Owl of Minerva Film Series Spring 2016

Sponsored by:
The Undergraduate Philosophy Club, Department of Philosophy

All are welcome!

**Resisting Authority: Systems of Power, Oppression, and Thought Control**

This spring’s philosophy film series is devoted to the theme of the resistance of the individual human being to the systematic attempt by an unjust society to control the movement, speech and even the thought of the people it rules. How do the powerful few in an unjust society control the thought of the majority? How can the individual resist the dehumanizing influence of such techniques? Is an individual person in an unjust society morally obliged to resist its authority? Are any and all modes of resistance to an unjust society morally justifiable or only some?

*All films scheduled to date will be screened in BSCB 101 (Becker Communications Studies Bldg. auditorium) on alternate Wednesdays at 7pm. Please see the schedule below for film titles and dates.*

**Agora**: JAN 20th | 7pm | BSCB 101 (Becker Communication Studies Bldg. auditorium)

*Agora* is a 2009 Spanish English-language historical drama film directed by Alejandro Amenábar and written by Amenábar and Mateo Gil. The biopic stars Rachel Weisz as Hypatia, a female mathematician, philosopher and astronomer in late 4th-century Roman Egypt, who investigates the flaws of the geocentric Ptolemaic system and the heliocentric model that challenges it. Surrounded by religious turmoil and social unrest, Hypatia struggles to save the knowledge of classical antiquity from destruction. Max Minghella co-stars as Davus, Hypatia's father's slave, and Oscar Isaac as Hypatia's student, and later prefect of Alexandria, Orestes. The story uses historical fiction to highlight the relationship between religion and science amidst the decline of Greco-Roman polytheism and the Christianization of the Roman Empire. The title of the film takes its name from the *agora*, a gathering place in ancient Greece, similar to the Roman *forum*.

12 Years a Slave: FEB 3rd | 7pm | BSCB 101 (Becker Communication Studies Bldg. auditorium)

12 Years a Slave is a 2013 period drama film and an adaptation of the 1853 slave narrative memoir Twelve Years a Slave by Solomon Northup, a New York State-born free African-American man who was kidnapped in Washington, D.C., in 1841 and sold into slavery. Northup worked on plantations in the state of Louisiana for 12 years before his release. The first scholarly edition of Northup's memoir, co-edited in 1968 by Sue Eakin and Joseph Logsdon, carefully retraced and validated the account and concluded it to be accurate. Other characters in the film were also real people, including Edwin and Mary Epps, and Patsey.

Short introductory clip for 12 Years a Slave: Maya Angelou, ‘The Mask’.

The Naked Civil Servant: FEB 17th | 7pm | BSCB 101 (Becker Communication Studies Bldg. auditorium)

The Naked Civil Servant is a 1975 biographical film based on gay icon Quentin Crisp's 1968 book of the same name, starring John Hurt and directed by Jack Gold, adapted by Philip Mackie, and produced by Verity Lambert. The film contains many anecdotes about Crisp's life from childhood to middle age, including troubles he faced by refusing to hide his homosexuality and lifestyle during a time when such behavior was criminalized in the United Kingdom.

Short introductory clip for The Naked Civil Servant: Priscilla, Queen of the Desert. Bar scene.

Before Night Falls: MAR 2nd | 7pm | BSCB 101 (Becker Communication Studies Bldg. auditorium)

Before Night Falls is based on the autobiography of the same name by Cuban poet and novelist Reinaldo Arenas. In the film, Arenas, who was openly gay, is born in Oriente in 1943 and raised by his single mother and her parents, who soon move the entire family to Holguín. After moving to Havana in the sixties to continue his studies, Reinaldo begins to explore his ambitions, as well as his sexuality. After receiving an honorary mention in a writing contest, Arenas is offered the chance to publish his first work. Through his work and friendships with other openly gay men (such as Pepe Malas and Tomas Diego), Arenas manages to find himself. The political climate in Cuba becomes increasingly dangerous, and in the early seventies Arenas is arrested for allegedly sexually assaulting minors, and for publishing abroad without official consent. In the next decade, Arenas is in and out of prison, attempting and failing to leave the country several times. In 1980, Arenas finally leaves Cuba for the US, starting a new life with his close friend Lazaro Gomez Carriles. A few years later, Arenas is diagnosed with AIDS, and after spending several years suffering, he dies in 1990 with the help of Lazaro.

Short introductory clip for Before Night Falls: Star Trek, Next Generation: ‘Four Lights!’
**Battle of Algiers**: MAR 30th | 7pm | BSCB 101 (Becker Communication Studies Bldg. auditorium)

*The Battle of Algiers* reconstructs the events that occurred in the capital city of French Algeria between November 1954 and December 1957, during the Algerian War of Independence. The narrative begins with the organization of revolutionary cells in the Casbah. Then partisan warfare between Muslims and Pied-Noir in which both sides exchange acts of increasing violence leads to the introduction of French army paratroopers to hunt the National Liberation Front (FLN). The paratroopers are depicted as winning the battle by neutralizing the whole of the FLN leadership through either assassination or capture. However, the film ends with a coda depicting nationalist demonstrations and riots, suggesting that although France won the Battle of Algiers, it lost the Algerian War. The tactics of the FLN guerrilla insurgency and the French counter insurgency, and the uglier incidents of the war, are depicted. Colonizer and colonized commit atrocities against civilians. The FLN commandeer the Casbah via summary execution of Algerian criminals and suspected French collaborators and use terrorism, including bombings, to harass Europeans. The security forces resort to lynch mobs and indiscriminate violence against the opposition. French paratroops are depicted as routinely using torture, intimidation, and murder. The story begins and ends from the perspective of Ali la Pointe (Brahim Haggiag), a petty criminal who is politically radicalized while in prison and then recruited by FLN commander El-hadi Jafar.

*Short introductory clip for The Battle of Algiers: Jesus Christ Superstar: ‘Damned for All Time/Blood Money’.*

**Network**: APR 13th | 7pm | BSCB 101 (Becker Communication Studies Bldg. auditorium)

*Network* is a 1976 American satirical film written by Paddy Chayefsky and directed by Sidney Lumet, about a fictional television network, UBS, and its struggle with poor ratings. The film stars Faye Dunaway, William Holden, Peter Finch, and Robert Duvall and features Wesley Addy, Ned Beatty, and Beatrice Straight. The film won four Academy Awards, in the categories of Best Actor (Finch), Best Actress (Dunaway), Best Supporting Actress (Straight), and Best Original Screenplay (Chayefsky). Howard Beale, the longtime anchor of the Union Broadcasting System's *UBS Evening News*, learns from the news division president, Max Schumacher, that he has just two more weeks on the air because of declining ratings. The two old friends get roaring drunk and lament the state of their industry. The following night, Beale announces on live television that he will commit suicide on next Tuesday's broadcast. UBS fires him after this incident, but Schumacher intervenes so that Beale can have a dignified farewell. Beale promises he will apologize for his outburst, but once on the air, he launches back into a rant claiming that life is "bullshit". Beale's outburst causes the newscast's ratings to spike, and much to Schumacher's dismay, the upper echelons of UBS decide to exploit Beale's antics rather than pull him off the air. In one impassioned diatribe, Beale galvanizes the nation, persuading his viewers to shout out of their windows "I'm as mad as hell, and I'm not going to take this anymore!"

*Short introductory clip for Network: Five Easy Pieces. Diner Scene.*
**The 400 Blows**: APR 27th | 7pm | BSCB 101 (Becker Communication Studies Bldg. auditorium)

*The 400 Blows* (French: *Les Quatre Cents Coups*) is a 1959 French drama film, the debut by director François Truffaut; it stars Jean-Pierre Léaud, Albert Rémy, and Claire Maurier. One of the defining films of the French New Wave, it displays many of the characteristic traits of the movement. Written by Truffaut and Marcel Moussy, the film is about Antoine Doinel, a misunderstood adolescent in Paris who is thought by his parents and teachers to be a troublemaker. Filmed on location in Paris and Honfleur, it is the first in a series of five films in which Léaud plays the semi-autobiographical character. *The 400 Blows* received numerous awards and nominations, including the Cannes Film Festival Award for Best Director, the OCIC Award, and a Palme d'Or nomination in 1959. The film was also nominated for an Academy Award for Best Writing in 1960. Antoine Doinel (Jean-Pierre Léaud) is a young boy growing up in Paris during the early 1950s. Misunderstood at home by his parents and tormented in school by his insensitive teacher (Guy Decomble), Antoine frequently runs away from both places. The boy finally quits school after being caught plagiarizing Balzac by his teacher. He steals a typewriter from his stepfather's (Albert Remy) work place to finance his plans to leave home, but is apprehended while trying to return it. The stepfather angrily turns Antoine over to the police and Antoine spends the night in jail, sharing a cell with prostitutes and thieves. During an interview with the judge, Antoine’s mother confesses that her husband is not Antoine’s biological father. Antoine is placed in an observation center for troubled youths near the shore (as per his mother's wishes). A psychologist at the center probes reasons for Antoine's unhappiness, which the youth reveals in a fragmented series of monologues.


**The Act of Killing**: Date TBD | 7pm | Location TBD

*The Act of Killing* (Indonesian: *Jagal*, meaning "Butcher") is a 2012 documentary film directed by Joshua Oppenheimer and co-directed by Christine Cynn and an anonymous Indonesian. It won the 2013 European Film Award for Best Documentary, the Asia Pacific Screen Award, and was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature at the 86th Academy Awards. The film is about the individuals who participated in the Indonesian killings of 1965–66 where almost a million people were killed. When Suharto overthrew Sukarno, the President of Indonesia, following the failed coup of the 30 September Movement in 1965, the gangsters Anwar Congo and Adi Zulkadry in Medan (North Sumatra) were promoted from selling black market movie theatre tickets to leading the most powerful death squad in North Sumatra. They also extorted money from ethnic Chinese as the price for keeping their lives. Anwar is said to have personally killed 1,000 people. Today, Anwar is revered as the right wing of a paramilitary organization Pemuda Pancasila that grew out of the death squads. The organization is so powerful that its leaders include government ministers who are openly involved in corruption, election rigging and clearing people from their land for developers. Invited by Oppenheimer, Anwar recounts his experiences killing for the cameras, and makes scenes depicting their memories and feelings about the killings. The scenes are produced in the style of their favorite films: gangster, western, and musical. Various aspects of Anwar and his friends' filmmaking process are shown, but as they begin to dramatize
Anwar's own experiences, the fiction scenes begin to take over the film's form. Oppenheimer has called the result "a documentary of the imagination". Some of Anwar's friends state that the killings were wrong, while others worry about the consequences of the story on their public image. After Anwar plays a victim, he cannot continue. Oppenheimer, from behind the camera, states that it was worse for the victims because they knew they were going to be killed, whereas Anwar was only acting. Anwar then expresses doubts over whether or not he has sinned, tearfully saying he does not want to think about it. He revisits the rooftop where he claims many of his killings took place, and retches repeatedly. The dancers from the film's theatrical poster are seen before the credits begin to roll.¹

*Short introductory clip for The Act of Killing: Conspiracy (2001). ‘This is the time to be practical’.*

¹ All film synopses from Wikipedia.