

FTS 272: Seminar in Slavoj Žižek

Instructor: Todd McGowan

Office: 431 Old Mill; Office Hours: M/W/F 10:30-11:30 and by appt. (McGowan)

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Course Description and Objectives: FTS 272 will provide an in-depth exploration of the philosophy of Slavoj Žižek, especially as it relates to the study of film and philosophy. He will examine the implications of Žižek's thought for the analysis of film and take stock of him as a film theorist. We will also attempt to understand the theoretical underpinnings of his philosophy, including Hegel, Lacan, and Marx.

Texts: *For They Know Not What They Do* – Slavoj Žižek (Verso)
Organs Without Bodies – Slavoj Žižek (Routledge)
Living in the End Times – Slavoj Žižek (Verso)

Grading:

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| Midterm Exam | 25% |
| Final Exam | 25% |
| Seminar Paper | 25% |
| Participation | 25% |

Paper: One seminar paper is required, roughly 10-12 pages. For the paper, you must choose a film that Žižek himself has not written on and make a Žižekian influenced argument about that film. Make sure that your essay has a clear thesis that is evident from the beginning and that it sustains an argument throughout. Papers that merely describe the film without making an argument about it will not be successful. Your essay should interact with the criticism written on Žižek in advancing its argument.

Participation: Because this is a seminar, there will be a special emphasis on class discussion. You should come to every class prepared to speak thoughtfully about the reading and to bring questions to class.

Exams: There will be two exams for the course, a midterm and a final. Each will require students to demonstrate a grasp of Žižek's thought and the films that we have viewed during the semester.

Late Work: Papers turned in late will be lowered one grading step for each day that they are late.

Class Schedule:

* Reading and writing assignments are *due* the day they are listed.

* There will be no screenings for the course, though films will be on reserve in the library.

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| Jan | 18 | Introduction to course |
| | 25 | <i>For They Know</i> 1-60; Screen: <i>Life of Emile Zola</i> (William Dieterle, 1937) |
| Feb | 1 | <i>For They Know</i> 60-95; Screen: <i>The Trial</i> (Orson Welles, 1962) |
| | 8 | <i>For They Know</i> 96-175; Screen: <i>Angel Heart</i> (Alan Parker, 1987) |
| | 15 | <i>For They Know</i> 175-228; Screen: <i>La Marseillaise</i> (Jean Renoir, 1938) |
| | 22 | <i>For They Know</i> 229-277; Screen: <i>Last Emperor</i> (Bernardo Bertolucci, 1987) |
| | 29 | Midterm Exam |
| March | 14 | <i>Organs Without Bodies</i> 1-147; Screen: <i>White Material</i> (Claire Denis, 2009) |
| | 21 | <i>Organs Without Bodies</i> 148-213; Screen: <i>Vertigo</i> (Alfred Hitchcock, 1958) |
| | 28 | <i>Living in the End Times</i> 1-53; Screen: <i>Confucius</i> (Mei Hu, 2010) |
| April | 4 | <i>Living in the End Times</i> 54-134; Screen: <i>Seconds</i> (John Frankenheimer, 1966) |
| | 11 | <i>Living in the End Times</i> 135-180; Screen: <i>Viva Riva</i> (Djo Tunda Wa Munga, 2010) |
| | 18 | <i>Living in the End Times</i> 181-278; Screen: <i>1900</i> (Bernardo Bertolucci, 1976) |
| | 25 | <i>Living in the End Times</i> 279-352; Screen: <i>Eagle Eye</i> (D.J. Caruso, 2008) |
| May | 2 | <i>Living in the End Times</i> 353-402; Screen: <i>Grey Zone</i> (Tim Blake Nelson, 2001) |

** Final Exam: Friday, May 4 at 1:30 PM