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**PSY 4990: Psychology in Film**  
**Fall 2012**  
**Tuesday 1:30 – 4:00**  
**SS 323**

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**Professor:** Dr. Aaron Ashley      **Office:** SS 328A  
**Office Hours:** M-F 1:00-2:00 or by appointment  
**Email:** AaronAshley@weber.edu      **Phone:** (801) 626-8743

Please note: This email address is the best way to contact me. You should, however, only use your Weber State email account to contact me, because the Weber State mail system is likely to quarantine your email, and I will probably not open email from or respond to non-Weber State email accounts.

I typically respond to email in the morning. This tactic keeps me from responding to email all day. I will certainly respond to your emails during office hours, but outside of those times it will most likely be the following morning.

**Course Description:** This course will provide a demonstration of how different psychological principles are characterized and presented in popular films and documentaries. In this class, you will watch a series of films and documentaries portraying, depicting, or highlighting psychological concepts, and analyze and discuss the psychological principles conveyed in this media.

**Class Format:** The course will consist of alternating film presentation and discussion. On one week you will watch a film or documentary; the following week, a professor will lead a discussion pertaining to the film and the psychological principles presented therein.

**Evaluation:** The final course grade will be based on performance on bi-weekly papers (70 points), and class participation (200 points). There are 270 total points possible for the course, and your final grade will be based on the percentage of total points obtained relative to the total points available. The following percentage-letter grade equivalents shall apply.

<b>A</b>	<b>90 - 100%</b>	<b>C+</b>	<b>77 - 79%</b>	<b>D+</b>	<b>67 - 69%</b>
<b>B+</b>	<b>87 - 89%</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>73 - 76%</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>63 - 66%</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>83 - 86%</b>	<b>C-</b>	<b>70 - 72%</b>	<b>D-</b>	<b>60 - 62%</b>
<b>B-</b>	<b>80 - 82%</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>&lt; 60%</b>		

**Bi-Weekly Movie Analysis and Commentary (10 pts each):** Students must write bi-weekly analyses and commentaries on the movies watched. Commentaries are to be submitted via email to ([AaronAshley@weber.edu](mailto:AaronAshley@weber.edu)) **before class** (1:30 pm) on the dates of the discussion of the movies. I will use the time-stamp of when I receive the email in determination of whether your paper was received before class. Commentaries are to consider the psychological concepts portrayed in the movies and the accuracy of the portrayal. Commentaries are not simply to be summaries of the movies. Commentaries should be between 500 and 750 words,

double spaced, and should be written at a college level. That is, free of grammatical, spelling, or typographical errors. Any papers containing an unacceptable amount of errors will not be graded. Commentaries are to be submitted in MS Word, WordPerfect, or RTF format. PDFs will not be accepted.

**In-class Discussion Participation (200 pts):** Discussion and exchange of ideas is an important component of learning. As a student in this class, it is your responsibility to thoughtfully consider the movies and the psychological principles contained within and participate in class discussion. As part of this process, before each class meeting, the professor will ask students to bring up questions on the assigned movies and/or issues they raised in their analyses and commentaries. I expect the discussion to be theoretical in nature, but not esoteric. I do, however, expect you to have some questions and comments related to the portrayal of the psychological principles. Simple comments of enjoyment are not acceptable. Your comments should reflect contemplation and understanding of the material. At the end of the course, you will earn a grade for class discussion/participation as follows:

(200 pts) Excellent class participation/attendance throughout the course. Participation generally reflected careful consideration of the movie and the psychological principles involved. Questions were generally thought-provoking and relevant to the material.

(150 pts) Good participation/attendance throughout the course. Participation questions generally indicated that the material had been considered and given some thought.

(100 pts) Good participation some days, weak participation other days. Questions asked not very thoughtful or thought-provoking.

(50 pts) Very little participation. Questions asked did not necessarily reflect a careful consideration of the course material.

(0 pts) Poor attendance and participation

### **Course Policies and Expectations**

**Attendance:** Attendance for this class is mandatory. It is expected that you will attend all of the film presentations and all of the discussions.

**Classroom Courtesy: Cell phones/ laptops/ other electronic devices:** Please leave **all** electronic devices turned off during class. I do not want to see any cell phones or laptops out during the class period. You can text message and email your friends during the other twenty-two hours of the day, but not during this class. This behavior is not only rude, but is also extremely disruptive. A first warning is forgetfulness. A second warning (and subsequent warnings) will result in five points off your final total points for each occurrence.

**Discriminatory Harassment:** Weber State University is committed to providing an environment free from harassment and other forms of discrimination based upon race, color, ethnic background, national origin, religion, creed, age, lack of American citizenship, disability, status

of veteran of the Vietnam era, sexual orientation or preference or gender, including sexual/gender harassment. Such an environment is a necessary part of a healthy learning and working atmosphere because such discrimination undermines the sense of human dignity and sense of belonging of all people in the environment. Thus, students in this class should practice professional deportment, and avoid treating others in a manner that is demeaning or derisive in any respect.

While diverse viewpoints and opinions are welcome in this class, in expressing them, we will practice mutual deference so important in the world of work. Thus, while I encourage you to share your opinions, when appropriate, you will be expected to do so in a manner that is respectful towards others, even when you disagree with them.

If you have questions regarding the university's policy against discrimination and harassment you may contact the university's AA/EO office (626-6239) or visit its website: <http://departments.weber.edu/aaeeo/>.

**Academic dishonesty policy:** Weber State University imposes specific disciplinary actions in response to incidents of academic misconduct (cheating, plagiarism, etc.). These actions may include admonition, failing grade, failure of course, disciplinary probation, suspension, and dismissal. The specified policies can be found in the WSU Student Code at <http://documents.weber.edu/ppm/6-22.htm>. Cheating will not be tolerated in this or any class at WSU. Any student caught cheating or plagiarizing on any assignment will result in a grade of E. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes plagiarism, if you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism ask. Ignorance of the law is no excuse.

**Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:** Any student requiring accommodations or services due to a disability must contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) in room 181 of the Student Service Center. SSD can also arrange to provide course materials (including this syllabus) in alternative formats if necessary.

Weber State University policies regarding Services for Students with Disabilities are available on the <http://weber.edu/ssd> website.

8/28	Introduction to course (Nature/Nuture)	Gattaca
9/4	Pinker (2004)	
9/11	Sensation/Perception & Consciousness	Jacobs Ladder
9/18	Samsonovich & Ascoli (2005)	
9/25	Learning	Manchurian Candidate
10/2	TBD	
10/19	Memory	Total Recall
10/16	Tulving (1985)	
10/23	Language & Representation	Being There
10/30	Lakoff (1986)	
11/6	Problem Solving, Decision Making, Expertise	Apollo 13
11/13	TBD	
11/20	Social Environment on Cognition and Behavior	The Experiment
11/27	TBD	
12/4	Individual Differences in Cognition	Harvey