



Call for Proposals

Faith, Film and Philosophy

“Of Love & Friendship: The Films of Whit Stillman”

October 13th & October 14th, 2017

Gonzaga University’s *Faith and Reason Institute* is pleased to announce the annual Seminar on Faith, Film and Philosophy, entitled **“Of Love & Friendship: The Films of Whit Stillman.”** The expatriot director will be our special guest. He will give a public talk on Thursday evening (12 October 2017) and participate in a Q&A after a viewing of one of his films on Friday evening (13 October 2017). Seminar members will have the chance to meet and interact with Stillman on Friday. In addition, Dr. Michael Foley (Great Texts Program, Honors College, Baylor University) will give a public lecture on Stillman on Wednesday evening (11 October 2017).

Since 1990, Whit Stillman has written, produced, and directed five films—*Metropolitan* (1990), *Barcelona* (1994), *The Last Days of Disco* (1998), *Damsels in Distress* (2011), and *Love & Friendship* (2016)—and has built a loyal following. He was nominated for an Academy Award (Best Writing, Screenplay Written Directly for the Screen) for his first film (*Metropolitan*), and has received multiple award nominations for his other films. His first three films are part of the prestigious Criterion Collection of “important classic and contemporary films.” In addition, Whit has published two novels—*The Last Days of Disco, With Cocktails at Petrossian Afterwards* (2000) and *Love & Friendship: In Which Jane Austen’s Lady Susan Vernon Is Entirely Vindicated* (2016)—and the screenplays for his first two films (*Barcelona & Metropolitan: Tales of Two Cities*, 1994). His first three films were the focus of the 2002 book *Doomed Bourgeois in Love: Essays on the Films of Whit Stillman* (ISI Books), edited by Mark Henrie.

All of his films are comedies that take up moral, political, and social issues in the modern world. Almost all of the films are focused on upper middle class young people as they attempt to establish their identity and character in a world where they seem to have been largely set adrift. (The absence of parents is noticeable in most of his films.) Jane Austen’s presence seems always to be hovering over these films. The films’ wit (much like that in Austen’s best novels) is always sharp, but also almost always subtle and sly.

We invite paper proposals on any of Whit’s films, themes in his films, his television work, and his novels. Possible topics for seminar papers include the following, although proposals on other topics or questions of relevance are certainly welcome and encouraged.

- Humor and character development in *Metropolitan* (or any of the other films)

- The significance of the arts (especially music and dance) in Stillman's city
- Jane Austen as moralist and her role in Stillman's films
- Religion (or the lack thereof) in Stillman's filmic world
- Education in Stillman's films
- Self-deception in Stillman's work
- How Stillman's filmic treatment of some theme compares to some other director's treatment of that same theme
- Violence in Stillman's films
- Stillman's treatment of popular culture in his films

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 2017**, and should include title, author(s), institutional affiliation (if any), mailing address, email address, and the text of the proposal. The seminar will conduct rolling acceptances beginning on **19 May 2017**, responding to each individual proposal within a week. We will continue reviewing and responding to proposals made between 20 May 2017 and 30 June 2017 until the seminar is filled.

Seminar sessions will take place on Friday, October 13th, and Saturday, October 14th. **Public lectures and other events** associated with the seminar will take place in the days leading up to the seminar. All seminar participants are welcome at the public lectures and other events as well. Final details on these public events will be distributed before the conference begins.

The seminar and its associated public events are part of a series of 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.