

Possible Categories for Movies for Philosophy of Film

It is easy to classify the films on the lists we generated in class, but the interesting challenge arises when we understand that films can belong to several categories at once. I have a rudimentary classification structure here as a starting place.

Philosophical Concept	Questions/ Issues	Films as Suggested in Class
The Nature of Reality	What is real? Can we trust sense data? Do we share the same reality? Skepticism	<i>Field of Dreams, Baraka, Men Staring at Goats, Inception, The Matrix, Truman Show, Spirited Away, Fight Club, Vanilla Sky, Momento, The Invention of Lying, Bladerunner, Donny Darko, Like Water for Chocolate, Big Fish,</i>
Morality/Ethics/Good vs. Evil? God	What is our responsibility to ourselves, to others, to society? Does evil exist? Does God exist? How shall we live? Is there an ultimate truth?	<i>Bruce Almighty, The Dark Knight, Clockwork Orange, Lord of the Rings, The Cider House Rules, Star Wars, Unforgiven, Jurassic Park, Proof, Million Dollar Baby, WallE</i>
Ontology/Identity	What does it mean to be a human being? What does my life mean? Ontology often brings to bear personal growth, a sudden change that challenges a previous way of life, epiphany, transformation, the hero's journey, humility, tragic flaw, denial, rites of passage, learning to love the self and others.....death	<i>Dead Poets Society, Scent of a Woman, Fight Club, Toy Story, Star Wars, American Beauty, Inception, Ghost in the Shell, Momento, Elephant Man, Bucket List, Matrix, Meet Joe Black, What Dreams May Come, Lord of the Rings, Millennium Man, I, Robot, Star Wars, Bladerunner, Like Water For Chocolate,</i>
Social Constructions of Reality	Are there big truths or does culture determine its own truths?	<i>Rabbit Proof Fence, One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, 12 Angry Men, Black Robe, Baraka, Bird Cage, Crying Game, Fight Club,</i>
Determinism vs. Free will	Are we truly free? Is our	<i>Gattaca, Minority Report,</i>

	life scripted? If so, by whom?	<i>Groundhog's Day, Slumdog Millionaire,</i>
Technology/Utopia	Will technology free us? Enslave us?	<i>Baraka, The Gods Must be Crazy, Black Robe...</i>
Mind/Body Problem	How are the mind and body connected?	<i>Proof, Matrix, Inception</i>
Epistemology	How do we know what we know?	<i>The Razor's Edge, The Book of Eli, Black Robe</i>
Stories Retold	How do the stories we tell reflect our cultural beliefs?	<i>Oh, Brother Where Art Thou, Passion of Christ, V for Vendetta, Batman, Karate Kid,</i>

Descartes: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lEr8hmvzeHU>

When you create your projects for the course, you will not be able to do a comprehensive philosophical analysis. For example, *Spirited Away* has philosophical themes dealing with determinism, ethics/morality, social identity, ontology, representations of reality, stoicism, Epicureanism, and dualism (to name a few). If you decide to lead a class discussion on determinism, you could bring in salient clips from *Spirited Away* (and other film clips) to help us understand the concept of determinism. You should also consider using Blackburn's *Think* as a resource. Blackburn's text is not comprehensive, and we will explore areas of philosophy that are not in our textbook; however, there are many wonderful supplements that you can use. I am happy to provide links and materials to assist you.

Possible Strategies for Conceiving your Projects

*Focus first on a movie that you enjoy analyzing. Think of the big questions that the movie evokes for you, and consider how that movie explores a particular philosophical concept

*Explore a philosopher or a particular concept that you find interesting and seek examples of how that philosophy is represented in film.