

ENG 370/SOC 200 CS

Film and Literature: Postmodernism and the Self

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Office Hours:	T & R: 4:00 to 6:00 W: 1:00 to 3:00	W: 8:00 to 11:00 T & R: 8:00 to 9:00 Others by appointment

Required Texts

Phillip K. Dick (1996). *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*

The Matrix (DVD)

Ex Machina (DVD)

Episodes of Black Mirror (available on Netflix)

Course handouts on eLearning

Note: The list of required readings (and films) for each class period are listed at the end of this syllabus in the course schedule.

Course Objectives

By the end of the semester students will be able to:

- Describe post-modern (late modern) culture and its defining characteristics
- See themselves and others as actors within a given socio-historical context (i.e., have developed a “sociological imagination”).
- Interpret literary and film texts as historical and cultural products as well as imaginative works of art.
- Explain how the theories we study revise and expand our understanding of the "self," the not-self, and the boundary between the two.

A note about this course

This course is a Carthage Symposium (CS). CS courses are intended to help students learn how to view a topic (or disciplinary problem) from two distinct academic fields. The controlling question for this course is: "how does post-modernism shape one's sense of self?" Professor Smiley will approach the problem of post-modern selves from her field of English, and Professor Matthews will approach the same problem as a sociologist. We will focus on uncovering the ways in which our disciplinary perspectives overlap or diverge in how we understand the problem of the self in a post-modern world.

While particular disciplinary *concepts* are important to this course, we will also emphasize ways of knowing or "*seeing*" the post-modern self through our particular disciplinary lenses. In short, we will ask you to use disciplinary concepts to analyze the post-modern self through both disciplinary lenses, taking stock of places where the disciplines overlap, and also where they diverge. Our role is to provide you with the disciplinary concepts and categories to help you make sense of the post-modern self. To be successful in this course, you will need to not only learn disciplinary concepts and theories, but also apply them.

Academic Dishonesty

Cheating or plagiarism will not be tolerated in this course. Such conduct may result in a failing grade. You must abide by the College Academic Honesty Guidelines discussed in the Student Community Code which can be found at: <https://www.carthage.edu/community-code/>

Statement on Learning Disabilities

If you have a disability that affects your learning, please see one of us during the first two weeks of class to discuss support and accommodations. You also need to meet with and provide documentation to Diane Schowalter in the Advising Center, x5802.

Extra Credit

There are no opportunities for extra credit in this course.

Classroom Conduct

We expect students to conduct themselves in a professional manner. This means not talking to classmates while others are talking, coming to class on time and prepared to discuss the course material, and honoring our "screen free" class policy. There is no need for you to bring a laptop to class. Since the midterm and final exams are open notes (see below) you will need to handwrite your notes from class to use them on the exams. If your behavior is disruptive or distracting to either Professor Smiley, myself, or someone else in the class, we will ask you to leave. Such an absence will affect your course grade.

We also expect everyone to be ready to start class on time each day. Entering class once it has started is disruptive, so please plan to arrive to class on time.

Grading and Course Assignments

Attendance & engagement	13%
Mid-term and final exam	35%
In-class writings	10%
Quizzes	12%
Journal Entries	10%
Final Paper, the "self"	25%

Attendance and engagement

Since the success of this course depends on everyone's active engagement and participation, each day you will be asked to turn in your cellphone as part of your attendance and engagement grade. When you turn in your phone, we'll mark you present for the day. Likewise, to earn credit for attendance and engagement, laptop use is not allowed during class. You get one free pass on attendance, and after that, absences will begin to lower your course grade.

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/Todays-Lesson-Life-in-the/148423>

Midterm and final exam

The midterm and final exams will be in-class essays, and you will be allowed to use your notes during the exam. The midterm exam will be 15% of your course grade, and the final exam will be 20%.

In class writings

Each of these assignments will be graded on a credit/no credit basis. The purpose of these assignments is to spark class discussion, and there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. Either you are present and participate through these writing assignments or you are not. Throughout the semester, you get one "freebee," which means if you were not present on the day we did an in-class writing assignment, your grade of zero will be thrown out. After you've used your "freebee," the only way to make up one of these assignments is with an excuse from the College (i.e., a doctor's excuse, participation in an athletic event, etc.). Please note that occasionally you will be asked to write more than one in-class paper during a class period.

Quizzes

Quizzes, found on eLearning, are designed to encourage you to keep current in your reading. Quizzes cover the content to be discussed on the quiz due date. Quizzes are timed and no re-

entry is allowed. They must be completed 15 minutes before class on the day the material they cover is discussed.

Journal entries

You will be required to submit two journal entries this semester. There is no need to print your journal, you should upload your file through eLearning. The due dates for the journals are listed at the end of the syllabus.

These journals are not just a log of daily activity. They are a description of something in your daily life that is connected to the course (e.g., readings, class discussions, major concepts, theories) in a meaningful way. Each journal entry is an opportunity for you to show us how you are “reflexively describing and explaining [your] experiences and observations in terms of a sociological [or Literary] perspective” (Wagenaar, 1984, p. 421).

Any journal that is not turned in late will be assessed a 10% penalty. If a late journal is not submitted within one week of the due date, we will assign a grade of zero.

Each journal should be 3-4 pages long. You can decide the topic of your journal. The topic might be a life event, something you witnessed, or an idea that has come to you while thinking about the class. Your journals will be graded on the following criteria:

Originality: Is the event or observation interesting or unique?

Controlling question: Is the journal written around a clear controlling question, issue, or topic?

Thoroughness: Is the event or observation adequately described?

Accuracy: Were sociological/literary concepts or theories accurately applied to the event or observation?

Analysis: Be sure to answer the question: So what? Explain to the reader why your observation is important, and why they should care.

Reflection: What did you learn? How has your thinking changed? How does this help you understand yourself, others, or society better?

Conventions of Standard Written English: Is the journal free of errors, typos, etc.?

Final Paper, the "self"

The final paper is due at the end of the semester, and before then, we will give you a handout that outlines our expectations in more detail. Early in the semester, we will ask you to write a short paper where you describe to us your understanding of self and society. In the final paper, we'll ask you to reflect on the ways in which your understanding of self and society has changed after taking this course.

Grading

Letter grades will be assigned using the following percentage scale:

A = 94% - 100%

A- = 90% - 93%

B+ = 87% - 89%

B = 83% - 86%

B- = 80% - 82%

C+ = 77% - 79%

C = 73% - 76%

C- = 70% - 72%

D+ = 67% - 69%

D = 63% - 66%

D- = 60% - 62%

F = 59% or less

Date	Topic	Readings/Assignments Due
2/8	Introduction	Wallace, This is water
2/13	Locating the boundary between the self and not-self	<u>On eLearning:</u> Before class today, watch The Matrix Plato, Allegory of the cave
2/15	Consequence of modernity: A post-human world?	<u>On eLearning:</u> Harari, The end of homo sapiens Max, Beyond Human
2/20	Locating the boundary between the self and not-self	<u>On eLearning:</u> Descartes, Meditations on first philosophy
2/22	Features of Modernity: All that is solid melts into air	<u>On eLearning:</u> Bauman, Introduction: On living in a liquid world Bauman, The individual under siege
2/27	Locating the boundary between the self and not-self	<u>On eLearning:</u> Baudrillard, Simulacra
3/1	Consequences of modernity: competitive and lonely	<u>On eLearning:</u> Rothbard-margolis, The exchanger Monboit, Falling apart Journal Entry 1 due

3/5 to 3/9	No Class	Spring Break
3/13	Locating the boundary between the self and not-self	<u>On eLearning:</u> Vendler, Constructing a self
3/15	Features of Modernity: Triumph of the consumer	<u>On eLearning:</u> Schor, The new politics of consumption Hochschild, Going on attachment alert Sustein, The daily me
3/20	Locating the boundary between the self and not-self	<u>On eLearning:</u> Eileen Myles, An American Poem https://www.wpr.org/shows/data-mining-tracking-and-more-its-just-not-online-retailers-anymore
3/22	Technology and social control	<u>On eLearning</u> Eubanks, The digital poorhouse
3/27	Locating the boundary between the self and not-self	<u>On eLearning:</u> Watch Black Mirror Episode: The entire history of you (Season 1, episode 3)
3/29	Modernity and self-identity	<u>On eLearning:</u> Giddens, The contours of high modernity
4/3		<u>On eLearning:</u>
4/5	The useless class?	<u>On eLearning:</u> Harari, The great decoupling Goodman, The robots are coming Watch video: Ted Talk by Sam Harris: Can We Build A.I. without losing control over it?

		<a href="https://www.ted.com/talks/sam_harris_can_we_build_ai_witho
ut_losing_control_over_it">https://www.ted.com/talks/sam_harris_can_we_build_ai_witho ut_losing_control_over_it
4/10	Self and technology	<u>On eLearning:</u> Before class today, watch Ex Machina Heller, If animals have rights, should robots?
4/12	"Intimacy" with machines in a post-modern world	<u>On eLearning:</u> Mori, uncanny valley https://www.wired.com/2017/10/hiroshi-ishiguro-when-robots-act-just-like-humans/
4/17	When human intervention meets life itself	<u>On eLearning:</u> Watch Black Mirror Episode: Be right back (Season 2, episode 1)
4/19	Bodies, reflexivity, and the self	<u>On eLearning:</u> Michal Pagis, Embodied self-reflexivity (Social Psychology Quarterly need to get article)
4/24	Gender and Sex in post-modern culture	<u>On eLearning:</u> Fausto-Sterling, Should there be only two sexes? Ainsworth, Sex redefined
4/26	Postmodern connectivity, "always on"	<u>On eLearning:</u> Tweenge, Insecure: The new mental health crisis Hidaka, Depression and modernity Gazzaley & Rosen, The psychology of technology Watch PBS clip on smartphones: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MacJ4p0vITM
5/1	The past as future	<u>On eLearning:</u> Watch Black Mirror Episode: San Junipero (Season 3, episode 4) Boyle, The relive box

5/3	Ontological insecurity in a runaway world	<u>On eLearning</u> Diamond, Constructive paranoia Giddens, Runaway world
5/8		<u>On eLearning:</u>
5/10	Challenging the culture of speed	<u>On eLearning:</u> slow movement
5/15		<u>On eLearning:</u>
5/17	Something bigger than the self?	<u>On eLearning:</u> The power of meaning
5/23	Final Exam	1:00 to 3:00 p.m.