

PHR-520 - Existentialism

Essay #2: Kierkegaardian Despair and Film

Don't despair - we aren't done with Kierkegaard quite yet! Having had the chance to test out the Danish philosopher's framework on *No Exit*, our focus will now shift to exploring Kierkegaard's idea of despair as it manifests within the medium of film. For this essay, you are to choose a movie with existentialist themes (a list of potential ideas is located below) and then respond to **one** of the following prompts:

Option 1: Pick two characters from your film and compare/contrast the manner in which they exhibit Kierkegaardian despair.

Option 2: Pick one character from your film and trace their progression/regression through Kierkegaardian despair over the course of the film.

The final draft should be between four and five pages in length (12-point font, 2.0-inch line spacing, 1.0-inch margins) and should include a Works Cited at the end (this is not counted in the page length). Citations can take the form of either parenthetical or footnotes (just be consistent). We will have a writing workshop in class on Monday, January 27th, by which time you should have watched your film.

Submitting your essay: Your essay should be submitted as either a Google Doc or a Word Document in your Google Drive folder for the course.

The final draft will be due at the beginning of class on Tuesday, January 28th.

Possible Films

Ordinary People	The Truman Show
American Beauty	Blade Runner
The Matrix	Groundhog Day
Melancholia	No Country for Old Men
Wild Strawberries	Into the Wild
Another Earth	Russian Doll (TV Series)

This list is not exhaustive! If you have another film in mind, please come to talk to me.

Standard 1.B Rubric - Kierkegaardian Despair

(6) Advanced Understanding	(5) Proficient Understanding	(4) Developing Understanding	(3) Emerging Understanding	(2 or Lower) Insufficient Evidence
In addition to 3, 4, and 5-level understandings, I can compile component ideas into a new whole or propose alternative solutions	In addition to 3 and 4-level understandings, I can analyze effectiveness, limitations, and new insights that result from the application of concepts to new contexts	In addition to 3-level understandings, I can accurately apply concepts to new contexts.	I can consistently recall and demonstrate an understanding of previously learned concepts.	I cannot recall previously learned concepts.