

Holy Family University
School of Arts & Sciences

Semester:	Fall 2022	Location:	TBD
Course:	PSYC/PHIL XXX	Credits:	3
Days/Time:	T: on your own online (no class meeting), Th: XX-XX		
Instructors:	Jill M. Swirsky, Ph.D (jswirsky@holyfamily.edu), ETC 230 Patrick Casey, Ph.D (pcasey@holyfamily.edu), ETC 203		

Section 1: Course Information

Morality, Motivation, & the Multiverse: The Making of a Superhero



“Compromise where you can. Where you can't, don't. Even if everyone is telling you that something wrong is something right. Even if the whole world is telling you to move, it is your duty to plant yourself like a tree, look them in the eye, and say 'No, you move.’” – **Sharon Carter, Captain America: Civil War (2016)**

“Everyone fails at who they're supposed to be.... The measure of a person, of a hero, is how well they succeed at being who they are.” – **Frigga, Avengers: Endgame (2019)**

Catalog Description

Students, Assemble! This seminar-style course uses superhero movies to explore psychological and philosophical themes. We will examine some of the many ways superhero movies portray real-world phenomena (e.g., morality, freedom versus security, human development). Emphasis will be placed on finding, reading, and interpreting empirical articles and other primary sources.

Course Objectives and Rationale

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify prominent themes in psychology and philosophy (e.g., nature vs. nurture, freedom vs. security)
2. Explain how psychological and philosophical principles are applied in the media
3. Critically read and interpret the findings from research articles and other primary sources
4. Produce clear, effective written arguments
5. Demonstrate oral communication skills

About this Class

You may be wondering what we can learn from superheroes. What can fictional characters like Bruce Banner, Tony Stark, and Steven Strange teach us about the world and ourselves? This course aims to answer that, and related questions, by helping students identify relevant psychological and philosophical constructs present in a variety of superhero movies. Each week, students will critically read and engage with a series of scholarly sources related to that week's theme and movie (e.g., adolescent risk taking in *Spider Man*). Students will learn to identify prominent psychological and philosophical themes, as well as to explain how these principles can be applied to both real-world and fictional situations. Furthermore, they will gain valuable practice in reading, interpreting, and evaluating scholarly sources. By putting ourselves in the capes and super-suits of beloved characters, we can journey through the murky and mystical world of human behavior – and perhaps get to know ourselves (and our fellow humans) a little better. We chose to offer this course in a student-led discussion-based seminar to take advantage of everyone's diverse experiences. What makes this course great is hearing everyone's unique and personal interpretations of how the characters in our favorite superhero movies demonstrate what we learn about in classes. Join us on a quest through the multiverse as we seek to save the world... er.... learn about psychology and philosophy!

Your Instructors

This is a team-taught course which means you have not one but TWO professors! Dr. Swirsky is a psychologist and Dr. Casey is a philosopher, so our combined expertise will help you develop the most well-rounded view. We communicate regularly with each other about this course and what either of us says goes. In other words, if you get an answer you don't like from Dr. Swirsky.... do not go ask Dr. Casey the same question hoping for a different answer. Along those lines, it is very important that you include both of us on all email correspondence so we can stay in the loop. In other words, don't just e-mail Dr. Swirsky or Dr. Casey- email us both! We both want to hear from you :)

Dr. Casey's Email & Office Hour Policy

My office hours are in-person Monday (5:30-6:15), Wednesday, and Friday (5:30-6:30) and by appointment (which can be either in-person or online via WebEx). In-person office hours are held in the Cub Cafe in ETC. I try to respond to e-mails as soon as I can read them but I may take up to 24 hours, especially on the weekends and holidays. If I have taken longer than 24 hours, then this means that I have either (a) been abducted by aliens and require assistance, (b) won the lottery and have quit my job and you'll never see or hear from me again, or (c) I've somehow missed your e-mail. (c) is probably the most likely, so please follow up at that point.

Dr. Swirsky's Email & Office Hour Policy

My office hours are Mondays 9-3 or by appointment. To arrange a meeting, you can [sign up here](#) (please note the reason for the meeting to help me prepare!). If none of those dates/times work for you, e-mail me a list of SEVERAL days/times that work for you, and I will confirm with a meeting time and/or link. I respond quickly to emails on weekdays between the hours of 8 AM and 4 PM. This means that if you send me an email at night or on a weekend... I will likely not respond until the next business day!! Plan accordingly and do not wait until the last minute. Please review the "[Emailing professors: Etiquette and guidelines](#)" document. If you send me an e-mail with poor etiquette, I will bounce it back to you and ask you to revise because I want to help prepare you for the working world.

Materials

There is no textbook for this course, we will read journal articles posted on the course Canvas page. You will need access to Netflix, Disney+, and Amazon Prime to be able to view the movies for class. There are also some weeks where the movie will be available to rent for an additional fee on Amazon Prime. We encourage you to team up with classmates to view the movies to cut down on costs. When possible, we will arrange to make the film available to rent via DVD from the library. we include a link for each movie but you can feel free to watch it wherever you can (legally!) find it, just be sure it is the version indicated in the syllabus.

Recommended materials (also available on reserve in the library):

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Course Format:

This is a **blended course**, which incorporates face-to-face class time as well as online assignments. A blended model was chosen to give everyone sufficient time to interact with both the superhero media and the course readings. The (synchronous) face-to-face and (asynchronous) online sessions are designed to complement one another. There is no class meeting on Tuesdays, you will use that time to engage in activities outside of class. We will meet face-to-face every Thursday from 11:30 to 1:00. Every week, prior to our face-to-face meeting, you will be responsible for 1) reading the assigned articles 2) watching the assigned movie, and 3) posting to the discussion board. This work will prepare you for our in-person class discussion which will take place on Thursdays.

Sample timeline for weekly schedule & assignment submissions:

- Sunday, March 12 at 8:00 PM – students who are NOT leading discussion submit their discussion post to Canvas
- Tuesday, March 14 at 8:00 PM – discussion leaders submit discussion guide to Drs. Swirsky & Casey for review.
- Wednesday, March 15 by 12:00 PM – we will return the guide to leaders with feedback.
- Thursday, March 16 at 11:00 AM – leaders will submit final guide to Canvas
- Thursday, March 16 at 11:30 AM – leaders will lead in-class discussion. Non-presenting students are expected to actively participate.

Canvas

We have a website for the course on Canvas. A copy of this syllabus is available on the site, as well as additional information on each assignment (in the “start here” module). We will use Canvas very frequently to post important documents, assignments, rubrics, grades and links, respond to discussion board questions, as well as to make announcements. Therefore, it is your responsibility to check the course’s Canvas site frequently, in addition to your Holy Family email. All graded work and information will be submitted and posted on the course Canvas site. **NOTE***** Canvas will not send you an email that announcements have been posted or that you have received a message in your inbox unless you tell Canvas to do so (go to Canvas’s settings to change your preferences as to what types of correspondence you would like to receive).

Section 2: Assignments & Course Requirements

*** Graded work is typically returned within 3-5 days from submission.

1) Discussion board post (10 posts x 10 points each, 100 points total)

For each week, students will submit 1 discussion post/question related to the readings for the week. Discussion posts should involve an integration of ideas across the readings for the week, as well as how they connect to that week’s movie. Posts that focus on issues related to only one source will not receive full credit. Posts should not just summarize an article/movie (we all read/watched them too!) but should involve a critical analysis of the readings. In other words, demonstrate that you really thought about the media! We will provide feedback on posts to make sure you are on the right track. These posts are intended as low-stakes assignments to make sure everyone is thinking critically about the media and key concepts for the week. Posts should be submitted to the discussion board on Canvas (under each week’s module) by **8 PM Sunday** to allow adequate time for the class discussion leader to organize the questions. There are 13 topics, but you do not need to post when you are the discussion leader. Additionally, the lowest two grades will get dropped, which means you can miss up to 2 weeks of posts and still earn full credit. Use your freebie weeks wisely! See Canvas for rubric.

2) Student-led discussions (100 points)

Each week, 2-3 students will lead one of the “student-led discussion” sessions noted in the class schedule (you’ll sign up for a date to lead on Canvas). Discussion leaders should work together to organize their classmates’ discussion posts into a thematic discussion guide. The guide should be thoughtfully organized by theme and contain 3-5 overarching points of interest about the topics addressed in the weeks’ readings/movie. Within each overarching point, please identify at least 5 questions to pose to your peers in discussion. It’s ok to use some of the questions raised in the discussion boards, but please give credit to whoever came up with the idea! Guides should begin with a brief overview/discussion of 3-5 key terms/concepts provided by the instructors. Additionally, please prepare at least one activity related to the week’s theme to engage the class. Discussion leaders should be prepared to actually discuss, answer, or give opinions about each question

or point of interest they develop. Discussion leaders should submit the guide via e-mail by **Tuesday at 8 PM**. We will make suggestions for changes by Wednesday at 12 PM, then the final guide is due via Canvas by **Thursday at 11:00 AM** (only ONE leader should submit). We will take a participatory role in the discussions (and will guide and redirect as needed), and we expect the student leaders to be the ones “driving” the conversation! See Canvas for rubric.

3) Class participation (10 weeks X 10 points each week = 100 points total).

You have amazing thoughts, and we all want to hear them! This is a seminar course, so attendance and participation are necessary to make it a great experience. To really think critically about the material, it is so important for us all to dig into the issues at hand and share our unique perspectives. Attending and participating in class is critical to helping us identify the science hiding in our superhero stories... and it helps build oral communication skills as well! Attendance will be taken at the start of each class period via a sign in sheet and document your comments during discussion. Quality and relevance, as well as quantity of participation contribute to your participation grade each week. If speaking up in class is a struggle for you, come see us - we have lots of tips and tricks to make it easier. There are 13 weeks of discussion, but you will not receive a participation grade for the week you lead, the lowest 2 participation grades will get dropped. In other words, you can miss up to two weeks of class and still earn full participation points. See Canvas for rubric.

4) Final paper (150 points)

For the final paper, students will choose a superhero movie we haven’t covered in class. Be creative – we love to see what stories “speak” to you. If you’re not sure if your movie counts as a “superhero movie”, just ask us! Please identify 3 themes (e.g., nature versus nurture, good vs. evil) present in the movie and will write a 5-7 page paper explaining the themes and discussing how they are portrayed in the movie. For each theme, select at least 2 empirical articles to support your point (that means at least 6 articles total). See Canvas for rubric.

5) Final paper outline (50 points)

Students will submit an outline of the final paper for instructor feedback. Outlines should be 1-2 pages double spaced. Bullet points are fine but remember - the more detail you give us, the more feedback we can give you! See Canvas for rubric.

6) Course reflection (complete/incomplete)

Students will submit a 1-2 page double spaced reflection of the course, due during the finals period. This paper should include 1) your favorite thing about the course, 2) something you would change and why, and 3) 3 things you learned.

Section 3: Grading Policies

Grading Policy

Grading will be consistent with the Holy Family grading system:

<i>Letter Grade</i>	<i>Equivalent</i>	<i>Per Credit</i>
A	94 – 100	4.0
A-	90 – 93	3.7
B+	87 – 89	3.3
B	83 – 86	3.0
B-	80 – 82	2.7
C+	77 – 79	2.3
C	70 – 76	2.0
D+	65 – 69	1.5
D	60 – 64	1.0
F	59 and below	0

Grades

All grades will be posted on Canvas. Final letter grades will be assigned using the Holy Family University grading scale as listed in the University Catalog. Your final course grade will be determined by the **5 criteria** listed below. To calculate

your grade, add up all the points you have earned (including any extra credit), divide it by the total number of points possible (500), and multiply by 100. Then use the above chart to find the corresponding letter grade. For example, if you received 437 points for the semester you would compute the following: $437/500 = .874 * 100 = 87.4\% = B+$.

Assignment	# points	% of grade
1. Discussion board post (10 weeks X 10 points each)	100	20
2. Discussion leader (1 time during semester)	100	20
3. Class participation (10 weeks X 10 points each)	100	20
4. Final paper	150	30
5. Final paper outline	50	10
6. Course reflection	Completion only	Completion only
Total Points	500	100%

Grid for Assessment

Course Outcome Objectives	Evaluation Methods	Grading Instruments
1. Identify prominent themes in psychology and philosophy (e.g., nature vs. nurture, freedom vs. security)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final paper/outline Discussion questions Class participation Discussion leader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of in-class participation Rubrics for discussion questions, discussion leader, and final paper
2. Explain how psychological and philosophical principles are applied in the media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final paper/outline Discussion questions Class participation Discussion leader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of in-class participation Rubrics for discussion questions, discussion leader, and final paper
3. Critically read and interpret the findings from research articles and other primary sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final paper/outline Discussion questions Class participation Discussion leader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of in-class participation Rubrics for discussion questions, discussion leader, and final paper
4. Produce clear, effective written arguments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final paper/outline Discussion questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rubrics for discussion questions and final paper
5. Demonstrate oral communication skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class participation Discussion leader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of in-class participation Rubric for discussion leader

Section 4: Course & University Policies

Title IX

Please refer to *HFU Title IX Policies* on our website for detailed information for detailed information. Please be aware of the following:

Reporting and Confidentiality

Your instructor is considered a responsible employee which means that she must report to the Title IX coordinator all relevant details about the alleged sexual violence shared by the complainant. To the extent possible, information reported to a responsible employee will be shared only with people responsible for handling the University's response to the report.

Confidential Resources

For those 18 or older, who are not yet prepared to make a report or pursue a complaint under this Policy, the University provides confidential professional and pastoral counseling. Conversations with professional and pastoral counselors are confidential. You may connect with persons in these offices as noted:

Name	Phone	Email
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Counseling Services	267-341-3222	counselingcenter@holyfamily.edu
Campus Ministry	267-341-3261	campusministry@holyfamily.edu
Health Services	267-341-3262	healthservices@holyfamily.edu

Center for Academic Enhancement

The Center for Academic Enhancement ([CAE](#)) is located in the library on the second floor. The purpose of the CAE is to provide support services for students for their coursework. In many cases they can link students who need extra help in a course with a peer tutor. Many of these peer tutors are students who have been recommended by faculty to serve as tutors. If a tutor has not been identified for the course (or is not available that semester) we are happy to try and find another student who can serve as a tutor. Using a tutor or services from the CAE does not mean you should not come to see us for extra help as well. For more information about the CAE and the wide range of services they provide for students please contact the CAE at cae@holyfamily.edu or (267-341-3326).

Academic Integrity Policy

The University's policy on academic honesty is available for review in the current Undergraduate Catalog and Graduate Catalog. Both documents are available in print (School Office) and on the University's [website](#). Violations of the University's standards in any form (including but not limited to plagiarism) as described therein or otherwise identified will not be tolerated. Plagiarism and/or cheating on any assignment will not be tolerated. In the event of plagiarism or cheating, appropriate university guidelines will be followed and/or disciplinary action will take place. Any proven incidents of academic dishonesty are subject to progressive sanctions. Responsibility for knowing and understanding the University's position and policies on academic integrity rests with each student.

You are welcome and encouraged to talk with classmates or with us about course material as you study. **However, your assignments should represent your own work and should not be completed with other students.** If students have consulted any resources for completion of an assignment (e.g., journals, books, or other media), such resources must be cited in American Psychological Association format in your reference section. Failure to cite such materials will be considered plagiarism. Undocumented use of information from the internet will be considered plagiarism. Cheating includes falsifying data, submitting work from other courses for credit in this course, submitting the work of someone else as your own, helping others to plagiarize or cheat from your own or someone else's work, or doing work for which another person is to receive credit. We reserve the right to refer any suspected cases of plagiarism, cheating, or collaboration to the University Disciplinary Committee.

Disability Disclosure Statement

Holy Family University serves a variety of learning styles and needs and is committed to accessibility. If you anticipate or experience any obstacles in this course, you may contact the Office of Disability Services for assistance (contact information below). In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Holy Family University's Office of Disability Services provides reasonable accommodations to qualified students with a disability (physical, psychological, learning, ADHD, chronic health-related, etc.). Please note that accommodation plans will not be retroactively implemented. More details regarding policy can be found in the Student Handbook, pages 17-19. The Office of Disability Services is located in the Campus Center room 206. Students may contact this office at 267-341-3231 or disAbilityservices@holyfamily.edu for information at any point. Canvas' statement of commitment to accessibility can also be found [here](#). Canvas also has a variety of options that help support students which include the following: **Screen Readers:** VoiceOver (for Macs), JAWS and NVDA for PCs. Please note that there is not screen reader support for Canvas. For Macs please use Safari to utilize VoiceOver, Internet Explorer 11 for JAWS and Firefox for NVDA. To access the screen reader option, use the [Canvas page navigation menu](#).

Late Assignments

It is your responsibility to complete all work in a timely fashion. Make-up assignments can be offered at our discretion, but we typically require advance notice and/or an extremely good reason, as well as documentation (e.g., doctors note). Missing an assignment without a valid excuse will result in a zero for that assignment. Late assignments may or may not be accepted at our discretion. It's in your best interest to look ahead and be proactive. If you see a conflict with a deadline, please inform us well in advance so we can plan accordingly. We understand that you are humans, and are balancing a

mountain of other expectations and responsibilities, but part of that responsibility involves learning how to handle situations when they come up. When in doubt, ALWAYS speak up before something is due – it’s much easier for us to be flexible and accommodating before the deadline. And... don’t wait until the last minute! Just don’t!

Appropriate Use of Course Materials

The materials distributed in this class and on Canvas may be protected by copyright and are provided solely for the educational use of students enrolled in this course. You are not permitted to redistribute them for purposes unapproved by the instructor; in particular, you are not permitted to post course materials or notes from lectures on commercial websites. Unauthorized use of course material may be considered academic misconduct. In addition, you are not permitted to video record or audio record lectures and discussions without written approval from the instructor. Please be aware that class content and discussions contain information for students enrolled in the course only and no other individuals except the enrolled student should be able to access or engage with class content, either during or outside of class meetings. You are also expected to observe and respect copyright laws regarding the media we view during this class.

Self-disclosure & Confidentiality

The educational process involves exposure to challenging topics and ideas. Some of these topics and ideas may provoke feelings of discomfort. If this should occur, please reach out to the free services offered on campus from Counseling Services Center (link to make appointment and/or contact information). There will be opportunities in this class to talk about yourself and share personal thoughts, feelings, opinions, ideas, and experiences both in class and in course assignments. You are responsible for monitoring your own level of comfort in self-disclosure. You will not be expected to disclose more about yourself than you choose to share. In the same respect, self-disclosure is a process that must be used with discretion and specific to course content and discussion. It should not detract from the lesson plan or normal group process of course learning objectives.

Both the instructor and students will need to protect the confidentiality of persons who may be described in various aspects of this course. Please practice good professional discretion at all times. Some of the material covered in readings, lectures, and discussions may be considered controversial or personal. Please be aware of this and exercise common sense, sensitivity, and courtesy in interactions related to class material. That said, sometimes things come up or come out, be respectful of this and do not discuss classmates’ personal information with others outside of class. Your comments are not confidential where state law requires the reporting of threats of harm, violence, or child abuse and neglect (from evidence or suspicion), and when information is subpoenaed by the courts.

Diversity Statement

This classroom supports an inclusive learning environment where diversity and individual differences are understood, respected, appreciated, and recognized as a source of strength. Students will:

- Be encouraged to be open and curious about others
- Demonstrate a willingness to examine one’s own beliefs in the context of others’ similar and dissimilar beliefs
- Demonstrate confidence in expressing one’s own views about diversity as well as sensitivity listening to and absorbing others’ views
- Demonstrate consideration of alternate philosophies about culture and society that demonstrates open-mindedness

Consideration, Professionalism, & Netiquette

You are expected to treat your fellow classmates in a professional and respectful manner. Be respectful. Everyone is entitled to their own opinion or point of view. Therefore, it is acceptable to disagree, but not to attack or degrade someone for their opinion or point of view. This includes but is not limited to inappropriate language, rude remarks and insulting comments, none of which will be tolerated. Students are expected to handle themselves in a professional manner during class discussions. If we feel that a statement made in the discussion board is disrespectful and/or derogatory, you will be contacted via email and given a warning for the first offense. Subsequent disrespectful and/or derogatory comments will be subject to progressive sanctions, such as failing the given assignment. Students should remember that others in the class may differ in religious/cultural background, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity or gender expression. This classroom is a space where people can feel respected and comfortable in their opinions.

Dropping the Class

The last day to “drop” a class is XXX. Course withdrawals are required by the deadline of XXX. If you stop coming to class without officially withdrawing from the class, you will likely receive a grade of “F”.

Section 5: Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Readings/Assignments
1	T	Get familiar with the course	Review syllabus & Canvas, sign up to lead discussion
	Th	Introduction to course; discussion of overarching themes	
2	T	Topic 1: <i>The Dark Knight</i> (P, \$3.99 to rent)	Discussion topic #1 readings: Langley, T. (2017, February 1). Beyond good and evil, beyond heroes and villains . Psychology Today. Steward, H. (1998). Akrasia . Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy.
	Th	Discussion topic #1	
3	T	Topic 2: <i>Captain America - Civil War</i> (P, D)	Discussion topic #2 readings: Antoni, D. (2018). Social Contract Theory . 1000 Word Philosophy. Hobbes, T. (1651). Leviathan . (Read Hobbes' Introduction, Ch. 13–14, Ch. 21). Langley, T. (2016, May 6). Freedom vs. security in Marvel's Captain America: Civil War . Psychology Today. Weltman, D. (2021) " Nasty, Brutish, and Short ": Hobbes on Life in the State of Nature . 1000 Word Philosophy.
	Th	Discussion topic #2	
4	T	Topic 3: <i>V for Vendetta</i> (P, \$3.99 to rent)	Discussion topic #3 readings: King, M.L., Jr. (1963). Letter from a Birmingham Jail . Locke, J. (1689). Second Treatise of Government . (Read Preface, Chs. 2–3, 8, 18–19) Van den Berg, F. (2009). V for Vendetta . Philosophy Now.
	Th	Discussion topic #3	
5	T	Topic 4: <i>Black Widow</i> (P, D)	Discussion topic #4 readings: Behrman , D. (2011, October 31). Should women use their sexuality to get ahead? Huffpost Brand, B. (2003). Trauma and women. <i>Psychiatric Clinics</i> , 26(3), 759-779. https://doi.org/doi:10.1016/S0193-953X(03)00034-0 Diamond, S. A. (2014, May 10). The Psychology of Sexuality . Psychology Today. Li, H. (2022, June). Her Movie's Enlightenment and Gender Ideologies from the Female Characters in Marvel Films. In <i>2022 8th International Conference on Humanities and Social Science Research (ICHSSR 2022)</i> (pp. 434-438). Atlantis Press.
	Th	Discussion topic #4	

6	T	Topic 5: Unbreakable (P, \$3.49 to rent)	Discussion topic #5 readings: Casey, P. J. (2021). Nietzsche, Friedrich . The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Philosophy of Religion. Hendricks, S. (2018). The meaning of life according to Nietzsche . Big Think.
	Th	Discussion topic #5	
7	T	Topic 6: Spiderman: Homecoming (P, \$2.99 to rent)	Discussion topic #6 readings: Do, K. T., Sharp, P. B., & Telzer, E. H. (2020). Modernizing conceptions of valuation and cognitive-control deployment in adolescent risk taking. <i>Current Directions in Psychological Science</i> , 29(1), 102-109. Duell, N., & Steinberg, L. (2019). Positive risk taking in adolescence. <i>Child Development Perspectives</i> , 13(1), 48-52. Lumen Learning (n.d.). Teens and risk-taking behavior . Cherry, K. (2022, June 22). Identity vs. role confusion in psychosocial development . Verywell Mind.
	Th	Discussion topic #6	
8	T	Topic 7: Ant Man (P, D)	Discussion topic #7 readings: Keene, D. E., Smoyer, A. B., & Blankenship, K. M. (2018). Stigma, housing and identity after prison. <i>The Sociological Review</i> , 66(4), 799-815. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038026118777447 Luther, K. (2016). Stigma management among children of incarcerated parents. <i>Deviant Behavior</i> , 37(11), 1264-1275. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01639625.2016.1170551 Nickerson, C. (2022, January 23). Recidivism: Definition, causes and examples . Simply Psychology. Martorano, G. (2016, July). How I spent 32 years in prison . [Video]. TEDxPenn
	Th	Discussion topic #7	Outline due (11:59 PM)
9	T	Topic 8: Guardians of the Galaxy (P, D)	Discussion topic #8 readings: Mills, K. I. (Host). (2022, March). How our siblings influence our lives (No. 180) [Audio podcast episode]. In <i>Speaking of Psychology</i> . American Psychological Association Morin, A. (2022, August 9). The 4 types of parenting styles and how kids are affected . VeryWell Mind. Scott, E. (2021, April 6). How to handle the stress of adult sibling rivalry . VeryWell Mind. Vallie, S. (2022, August 25). What to know about grieving the death of a child . WebMD
	Th	Discussion topic #8	
10	T	Topic 9: The Incredible Hulk (P, \$3.99 to rent; 2008 version – NOT the one on Disney+)	Discussion topic #9 readings: Bergman, M. (2019, January 9). Perspectives on Gene Editing . The Harvard Gazette. (Read the first section and “Human Genome Editing: Somatic vs. Germline.” Knoepfler, P. (2017). The ethical dilemma of designer babies . [Video]. TEDxVienna.

			Newson, A. J. & Wrigley, A. (2020). Genetic modification . Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780415249126-L133-2
	Th	Discussion topic #9	
11	T	Topic 10: Dr. Strange (P, D)	Discussion topic #10 readings: Langley, T. (2021, February 16). WandaVision: Complicated grief causes life complications . Psychology Today. Narcissism (n.d.). Psychology Today. Pitcho-Prelorentzos, S., & Mahat-Shamir, M. (2019). A shattered dream: Meaning construction in response to retirement from professional sport due to career-ending injury. <i>The Sport Psychologist</i> , 33(2), 110-118. https://doi.org/10.1123/tsp.2018-0069 Tian, D. (Host). (2022, May 5). On the origins of Dr. Strange: Narcissism, self-worth, & morality (No. 45) [Audio podcast episode]. In <i>The Masculine Psychology Podcast</i> . (YouTube)
	Th	Discussion topic #10	
12	T	Topic 11: Spiderman: No Way Home (S)	Discussion topic #11 readings: D'Olympio, L. (2016, June 2). The trolley dilemma: Would you kill one person to save five? The Conversation. Foot, P. (1984). Killing and Letting Die .
	Th	Discussion topic #11	
13	T	Topic 12: Black Panther (P, D)	Discussion topic #12 readings: Brittian, A. S. (2012). Understanding African American adolescents' identity development: A relational developmental systems perspective. <i>Journal of Black Psychology</i> , 38(2), 172-200. https://doi.org/10.1177/0095798411414570 . Langley, T. (2019, May 27). M'Baku of two worlds: Religious freedom vs. oppression . Psychology Today. Waldron, I. R. (2019). Archetypes of Black womanhood: Implications for mental health, coping, and help-seeking. In <i>Culture, Diversity and Mental Health-Enhancing Clinical Practice</i> (pp. 21-38). Springer, Cham.
	Th	Discussion topic #12	
14	T	Topic 13: Avengers: Endgame (P, D)	Discussion topic #13 readings: Blackburn, S., Swinburne, R., Hawthorne, J., Bilder, R., Law, S., & Moore, M. (2014). How does personal identity persist through time? Closer to Truth. Wallace, K. (2021). You are a network . Aeon. Kind, A. (2022, February 7). Identity across the multiverse . The Splintered Mind. Langley, T. (2019, May 7). Death instincts: Thanos, Thanatos, and Stekel (Not Freud) . Psychology Today.
	Th	Discussion topic #13	Final paper due (11:59 PM)
15		Finals week: Wrap-up	Course reflection due (11:59 PM)

The course schedule is subject to change at our discretion. If so, you will be notified by e-mail and an updated schedule will be posted on Canvas. Note that this is a blended course – we will ONLY meet live on Thursdays. You are expected to come to each class having read/viewed all the material for that week! *** P = Prime, D = Disney+, S=Starz

Section 7: Assignment Descriptions & Rubrics

Outline Description & Rubric (50 points)

Description: Students will submit an outline of the final paper for us to review and provide feedback on. Outlines should be 1-2 pages double spaced. Bullet points are fine but remember - the more detail you give us, the more feedback we can give you!

Criteria	Description	Points
Movie & Rationale	Movie and rationale are clear, movie is appropriate and available	10
Theme 1	Three (3) appropriate themes have been identified with thorough rationale for why each theme was chosen. For each theme, provide at least one (1) specific example from the movie.	10
Theme 2		10
Theme 1		10
3 sources (in APA style)	At least one (1) appropriate source has been identified for each theme and cited using correct APA style. Two (2) points each	6
Librarian meeting scheduled	Please provide proof (e.g., an email) that the meeting with the librarian has been scheduled/already happened	4
TOTAL		50

Final Paper Description & Rubric (150 points)

Suit up and grab your gear, it's time for the final paper. For this assignment, you will choose a superhero movie we did NOT discuss in class this semester. You have broad artistic freedom to identify a movie that speaks to you; with a few caveats: 1) The movie must be readily available via streaming/DVD, 2) It must be a superhero movie, although this can be broadly defined (hey, we counted *Unbreakable!*), and 3) It must be available via a legal recording. Unsure? Ask!

Once you've chosen your movie, you will choose three (3) psychological or philosophical themes present in the movie. For example, in *Thor* (2011) you might discuss family dynamics between Thor, Loki, and Odin. Or in *Wonder Woman* (2017) you might consider the utopian (and solely female) setting in which Diana was raised. Use the themes from each week's class as your guide, and if you're not sure... ASK US! Themes should be clearly defined. For example, if you choose utopian society in *Wonder Woman*, you need to explore the concept of utopia.

From there, you will explore those themes using evidence from empirical articles and examples from the movie to support your point. For EACH theme, you should select at least three (2) empirical articles to support your point – that means AT LEAST six (6) articles total. During the course of the semester, you must meet with a reference librarian to help you navigate Holy Family's research database and identify quality sources. We encourage you to meet in pairs or small groups, but individual meetings are fine. To sign up for a meeting, go to the [CAE scheduler](#). You may need to create an account. You'll see a dropdown menu that says "limit to", please choose APA format. From there, review the available meeting times and sign up for one that works for you.

The paper should be organized as follows:

- Introduction paragraph: identify your movie, summarize it briefly, provide a brief rationale for why you chose it, and BRIEFLY introduce the 3 themes you will discuss
- Supporting paragraphs for theme 1 (definitions, how/why it connects to the movie, specific examples from the movie, and empirical evidence to support your point)
- Supporting paragraphs for theme 2 (definitions, how/why it connects to the movie, specific examples from the movie, and empirical evidence to support your point)
- Supporting paragraphs for theme 3 (definitions, how/why it connects to the movie, specific examples from the movie, and empirical evidence to support your point)
- Conclusion paragraph: tie everything together and summarize your main points.

By the time you go to write the paper, you'll have lots of practice writing discussion posts. The supporting paragraphs in your paper should follow the same format you use when you write your integrative discussion posts each week. The final paper should be 5-7 pages and in proper APA format. Wheels up, team, the fate of the world (or, at least, your grade) depends on you!

Criteria	Description	Points
Theme 1	Theme is appropriate and makes sense with the selected movie. There is a clear rationale for why this theme was chosen. The theme was accurately and thoroughly defined, it is clear that the student understands the material. For each theme, specific examples are provided from the movie to back up the point, as well as supporting evidence from empirical sources.	25
Theme 2		25
Theme 3		25
Sources	For each theme, you must include at least two (2) empirical sources (six total).	12
Organization	The paper should be well thought out and organized following the rough outline below.	25
Writing & APA style	The paper should be clearly written, free of jargon, biased language, grammatical errors, and typos. Proper APA style is required, including in-text citations, reference section, and formatting throughout the paper.	25
Meeting with reference librarian	You must meet with a reference librarian to help you navigate Holy Family's research database and identify quality sources. Please complete and print the reference librarian meeting form available on Canvas and have it signed by the librarian when you meet. Include a scanned copy or picture of this form at the end of your paper	13
TOTAL		150

Participation Description & Rubric (10 points/week X 10 weeks = 100 points)

You have amazing thoughts, and we all want to hear them! This is a seminar course, so attendance and participation are necessary to make it a great experience. To really think critically about the material, it is so important for us all to dig into the issues at hand and share our unique perspectives. Attending and participating in class is critical to helping us identify the science hiding in our superhero stories... and it helps build oral communication skills as well! Attendance will be taken at the start of each class period via a sign in sheet and document your comments during discussion. Quality and relevance, as well as quantity of participation contribute to your participation grade each week. If speaking up in class is a struggle for you, come see us - we have lots of tips and tricks to make it easier. There are 13 weeks of discussion, but you will not receive a participation grade for the week you lead, the lowest 2 participation grades will get dropped. In other words, you can miss up to two weeks of class and still earn full participation points. See Canvas for rubric.

	5	3	1	0
Quantity of Participation	7 + contributions	5-6 contributions	3-4 contributions	Fewer than 3 contributions/absent
Quality of Participation	Gives substantial, relevant and thorough responses to classmate's comment or makes original contribution. Moves the discussion forward or in another relevant direction.	Responds to classmate's comments or makes own comments; makes substantial points that move the discussion forward or in another mostly relevant direction.	Thorough commentary, but does not move the discussion forward, points are off topic	Not substantive and/or does not move the discussion forward or in a new direction.

Discussion Board Description & Rubric (10 points/week X 10 weeks = 100 points)

For each week, students will submit 1 discussion post/question related to the readings for the week. Discussion posts should involve an integration of ideas across the readings for the week, as well as how they connect to that week's movie. Posts that focus on issues related to only one source will not receive full credit. Posts should not just summarize an article/movie (we all read/watched them too!) but should involve a critical analysis of the readings. In other words, demonstrate that you really thought about the media. We will provide feedback on posts to make sure you are on the right track. Posts should be submitted to the discussion board on Canvas (under each week's module) by **8 PM Sunday** to allow adequate time for the class discussion leader to organize the questions. There are 13 topics but you do not need to post when you are the discussion leader. The lowest two grades will get dropped, which means you can miss up to 2 weeks of posts and still earn full credit.

	2	1	0
Content Knowledge	Concepts and claims are well-supported by relevant details and/or examples.	Concepts and claims are adequately supported by relevant details and/or examples but could be improved.	Concepts and claims are not supported by relevant details and/or examples
Writing and organization	Ideas are presented in a clear and logical sequence. Related ideas are appropriately grouped and fully developed. Submissions are grammatically correct, posts with rare misspellings, format is easy to read/professional delivery.	Ideas are able to be followed, but could be improved. Organization is there but lacking, points may be slightly difficult to follow. Posts contain a few minor grammar errors or typos but are overall easy to read and professional.	The post and ideas are presented in an order that can only be followed with some effort. Poor spelling and grammar in posts; format is extremely hard to read would be deemed as unprofessional documentation by common business standards.
Critical thinking/analysis	Interprets topic in accurate and insightful ways. Uses information thoughtfully, in ways that are factually relevant and accurate; postings demonstrate analysis, might offer alternatives or creative viewpoints based on concrete evidence.	Accurately interprets topic; uses main points of information from resources/references; may repeat the ideas of others but attempts to offer new insight; response does not provoke significant new thinking or further discussion.	Makes errors in interpreting topics; opinion-based comments only; superficial commentary.
Thoroughness of response	Post addresses ALL the readings for the week and represents the key ideas accurately. Post is on topic and provides an interesting and thoughtful synthesis of the week's topic. Post does not just summarize articles.	Post addresses some of the readings for the week but may omit some. Post is mostly on topic but does not synthesize the readings in a meaningful way or just provides a summary of the articles.	Post only addresses one (or no) readings and may not relate to the week's topic. Remarks are not cohesive or summarizes other postings; unclear connection to topic; minimal expression of opinions or ideas.
Length/breadth	Post contains 2-3 clearly thought out, organized, and well-articulated paragraphs.	Post contains 1-2 paragraphs that are mostly thought out, organized, and well-articulated paragraphs.	Post is 1 paragraph or shorter in length and/or shallow in breadth

Discussion Leader Description & Rubric (100 points)

Description: Each week, 2-3 students will lead one of the “student-led discussion” sessions noted in the class schedule (you’ll sign up for a date to lead on Canvas). Discussion leaders should work together to organize their classmates’ discussion posts into a thematic discussion guide. The guide should be thoughtfully organized by theme and contain 3-5 overarching points of interest about the topics addressed in the weeks’ readings/movie. Within each overarching point, please identify at least five (5) questions to pose to your peers in discussion. It’s ok to use some of the questions raised in the discussion boards, but please give credit to whoever came up with the idea! Additionally, please prepare at least one activity related to the week’s theme to engage the class. Discussion leaders should be prepared to actually discuss, answer, or give opinions about each question or point of interest they develop. Discussion leaders should submit the guide via e-mail by **Tuesday at 8 PM**. We will make suggestions for changes, the final guide is due to Canvas by **Thursday at 12:00 PM** (only ONE leader should submit).

	10	5	3	0
Thoroughness of guide	Guide contained 3-5 overarching points of interest for discussion, along with at least 5 questions for each point. Guide covered a wide range of topics and integrated the discussion board posts in a way that was thoughtful and cohesive. Several specific points from the movie were incorporated throughout.	Guide contained 2-4 overarching points of interest for discussion or had fewer than 5 questions for each point. Guide covered an acceptable range of topics but could have been more in depth, and adequately integrated the discussion board posts. 1-2 specific points from the movie were incorporated throughout.	Guide contained 1-3 overarching points of interest for discussion or had fewer than 3 questions for each point. Guide covered a few topics but more were needed for good discussion. Discussion board posts were not integrated. The movie was barely incorporated throughout.	Guide contained fewer than 1-3 points of interest. Posts were not integrated. Movie was not incorporated.
Organization of guide	Guide was very well organized in a way that led to thoughtful and stimulating discussion. The overarching points made sense and were distinct enough from one another to generate broad conversation. The points were organized to flow into one another. Guide is organized by theme rather than by study.	Guide was organized acceptably to provoke discussion. The overarching points may not have been distinct enough from one another to generate broad conversation, leading to repetition. Guide is mostly organized by theme rather than by study.	Guide was barely organized at all, the overarching points were unclear and barely related each other or the readings. Guide is organized by study rather than by theme.	Guide was not organized at all, the overarching points were unclear and did not relate to each other or the readings. Guide is organized by study rather than by theme.
Accuracy	The guide accurately interpreted the themes and posts for the week in a way that demonstrates the discussion leader(s) mastery of the concepts. It was extremely clear that the leader(s) understands how the week’s movie demonstrates the class concepts.	Guide adequately interpreted the themes and posts for the week, although there may have been a few minor mistakes, suggesting that the discussion leader(s) have a moderate grasp on the concepts. It was marginally clear that the leader(s) understands how the week’s movie demonstrates the class concepts.	Guide did not accurately interpret the themes and posts for the week, suggesting that the moderate leader(s) barely understand the material being discussed that week. It was not clear that the leader(s) understands how the week’s movie demonstrates the class concepts.	Guide was completely off base regarding interpreting the themes and posts for the week, suggesting that the moderate leader(s) do not understand the material being discussed that week. The leader(s) do not understand how the week’s movie demonstrates the class concepts.
Leading discussion	Student asked thoughtful follow-up questions, made strong and relevant points, kept conversation flowing, and engaged with their peers during discussion.	Student asked a few thoughtful questions, although struggled to keep the conversation flowing. Moderate engagement with peers during discussion.	Student asked very few questions or barely engaged with peers during discussion.	Student did not ask any thoughtful questions or did not engage with peers during discussion.
Activity	Activity was engaging and relevant to the week’s topic and themes.	Activity was acceptable but could have been more engaging and/or relevant to the week’s topic and themes.	Activity was not relevant to the week’s topic and themes.	There was no activity prepared.