FITV 4570: Films of Moral Struggle  
Prof. Jacqueline Reich: jreich8@fordham.edu

COURSE GUIDELINES

TEXTBOOK: A course reader on GOOGLE DRIVE  

FILMS (available on Google Drive or via links)

- *The Cheat* (Cecil B. De Mille, 1915)  
- *She Done Him Wrong* (Lowell Sherman, 1934)  
- *Casablanca* (Michael Curtiz, 1942)  
- *Rashomon* (Akira Kurosawa, 1950)  
- *8 ½* (Federico Fellini, 1962)  
- *Bamboozled* (Spike Lee, 2000)  
- *Thelma and Louise* (Ridley Scott, 1990)  
- *A Question of Silence* (Marleen Gorris, 1982)  
- *All About My Mother* (Pedro Almodovar, 1999)  
- *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (Frank Capra, 1936)  
- *Thank You for Smoking* (Jason Reitman, 2005)  
- *Zero Dark Thirty* (Kathryn Bigelow, 2012)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course examines film representations of moral and ethical struggles in select films from the silent era to the present. The films span a range of genres and analyze how class, race, gender, and religion affect moral and ethical justice in the United States and beyond. Short readings on film technique, history, genre, and style help to demonstrate how films construct and engage in moral struggles, as well as contextualizing and situating films in their historical context. Discussion, presentations, research, and short writing assignments culminate in a critical research paper. Fulfills the Senior Values and *Eloquentia Perfecta* 4 requirements.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Learn the concepts and terminology for the critical study of film and culture.  
- Develop critical thinking through the study and analysis of written and cinematic texts.  
- Develop oral communication skills through in class discussion and informal presentations.  
- Write critically about morality, ethics, and film.  
- Develop skills for researching and revising an extended argument.  
- Interrogate personal moral and ethical principles in relation to struggles for justice.

CLASS STRUCTURE: The course meets on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 1:00-5:00 pm in LL 908. Class time will be divided as such: the first 2 hours we will have a discussion of the films and the readings; the second two hours will consist of active viewing of the films. You are expected to conduct yourselves as responsible students and adults in this class: please arrive on time, not talk amongst yourselves, and not disrupt the class in any unruly fashion.

ASSIGNMENTS AND MATERIALS: Students must complete all the readings and assignments by the day they are due, as listed in the syllabus. Readings are available on Google Drive, as are most of the films (unless links are provided or otherwise noted).
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TECHNOLOGY: Since this is a seminar and not a lecture, COMPUTERS AND IPADS ARE NOT ALLOWED DURING DISCUSSION.

You will be required to have a twitter account for the class. It can be attached to your Fordham email, or another email address. Please follow me @Profjreich, and I will follow you. The class’s hashtag is #FITV4570 – make sure you put this hashtag in all your tweets. Please also LIKE the CMS Department on Facebook at www.facebook.com/FordhamCMS, I post about film there all the time.

GOOGLE DRIVE: Everything pertaining to the class – syllabus, links to films, external links – will be available in a shared folder on GOOGLE DRIVE.

CLASS WORK AND GRADES: The percentage breakdowns as follows:

Grade Breakdown:
- Attendance: 15%
- Presentation/ Discussion: 15%
- Prospectus: 10%
- Draft: 10%
- Introduction: 10%
- Film Analysis: 10%
- Final Paper: 30%

EXPLANATION OF GRADING EXPECTIONS:

ATTENDANCE: Students are expected to attend every class. If you know you will miss a class for religious reasons or required participation in a university sponsored-event please let me know in advance via email. If you are ill or there is a family emergency, please contact me via email as well. If you have more than one unexcused absences, your grade will be lowered one step (e.g. from an A to an A-), regardless of your cumulative total.

Leading Discussion—Once this session, you will lead a class discussion on an assigned ethical reading with another student. You will be graded on your preparation, how well you facilitate student discussion, and how you link the reading to the film.

PROSPECTUS: You will turn in a one-page prospectus that will state the film or films you will analyze, the argument you will make, and the topics, critical approaches, and philosophical arguments you will research. You will also list at least five bibliographic sources. Do not worry at this point whether or not your argument will ultimately prove correct; the prospectus is intended to stimulate and focus your thought. As soon as you finish writing the prospectus, start researching and writing your paper. It is fine if your final paper differs significantly from your prospectus, as the process of writing should be generative and adventurous.

INTRODUCTION: You will submit the first two pages of your paper (revised from your prospectus). This will include the Introduction and contextual information needed before you hone in on your argument. You should have footnoting in this section as well as bibliography.

DETAILED FILM ANALYSIS: This assignment should be at least two pages long and consist of a detailed analysis of the film in question, using the tools we have discussed in class on how to analyze film. It should be a pivotal scene from the film you wish to analyze.
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**DRAFTS**: Before you turn in your final paper, you will submit one final of it. It will be at least 13 pages long and go through a peer review process. More details to follow.

**FINAL PAPER**: Building on the prospectus, writing assignments, and drafts, you will turn in a 15-page research paper. Your paper will critically analyze the moral struggle in at least one film using at least 6 academic sources from outside of the class readings. The paper must argue for an original interpretation of the moral struggle in the film, not simply reformulate the cited sources. You may write on any film you want, just not the assigned films. The paper must be in MLA format and use the conventions of academic writing.

**ALL WORK WILL BE SUBMITTED VIA SAFEASSIGN ON BLACKBOARD UNLESS OTHERWISE REQUESTED**

**LATE WORK**: Any work submitted to Blackboard after class begins on the assigned day is late. Late work is penalized by 1/3 of a letter grade for each day late (50% maximum).

**Grade Breakdown:**

- 94-100: A
- 90-93: A-
- 87-89: B+
- 83-86: B
- 80-82: B-
- 77-79: C+
- 73-76: C
- 70-72: C-
- 65-69: D+
- 60-64: D
- 0-59: F

**7) UNIVERSITY STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**: A University, by its nature, strives to foster and recognize originality of thought. Originality can only be recognized, however, when people acknowledge the sources of ideas or works that are not their own. Therefore, students must maintain the highest standards with regards to honesty, effort and performance. As a Jesuit, Catholic University, Fordham is committed to ensuring that all members of the academic community strive not only for excellence in scholarship but also for integrity of character. In the pursuit of knowledge and personal development, it is imperative that students present their own ideas and insights for evaluation, critique and eventual reformulation. As part of this process, each student must acknowledge the intellectual contribution of others…. Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating on exams, falsification, unapproved collaboration, and destruction of library materials. For further details, consult the Standards of Academic Integrity on the University website [http://www.fordham.edu/academics/handbooks_publicati/undergraduate_academ/index.asp](http://www.fordham.edu/academics/handbooks_publicati/undergraduate_academ/index.asp)

**8) ASSISTANCE**: I will hold office hours before and after class and by appointment. The best way to reach me is via e-mail: jreich8@fordham.edu.

**9) EQUAL EDUCATIONAL ACCESS FOR ALL STUDENTS**: The Office of Disability Services at Fordham University helps to ensure equal educational access and opportunity for all members of our community. In the Jesuit tradition of cura personalis, members of the ODS staff work individually with each student to understand his or her strengths and limitations in order to
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develop their most effective and comprehensive accommodation plan. Fordham will offer reasonable and appropriate auxiliary aids and services to assist otherwise qualified persons in achieving access to its programs, services, and facilities once students meet with ODS for an initial intake meeting to develop an accommodation plan directly with the student in accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Students seeking accommodation(s) should the Rose Hill Office of Disability Services, (718) 817-0655 or email disabilityservices@fordham.edu.

Recent events surrounding and following the 2016 US Presidential Election have legitimated ugly actions and set a tone that is fundamentally at odds with the aims of higher education. It is the values and pedagogies associated with the Fordham mission, however, that will continue to set the tone in our classrooms. In the language of the university mission statement, such values include a “commitment to research and education that assist in the alleviation of poverty, the promotion of justice, the protection of human rights, and respect for the environment.” Members of this class can expect to continue an education that promotes “understanding of and reverence for ways of life other than their own,” and to continue their preparation “to live in and to contribute to an increasingly multicultural and multinational society.” As with all courses of study at Fordham, the aim of ours is to foster “life-long habits of careful observation, critical thinking, creativity, moral reflection, and articulate expression.”

Fordham’s full Mission statement is available here:
http://www.fordham.edu/info/20057/about/2997/mission_statement

BY ENROLLING IN THIS CLASS, YOU AGREE TO ABIDE BY THE GUIDELINES AND THE SYLLABUS AS STATED ABOVE. FAILURE TO FOLLOW THE GUIDELINES AND THE SYLLABUS HAS THE POTENTIAL TO NEGATIVELY AFFECT YOUR GRADE IN THE COURSE. THE PROFESSOR ALSO RESERVES THE RIGHT TO ALTER THE COURSE IN ANY MANNER DURING THE SEMESTER WITH PROPER NOTICE TO THE STUDENTS.
SYLLABUS

Historicizing Cinematic Morality

XX Course Introduction
Reading: Greg Smith, “It’s Only a Movie”
Screening: The Cheat (Cecil B. De Mille, 1915)

XX The Birth of Cinema and Moral Struggles
Reading: Marjorie Heins, “Not in Front of the Children;”
Screening: She Done Him Wrong (Lowell Sherman, 1934)
http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x21wh03_she-done-him-wrong-1933_shortfilms

XX Censorship and Morality
Reading: Leff and Simmons, “The Dame in the Kimono”
Screening: Casablanca (Michael Curtiz, 1942)

XX Classical Hollywood Narrative and Moral Struggle
Readings: Smith, “What is realism?”; Noel Carroll, “Art, Narrative and Moral Understanding”
Screening: Rashomon (Akira Kurosawa, 1950) (Kanopy)
Prospectus Due

Cinema as Metaphor of Moral Struggle

XX Subjectivity and Storytelling
Reading: Van Es, “Persistent Ambiguity and Moral Responsibility in Rashomon”
Screening: 8 1/2 (Federico Fellini, 1962)

XX The Auteur’s Moral Struggle
Readings: Jacqueline Reich, excerpt from Beyond the Latin Lover
Screening: Bamboozled (Spike Lee, 2000)

XX Racialization and Morality
Readings: Articles on Bamboozled from Cineaste
Screening: Thelma and Louise (Ridley Scott, 1990)
Paper Introduction Due

Moral Struggle and Gender

XX Hollywood, Gender and Moral Struggle
Readings: Carol Gilligan, “Images of Relationship”; Sharon Willis, “What do Women Want? A Reading of Thelma and Louise”
Screening: A Question of Silence (Marleen Gorris, 1982)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZyhIKvTQB6s

XX Alternative narratives of Moral Struggle
Readings: Linda Williams, “A Jury of Their Peers”
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Screening: *All About My Mother* (Pedro Almodovar, 1999)

XX Male Authorship, Female Struggle, and National Identity
Reading: Ernesto Acevedo-Munoz, “The Body and Spain: Pedro Almodóvar’s All About My Mother”
Screening: *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (Frank Capra, 1936)
[https://archive.org/details/MrSmithGoesToWashington1939480x360](https://archive.org/details/MrSmithGoesToWashington1939480x360)
Detailed Film Analysis Due

**Politics, American Cinema, and Moral Struggle**

XX Myths of Political and Moral Struggle
Readings: Eric Smoodin, “Regarding Frank Capra”
Screening: *Thank You for Smoking* (Jason Reitman, 2005)

XX Humor, Politics, and Moral Struggle
Readings: TBD
Screening: *Zero Dark Thirty* (Kathryn Bigelow, 2012)
[First Draft Due](#)

XX War, Torture and Moral Struggle
Readings: Michael Boughn, “The War on Art and Zero Dark Thirty”
Screening: Students Choice

XX Peer Review/Paper Consultations

XX Paper Consultations