

Instructor: Javier Cardoza-Kon

Nihilism and Film

2 Units

Philosophy 14

Course Description: This course will explore the concept of nihilism in the contemporary western world and its relation to what might be considered a technological mindset in terms of a Nietzschean and Heideggerian interpretation. While the word “technology” commonly signifies little more than sophisticated tools (cars, computers, cell phones, etc.), it has a much deeper significance within the overall conception of ourselves and the world-at-large. Our topics will touch on metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, culture, and language. We will work through readings as well as relevant films as it may well be argued that contemporary cinema is a metaphorical mirror for our conception both of how the Western World is and how we imagine it should or might be.

Coursework:

3 response papers 2-3pp. - 90% (30% each)

Attendance – 10%

Required Texts:

All texts will be made available on ecommons

Office Hours: TBA

Week 1: Nihilism, Value, and Fate vs. Free-Will

1) Film: *The Seventh Seal*

2) Readings: Nietzsche Selections from *Gay Science* and *Will to Power*: Discussion

Week 2: Nihilism, Value, and Fate vs. Free-Will Continued

1) Film: *A Clockwork Orange*

2) Readings: Heidegger: “The Question Concerning Technology”

Paper 1 Due on ecommons 5pm

Week 3: Technology and Humans as a Resource

1) Film: *Dr. Strangelove*

2) Readings: Thomson, Selections from *Heidegger on Ontotheology*

Week 4: Technology and Humans as a Resource, cont.

Paper 2 Due on ecommons 5pm

- 1) Film: *The Matrix*
- 2) Jean Baudrillard: selections from *Simulacra and Simulation I*.

Week 5: Possible Reversal or at Least Change?

- 1) Film: *Fight Club*
- 2) Readings: Baudrillard: selections from *Simulation and Simulacra 2*

Final papers due on ecommons Fri. by 5pm