



Call for Proposals

Faith, Film and Philosophy

“Saving Private Ryan and Other Love Stories”

October 14th & October 15th, 2016

Gonzaga University’s *Faith and Reason Institute* and Whitworth University’s *Weyerhaeuser Center for Faith and Learning* are pleased to announce the annual Seminar on Faith, Film and Philosophy, entitled ***“Saving Private Ryan and Other Love Stories.”***

Films centered on war and its effects have long been a Hollywood staple. The earliest actual film footage of war dates from 1897, although the footage shot by Frederic Villiers has not survived. In that same year, the pioneering French filmmaker Georges Méliès shot what appears to be the first staged battle scene for his film *Sea Battle in Greece*. The first American film involving war was a staged 1898 propaganda short entitled *Tearing Down the Spanish Flag*. Hollywood eventually took on the subject of war beginning in the second decade of the 20th century. As one might expect, the number of “war films” increased dramatically with the outbreak of World War II and then entered a period of declining numbers until the 21st century, which saw a rebirth of interest in the subject.

War provides a crucible, a time of testing for persons and cultures. Of particular interest to us are the multiple roles that love plays in this crucible and the ways in which popular films have dealt with this topic. The variety of loves includes love of self, love of humanity, love of neighbor, patriotism, love of fellow-soldiers, erotic love, and love of other living things. These loves have their shadows in a lack of love or even a hatred of self, humanity, country. How does war affect these loves? How do these loves affect war and its associated activities? How does popular film deal with these matters? The reflective filmgoer wants to consider how one should think about various relationships between love and war and the filmic depictions of these relationships. Thus, popular films provide fertile ground for philosophical, theological and artistic reflection. We invite contributions to the seminar from a wide variety of disciplinary and theoretical perspectives.

Possible topics for seminar papers include the following, although proposals on other topics or questions of relevance are certainly welcome and encouraged.

- What do war films tell us about self-love and self-hatred in the context of war?
- Is self-sacrifice in war for a common or greater good laudable?
- Can there truly be just wars? Do popular films help us to identify just wars?
- How do popular films treat religion (or love of God) and war? Is religion often offered as a cause for war? How is religion linked to patriotism?

- How do popular films about war tend to treat religious characters?
- What do popular films tell us about the impact of war on familial love and vice versa?
- Do war films treat religious devotion by soldiers as “foxhole conversions”?
- Ought war films offer a realistic portrayal of military weaponry and its effects on the human body?
- How can combatants know what is the right thing to do when preparing for or engaging in battle?
- Do popular films attempt to address the problems of evil and suffering that they depict?

We are particularly interested in popular films from the last 25 years, although the program committee will certainly consider exceptions to the 25-year rule.

Proposals not longer than two pages (double-spaced), and in Word format, should be submitted electronically to Dr. Brian Clayton at claytonb@gonzaga.edu no later than midnight on **30 June 2016**, and should include title, author(s), institutional affiliation (if any), mailing address, email address, and the text of the proposal. The seminar organizers will send **acceptances** by **15 July 2016**.

Seminar sessions will take place on Friday (October 14th) and Saturday (October 15th). **Public lectures and other events** associated with the seminar will take place in the days leading up to the seminar.

The seminar and its associated public events are part of a series of jointly-sponsored programs focused on “Faith, Reason and Popular Culture.” The conviction behind these programs is that if Christian institutions of higher learning are to respond properly to their charge to be places where faith seeks understanding, then they must engage contemporary popular culture. Film is among the most powerful and important forms of popular culture. Thus, the seminar organizers seek scholars who will engage in two days of discussion investigating issues of faith and philosophical import raised by contemporary popular film. Presenters need not have any formal academic appointment.

For further information please contact Dr. Brian Clayton, Director, Gonzaga University Faith and Reason Institute at claytonb@gonzaga.edu.