

## **PSY 354: PSYCHOLOGY AND FILM**

Fall 2006

Professor Emily Fox Kales

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Office hours: Thursdays 2-4 and by appointment

This course uses film as a medium to investigate psychological topics, including development over the life cycle (particularly childhood and adolescence), family dynamics, human sexuality and gender. The focus this semester will be on cinematic depictions of psychopathology including mood and anxiety disorders, psychosis, addiction, and trauma; as well as clinical treatment—from the “mental asylum” to the patient-therapist relationship. How is cinema used to express unconscious and subjective states of mind? We will study how selected films’ portrayal of abnormal human behavior reflects changing social and scientific beliefs about mental illness.

### **Organization & Course Requirements:**

Weekly film screenings: Wednesdays (during class time a/or at the Media Center  
Mondays: Discussion, lectures, and selected readings which will serve as the basis for student papers and presentations. Each student will be assigned to a student-led small group, which will form the basis of both in-class discussions of films and readings, as well as oral presentations of team projects. Two short papers (3-4 pp.) and a (10-12pp.) final paper, due the last day of class, will allow students to apply course themes and clinical psychological concepts to a film/films of their choice. Specific paper guidelines will be distributed.

**Grades** are based on film discussion (10%), short papers (15% each) team project (20%) and final paper (40%).

### **Policies/Protocol:**

If you must leave before class officially ends, please let me know in advance. *Turn off cell phones before entering class.* More than 2 unexcused absences will result in grade penalty. Appropriate e-mail communication will be answered ASAP, weekends excluded. Students with disabilities who need classroom or academic accommodations should see me as soon as possible.

### **Required Text:**

Wedding & Boyd. *Movies & Mental Illness: Using Films to Understand Psychopathology* ( 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Hogrefe Press, 2005)

### **Recommended Reading:**

Stephen Prince .*Movies and Meaning: An Introduction to Film* (Allyn & Bacon, 2001)

Otto Wahl. *Media Madness: Public Images of Mental Illness* (Rutgers Univ. Press, 1995)

Wayne Wilson. *The Psychopath in Film* (University Press of America, 1999).

## Course Schedule

9/11	Introduction
9/13	Screening: <b>Like Water for Chocolate</b> (Arrau, 1993)
9/18	Film & the unconscious: fantasy, dream, and sublimation. Text: Chapter 1
9/20	Screening: <b>Ordinary People</b> (Redford, 1980)
9/25	Family Systems Theory; Mood Disorders Text: Chapter 5
9/27	Screening: <b>A Beautiful Mind</b> (Howard, 2001)
10/2	“Mad Genius” and Schizophrenia Text: Chapter 9
10/4	Screening: <b>Donnie Darko</b> (Kelly, 2001)
10/9	Columbus Day Holiday (no class)
10/11	Screening: <b>Three Faces of Eve</b> (Johnson, 1957) Short Paper #1 due
10/16	Dissociative Disorders and the “Hysterical Woman” Text: Ch.3
10/18	Screening: <b>Fatal Attraction</b> (Lyne, 1989)
10/23	Personality Disorders. Text: Chapter 6
10/25	Screening: <b>As Good as it Gets</b> (Brooks, 1997)
10/30	Anxiety Disorders. Text: Ch. 2
11/1	Screening: <b>Requiem for a Dream</b> (Aronofsky, 1998)
11/6	Substance Abuse: Text: Ch. 7 Short Paper #2 Due
11/8	Screening: <b>Fight Club</b> (Pincher, 1999)
11/13	Violence, Aggression and the Split Self Text: Ch. 14
11/15	Screening: <b>One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest</b> (Forman, 1975)
11/20	Society as Mental Asylum Text: Ch. 15 Treatment
11/27-	
12/6	Final Project Presentations Final papers due!



