

## Gettysburg College Philosophy and Film Seminar

### “The Thought of Terrence Malick”

#### Call for Abstracts

**April 8 & 9, 2016**

**Seminar Director:** Vernon W. Cisney,  
Visiting Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Gettysburg College

**Keynote Speaker:**  
Steven Rybin, Assistant Professor of Film Studies, Minnesota State University, Mankato  
*Author of Terrence Malick and the Thought of Film*

The Gettysburg College Philosophy Department, in cooperation with the Cinema and Media Studies Program, are delighted to announce the Gettysburg College Philosophy and Film Seminar, entitled “The Thought of Terrence Malick.” Evoking universal elements of the human experience, but in such a way as to provoke rich intellectual reflection, Malick’s films function as what Plato in the *Republic* calls ‘summoners’ of thought. In addition to narrative explorations of philosophical and religious questions, Malick’s works also employ notoriously unorthodox directorial techniques, garnering widespread critical acclaim and a great deal of controversy among popular audiences. His films thus provide myriad avenues of theoretical exploration and analysis, from the philosophical to the cinematic and aesthetic, the psychological, theological, and cultural.

The Gettysburg College Philosophy and Film Seminar will be held on the campus of Gettysburg College in historic Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, just one hour from Baltimore and ninety minutes from Washington, D.C. The vision of the seminar is to provide an intimate setting where collegial and rigorous intellectual enrichment of an interdisciplinary nature can take place. In the true spirit of the liberal arts, we invite submissions of abstracts from across the spectrum of academic disciplines.

Suggested questions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- How do Malick’s films speak to America’s founding myths, and to the relation between those founding myths and contemporary understandings of family and home?
  - What is the significance of the feminine narration of Malick’s early films?
  - In what ways does the relation between time and memory transform across the body of Malick’s work?
  - What do Malick’s films reveal about the human impulse toward cruelty, violence, and transgression?
  - Are there unique ways in which Malick’s work is capable of *thinking* philosophically, beyond the transposition of textual argument into a cinematic medium?
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## **Seminar Details and Submission Instructions**

**Dates and Events:** The seminar will take place on Friday and Saturday, April 8 & 9, 2016. In addition to the seminar sessions, there will be a public keynote address delivered by Prof. Steven Rybin; a Gettysburg College Student Panel, titled 'Visions of America in Malick's Work'; and a public film screening. To ensure the intimate collegiality of the event, we will accept no more than twelve participants to the seminar. For this reason, we ask that seminar participants plan to attend all associated events over the course of April 8 and 9.

**Format:** To optimize intellectual enrichment, the primary format of the seminar will be discussion, as opposed to presentation. Accepted papers will be collected and distributed to seminar participants one week prior to the seminar, to allow a basic familiarity with the arguments in advance. The participant's allotted time at the seminar will then be forty-five minutes, ten of which will be devoted to the presentation of key passages and elements of the argument. The remaining thirty-five minutes will be dedicated entirely to discussion. With this in mind, in preparing an abstract, participants should think in the direction of approximately 12-15 pages for their papers.

**Travel and Costs:** There is no registration fee for the seminar, and shuttle transportation to and from the airport in either Washington, D.C. or Baltimore will be provided at no cost to seminar participants. In addition to light breakfasts, there will be light snacks, lunches, and dinners provided on the days of the seminar (April 8 & 9). As the events span the entirety of both days, participants traveling by air will want to plan to arrive on April 7 and depart on April 10, though we also encourage extending your stay should you wish to visit the battlefield or the Gettysburg National Cemetery. The GCPFS has blocked rooms at a conference rate, discounted for seminar participants, at the Gettysburg Hotel in the heart of downtown Gettysburg, just a few blocks from campus.

**Please submit detailed abstracts of no more than 600 words, in .doc or .pdf format, to the seminar director, Vernon Cisney, at [gcpfs@gettysburg.edu](mailto:gcpfs@gettysburg.edu), no later than midnight, January 3, 2016. Any questions may be so directed as well. In the abstract, please include title, author name and institutional affiliation, and contact information.**

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