MDST 3630 Professor William G. Little

Spring 2017 Wilson Hall 204 454 New Cabell Hall

Ruffner Hall 177 Office Hours: Friday1-3 and by appointment

TR 9:30-10:45 e-mail: wgl2h@virginia.edu

**Screening Terrorism**

This course will examine cinematic representations of terrorism. It aims to do the following: to promote critical awareness of the ways in which terrorism is depicted on screen; to encourage exploration of the complex ways in which real acts of terror involve performance and theatrics; to foster consideration of the responsibilities fictional film and television are to hold in relation to terrorism by addressing the ethics of re-creating acts of terror on screen. These aims are linked to a premise that responsibility is always bound up with seduction: the seductiveness of the desire to claim responsibility for an act, event, experience; the seductiveness of the claim to know who or what is responsible; the seductiveness of the desire to track down those responsible; the seductiveness of the power to assign responsibility. The texts we will examine are riddled with these seductions. They depict characters and reflect the work of artists who are drawn to, and in some cases carried away by, responsibility’s seductions.

In addition to studying several films that dramatize terrorist activity, we will explore a series of paintings by the contemporary German artist Gerhard Richter. To analyze the visual texts we consider, we will draw on multiple methodological approaches. A number of theoretical secondary readings (e.g., on terror as spectacle for consumption; on the relationship between terror and the sacred; on the structure of torture) will be assigned.

**Required Text (available at UVA Bookstore):**

Giovanna Borradori, *Philosophy in a Time of Terror* (2004)

All other readings and course materials will be posted online on Collab in PDF or Word format. Readings must be printed and brought to class.

**Course Films (on reserve in Robertson Media Center):**

John McTiernan, *Die Hard* (1988) 131 minutes

Gillo Pontecorvo, *The Battle of Algiers* (1966) 121 minutes

Michael Haneke, *Caché* (2005) 110 minutes

Uli Edel, *The Baader Meinhof Complex* (2008) 149 minutes

Steven Spielberg, *Munich* (2005) 164 minutes

Chris Morris, *Four Lions* (2010) 97 minutes

Paul Greengrass, *United 93 (*2006) 111 minutes

Abderrahmane Sissako, *Timbuktu* (2014) 100 minutes

Julia Loktev, *Day Night Day Night* (2006) 94 minutes

Hany Abu-Assad, *Paradise Now* (2005) 91 minutes

Gus Van Sant, *Elephant* (2003) 81 minutes

**film/tv databases**:

[www.imdb.com/](http://www.imdb.com/)

[www.allmovie.com/](http://www.allmovie.com/)

**Film terms**:

See “Glossary of Film Terms” in Collab Resources

http://www.empireonline.com/features/film-studies-101-camera-shots-styles/p1

**Graded Requirements:**

Response Papers (2 @ 10 points each) (3-4 pages) 20 points

Participation 10 points

Essay #1 (6-8 pages) 30 points

Final Paper (10-12 pages) 40 points

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TOTAL 100 points

**Attendance:**

Attendance is mandatory. Students must inform me in advance of an intended absence. More than two absences will lower your grade and may be ground for failure.