MDST 3630 Professor William G. Little

Spring 2014 242 Wilson Hall 454 New Cabell Hall

Gibson Hall 242 Office Hours: W:1-3 and by appointment

Tuesday & Thursday 9:30-10:45 e-mail: wgl2h@virginia.edu

**Screening Terrorism**

This course will examine cinematic and televisual 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 involved in 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 captivated by, 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 and, perhaps, a complete season (season 4) of the popular, acclaimed television program *24*. To analyze these texts, 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):**

James Marsh, *Man on Wire* (2008) 94 minutes

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

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

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

Steven Spielberg, *Munich* (2005) 164 minutes

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

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

Joel Surnow, *24* (Season 4) (2004-05)

Kathryn Bigelow, *The Hurt Locker* (2008) 127 minutes

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

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

**Instructions for accessing the list of films on reserve and their call numbers**:

1. Go to the UVA library homepage ([www.lib.virginia.edu](http://www.lib.virginia.edu))

2. Click on “Services” on upper right-hand side of page

3. Click “Search Course Reserves”

**film/tv databases**:

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

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

Writing about film and film terms (a helpful guide):

<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~writing/materials/student/humanities/film.shtml#a>

**Graded Requirements:**

Response Papers/Participation 35 points

Essay #1 (5-7 pages) 25 points

Final Paper (10-12 pages) 40 points

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TOTAL 100 points