

The course, which explores the films of Alfred Hitchcock, the master of suspense, serves two main purposes.

First, it introduces students to film as a distinctive art form. Students will become familiar with the questions and categories with which one can most meaningfully interpret and evaluate any film, including film-specific dimensions. Like theater, film is a visual, temporal, and linguistic medium, but film differs from theater insofar as it is defined by camera or shot, which frames our sight; montage or editing, which allows film to be spatially and temporally discontinuous; and *mis-en-scene*, the totality of expressive content in the filmed image, from setting, props, and costumes to gestures, facial expressions, and lighting. Together these three elements bring forward not only a distinctive art form but also an unusually capacious and creative ontology.

Second, we will consider the ways in which Hitchcock's works raise questions and convey meaning. Although Hitchcock is justly famous for eliciting powerful emotions, he is also a cerebral director, whose works reflect on art and its relation to reality. Power and love are the two great intersubjective themes that dominate Hitchcock's concept of the social world. His films play with identity, mistaken identity, and identity crises. Hitchcock stresses the difficulties of achieving certainty in intersubjective relations and the various ways in which we try to navigate this uncertainty, which can evoke fear, thwart love, enable evil, and hinder the revelation of truth. Hitchcock is also a Catholic director who thematizes the gap between what is and what ought to be. His assessment of a human impulse toward cruelty is nonetheless paired with concepts of grace and providence. Hitchcock plays with diverse genres, but his most distinctive mode may be humor, which represents a persistent but loving critique of an inadequate world.

The course will be student-centered, with considerable focus on discussion. Students will write extensively on the films and thereby develop not only their interpretive but also their oral and written capacities.

The course is designed for Glynn sophomores, juniors, and seniors who are interested in a year-long academic experience. In the Fall the course satisfies the University Requirement in the Fine Arts and in the spring, via its continuation in "Faith, Doubt, and Reason," the University Requirements in either Second Philosophy or Catholicism and the Disciplines. The Spring course will explore questions of faith, doubt, and reason via a range of thinkers, including Plato, Marx, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Freud, John Paul II, and Benedict XVI as well as literary and artistic works (including films). Sophomores and seniors who choose the course should plan on the year-long experience. Juniors who would like to take either the fall or spring semester but who are spending the other semester abroad may, with the permission of the instructor, sign up for fall or spring.