



O.P. Jindal Global University
A Private University Promoting Public Service



**Jindal School of
Psychology & Counselling**
India's First Transdisciplinary Psychology School

Psychological Perspectives in Cinema

(School Specific Elective Course)

Course/ Subject Code: PCCU-03-BAP-PPCA082

Spring Semester - 2026

Jindal School of Psychology and Counselling B.A. (Hons.)

O.P. Jindal Global University

(Institute of Eminence, Deemed to be University)

Sonipat, India - 131001

Course Information

Course Duration: 15 weeks

Credit Hours: 4 credit points

Meetings: TBD

Location: TBD

Prerequisites: Interest in psychology and cinema; no prior film studies required

Equivalent Courses:

Exclusive Courses:

Instructor Information

Instructor: Dr Sarah Ghani

Biography: Dr. Sarah Ghani is currently an Associate Professor at Jindal School of Psychology & Counselling at O. P. Jindal Global University. She holds a Ph.D. in History of Psychiatry from the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS), Bangalore. Her doctoral research, which was funded by the 'Wellcome Trust, United Kingdom', focused on tracing the History of Psychiatry in India pertaining to the Pre-Independence Era and understanding the underpinnings of a native-run hospital. It also focused on studying the impact of colonisation on the History of Psychiatry in India. Her research interests are diverse, such as the History of Psychiatry, History of Mental Health, Public Mental health, Community Psychiatry, Clinical psychology, Social psychology, Animal-assisted therapy, Psychoanalysis, Dream analysis, Emotional regulation

Email: sarah.ghani@jgu.edu.in

Phone:

Office: FOB, 08, West, 1st Floor

Office Hours: By appointment

Homepage: <https://scholars.jgu.edu.in/display/n14952>

1. Course Description:

Psychological Perspectives in Cinema is an elective that examines the relationship between film and psychology. The course treats cinema not only as entertainment but also as a cultural text that reflects, reinforces, and challenges psychological theories and social realities. Students will explore how films portray the human mind, emotions, and behavior, while also learning to apply key psychological frameworks including psychoanalysis, archetypes and myth, developmental psychology, social influence, trauma and memory, empathy, and mental health stigma to the analysis of characters, narratives, and cinematic techniques.

Across 14 weeks, the course combines lectures, screenings, discussions, and creative projects to encourage both critical and imaginative engagement. Students will watch and analyze scenes from films ranging from classics to contemporary works, exploring how

cinema represents unconscious desires, identity struggles, social conformity, collective trauma, and emotional responses. Through assignments, debates, and a final group video project, students will strengthen their ability to bridge theory and practice by connecting abstract psychological concepts to specific film scenes.

2. Course Learning Objectives:

By the end of the course, students will:

1. Apply psychological theories to analyze characters, narratives, and cinematic techniques.
2. Critically examine media portrayals of mental health, trauma, and social identity.
3. Understand how films influence collective memory and social behavior.
4. Engage in creative, research-based responses through essays, debates, and group work.
5. Connect psychological frameworks with everyday media consumption.

3. Scheme of Evaluation and Grading

The course will adopt a continuous assessment procedure for evaluation. The breakdown of assessments is as follows:

Task	Marks
Attendance and Class Participation	10%
Assignment 1: Video Presentation	30%
Assignment 2: In Class exam	30%
Assignment 4: Written In class Final Exam (Closed)	30%
Total	100

Assessments Structure:

Assignment 1 (30%): Group Video Project & Presentation

In this assignment, students will work in groups to create a 5–7 minute video that demonstrates their ability to apply psychological theory to cinema. The video should combine film clips, analysis, and creativity: students may use scenes from existing films, or they may enact and record their own short scenes to illustrate psychological concepts studied in class (e.g., psychoanalysis, archetypes, social influence, trauma, empathy). Voiceover, on-screen text, or dialogue should clearly connect the chosen scenes to the relevant psychological theory.

In addition to the video, each group will submit a 500-word reflection describing:

- How psychological theory was applied in the project
- The creative choices made in selecting or enacting scenes
- The roles and contributions of each team member
- What the group learned about both cinema and psychology through the process

Tentative Submission Date:

Assignment 2 (30%): In class Exam

Class Participation (10%)

Class participation will be decided at the end of the semester depending on individual performance in class.

End semester exam (30%)

This will be a closed in-class written exam.

Students Responsibilities

Students are required to submit all the assignments on a particular date and time. Class participation will include but will not be limited to participating in class discussions based on the lecture slides and pre-reading material assigned to them, asking questions, doubts, and having healthy interaction with their fellow classmates.

Grade Definition

The percentages will be converted to grades and grade value by the examination office using the following breakdown:

Grade	Percentage of Marks	Grade Value	Grade Description
O	80% and above	8	Outstanding: Exceptional knowledge of the subject matter, thorough understanding of issues; ability to synthesize ideas, rules, and principles; and extraordinary critical and analytical ability.
A+	75 - 79.75%	7.5	Excellent: Sound knowledge of the subject matter, thorough understanding of issues; ability to synthesize ideas, rules, and principles; and critical and analytical ability.

A	70 - 74.75%	7	Very Good: Sound knowledge of the subject matter, organizational capacity; ability to synthesize ideas, rules, and principles; critically analyze existing material and originality in thinking.
A-	65 - 69.75%	6	Good: Good understanding of the subject matter, ability to identify issues and provide balanced solutions to problems; good critical and analytical skills.
B+	60 - 64.75%	5	Fair: Average understanding of the subject matter, limited ability to identify issues and provide solutions to problems; reasonable critical and analytical skills.
B	55 - 59.75%	4	Acceptable: Adequate knowledge of the subject matter to go to the next level of the study; passable critical and analytical skills.
B-	50 - 54.75%	3	Marginal: Limited knowledge of the subject matter and irrelevant use of materials; poor critical and analytical skills.
P1	45 - 49.75%	2	Pass 1: Pass with a passable understanding of the subject matter; lacking in critical and analytical skills.
P2	40 - 44.75%	1	Pass 2: Pass with a rudimentary understanding of the subject matter; lacking in critical and analytical skills.
F	Below 40%	0	Fail: Poor comprehension of the subject matter; poor critical and analytical skills; and marginal use of the relevant materials. Requires the student to repeat the course.
P/F	Pass / Fail		Pass or Fail: Pass is awarded a final grade of 40% or above. Fail reserved for the final grade below 40%. This option is only available for semesters taught online (covid).
I	Incomplete		Incomplete: Issued due to extenuating circumstances that prevent the student from completing internal or external marks. If an 'I' grade is assigned, the JSPC Academic Committee will suggest a schedule for the completion of work or a supplementary examination.

4. Academic Integrity

Punctuality and Conduct

JSPC conducts all classes on a foundation of professionalism. Students are expected to be present in class and seated within five minutes of the class start time. Students arriving after a ten-minute window from the designated start time will be refused entry/attendance. A classroom is a place for free expression and critical-thinking students must respect the opinions expressed and actively participate in classroom discussions.

Participation and Attendance Policy

Attending classes will help students understand and master the concepts and their applications. Thus, we encourage you to attend all classes and avoid missing them until and unless very necessary. Students with less than 75% attendance will not pass this course.

Phone Usage

Phones are not allowed during classroom hours. The use of phones by students may result in their removal by the course instructor. Repeated violations may result in an academic discipline.

Plagiarism

In line with JGU policy, JSPC operates a zero-tolerance approach to plagiarism. The unacknowledged use of material by others within your work is a violation of academic integrity, and all reported cases will be investigated for potential disciplinary action.

Disability Support

JGU endeavours to make all its courses accessible to students. The Disability Support Committee (DSC) has identified conditions that could hinder a student's overall well-being. These include physical and mobility-related difficulties, visual impairment, hearing impairment, mental health conditions, and intellectual/learning difficulties, e.g., dyslexia and dyscalculia. Students with any known disability needing academic and other support are required to register with the Disability Support Committee (DSC) by following the procedure specified at <https://jgu.edu.in/disability-support-committee/>

Students who need support may register any time during the semester up until a month before the end-semester exam begins. Those students who wish to continue receiving support from the previous semester must re-register within the first month of the semester. Last-minute registrations

and support might not be possible as sufficient time is required to make the arrangements for support.

The DSC maintains strict confidentiality about the identity of the student and the nature of their disability, and the same is requested from faculty members and staff as well. The DSC takes a strong stance against in-class and out-of-class references made about a student's disability without their consent and disrespectful comments referring to a student's disability.

All general queries are to be addressed to disabilitysupportcommittee@jgu.edu.in

Mental Health Services

Sukoon is physically located on the JGU campus and provides confidential and professional support through qualified counsellors, therapists, and mental health professionals. Their services are integrated with cutting-edge technology, including individual counselling, early screening, crisis intervention, and specialised workshops focused on resilience building, managing academic stress, and mental health awareness.

The centre is open 24/7 and staffed by trained psychologists, backed by Sukoon's extensive network of inpatient psychiatric facilities and emergency services, ensuring seamless care for all members of JGU.

Sukoon's approach is holistic and trauma-informed, creating a safe, non-judgmental environment that prioritises emotional safety and confidentiality. Their evidence-based methods integrate psychotherapy, art therapy, recreational activities, and progress monitoring to support mental wellness comprehensively. Sukoon also offers a 24/7 helpline and virtual consultations, ensuring all members of JGU can access care on campus or remotely at any time.

24/7 Physical and Virtual Availability: Sukoon's mental health services will be operational 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with a physical presence on campus as well as virtual consultations to ensure you have access to support whenever you need professional support.

Helpline Continuity: The 24/7 helpline you rely on will remain active and unchanged, now operated as the Sukoon Helpline.

Safe Space and Respect for Diversity

This course may discuss issues that could result in distress or provoke emotional responses in students. To make sure that all students collectively benefit from the course, it is incumbent on everyone to maintain respect towards one another. All JSPC program faculty, staff, and students shall maintain respect for differences including, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age religion/spirituality, ability, socioeconomic status, and culture. Each person will be responsible and accountable for creating and maintaining a culture of respect at every level of the program. This does not mean that you must feel restrained about what you feel and say- rather it is about creating a safe space for everyone to speak and learn without inhibitions or fear.

5. Keyword Syllabus:

Psychoanalysis, Archetypes, Identity, Trauma, Empathy, Representation, Cinema

6. Course Material

- Freud, S. (1900). The Interpretation of Dreams. Full text (PsychClassics):
<https://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Freud/Dreams/dreams.pdf>
- Mulvey, L. (1975). Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema (PDF):
<https://www.amherst.edu/system/files/media/1021/Laura%20Mulvey%20Visual%20Pleasure.pdf>
- Pederson, T. (2018). Psychoanalysis and Hidden Narrative in Film (PDF):
<https://bgsp.edu/app/uploads/2021/10/PEDERSON-PSYCHOANALYSIS-AND-HIDDEN-NARRATIVE-IN-FILM-book.pdf>
- Jung, C. G. (Selections). The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious (PDF excerpt):
https://www.jungiananalysts.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/C.-G.-Jung-Collected-Works-Volume-9i_-The-Archetypes-of-the-Collective-Unconscious.pdf
- Campbell, J. (1949). The Hero with a Thousand Faces. Internet Archive PDF copies:
[https://ia601406.us.archive.org/30/items/Birdsfrogsandmirrors/JosephCampbell%20-](https://ia601406.us.archive.org/30/items/Birdsfrogsandmirrors/JosephCampbell%20)

%20The%20Hero%20With%20a%20Thousand%20Faces%20Commemorative%20Edition.pdf

- Erikson, E. H. (1950). *Childhood and Society* (Internet Archive reading/copy):
<https://archive.org/details/childhoodandsoci00erik>
- Bem, S. (1981). *Gender Schema Theory*. ResearchGate (author-uploaded copy):
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232559496_Gender_Schema_Theory_A_Cognitive_Account_of_Sex_Typing
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). *An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict* (PDF):
<https://alnap.cdn.ngo/media/documents/tajfel-turner-1979-compressed.pdf>
- Bandura, A., Ross, D., & Ross, S. A. (1961). *Transmission of aggression through imitation* (classic reprint): <https://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Bandura/bobo.htm>
- Asch, S. E. (1955). *Opinions and Social Pressure* (PDF):
<https://pdodds.w3.uvm.edu/teaching/courses/2009-08UVM-300/docs/others/everything/asch1955a.pdf>
- Milgram, S. (1963). *Behavioral Study of Obedience* (PDF):
<https://web.stanford.edu/class/polisci92n/readings/oct30.4.milgram.pdf>
- Brewin, C. R. (2007). *Autobiographical memory for trauma* — PubMed:
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/17454661/> (related UCL/revised PDFs available via UCL discovery)
- Rubin, D. C. (2008). *Memory in PTSD* (open access review):
<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC2597428/>
- Plantinga, C. (2021). *Collective Memory and the Rhetorical Power of the Historical Fiction Film* (PDF): <https://journals.publishing.umich.edu/gs/article/855/galley/36/view/>
- Decety, J., & Jackson, P. L. (2004). *The Functional Architecture of Human Empathy* — PubMed: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/15537986/> (author copies on Semantic Scholar/ResearchGate).
- Riess, H. (2017). *The Science of Empathy* (open access):
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5513638/>
- Corrigan, P. W. (2002). *Understanding the impact of stigma on people with mental illness* (open access): <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC1489832/>

- Wahl, O. F. (1995). Media Madness: Public Images of Mental Illness — Internet Archive reader: https://archive.org/details/mediamadnesspubl0000wahl_k3x0

7. Session Plan

Week	Topic / Chapter	Subtopics/ Readings	Activities / In-class work
1	Introductory Class: Psychology, Cinema & Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Film as cultural & psychological text; • Intro to course. <p>Readings (Optional framing) Plantinga, C. (2021). 'Collective Memory and the Rhetorical Power of the Historical Fiction Film' — full PDF: https://journals.publishing.umich.edu/gsa/article/855/galley/36/view/</p>	Screening: short clips from The Truman Show etc.(discussion of self & reality).
2–3	Chapter 1 — Psychoanalytic Approaches & Film	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unconscious, • Dream-Work, • Symbolism, • Scopophilia & Gaze. <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freud, S. (1900). The Interpretation of Dreams — full text: https://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Freud/Dreams/dreams.pdf 	Close-reading: clip analysis from Black Swan etc; short group exercise: identify 'dream logic' in a 3-minute scene.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mulvey, L. (1975). 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' (PDF): https://www.amherst.edu/system/files/media/1021/Laura%20Mulvey%2C%20Visual%20Pleasure.pdf • Pederson, T. (2018). Psychoanalysis and Hidden Narrative in Film (PDF): https://bgsp.edu/app/uploads/2021/10/PEDE-RSON-PSYCHOANALYSIS-AND-HIDDEN-NARRATIVE-IN-FILM-book.pdf 	
4–5	Chapter 2 — Jung, Archetypes & Narrative Psychology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Archetypes, • Collective Unconscious, • Hero's Journey. <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jung, C.G. — Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious (excerpt PDF): https://www.jungiananalysts.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/C.-G.-Jung-Collected-Works-Volume-9i_-The-Archetypes-of-the-Collective-Unconscious.pdf • Campbell, J. (1949). The Hero with a Thousand Faces (PDF): https://ia601406.us.archive.org/30/items/Birdsfrogsandmirrors/JosephCampbell%20-%20The%20Hero%20With%20a%20Thousand%20Faces%20Commemorative%20Edition.pdf 	Activity: map the Hero's Journey onto Star Wars (group mapping + presentation).
6–7	Chapter 3 — Development, Identity & Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erikson's psychosocial stages • identity formation, • gender schema, • social identity. <p>Readings:</p>	Activity: map character's identity via Erikson; media audit on gender portrayals.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erikson, E. — Childhood and Society (Internet Archive): https://archive.org/details/childhoodandsoci00erik • Bem, S. (1981). Gender Schema Theory (PDF): https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232559496_Gender_Schema_Theory_A_Cognitive_Account_of_Sex_Typing • Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. (1979). SIT chapter (PDF): https://alnap.cdn.ngo/media/documents/tajfel-turner-1979-compressed.pdf 	
8–9	Chapter 4 — Learning, Aggression & Social Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bandura (observational learning), • Asch (conformity), • Milgram (obedience). <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bandura et al. (1961). Bobo Doll study: https://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Bandura/bobo.htm • Asch, S. (1955). Opinions and Social Pressure (PDF): https://pdodds.w3.uvm.edu/teaching/courses/2009-08UVM-300/docs/others/everything/asch1955a.pdf • Milgram, S. (1963). Behavioral Study of Obedience (PDF): https://web.stanford.edu/class/polisci92n/readings/oct30.4.milgram.pdf 	Activity: Asch-style demo; Bandura modeling clip analysis.
10–11	Chapter 5 — Memory, Trauma & Representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autobiographical memory, • Trauma Narratives, • Collective Memory. <p>Readings:</p>	Activity: Screening & journaling — Memento, Schindler’s List etc.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brewin, C. R. (2007). Autobiographical memory for trauma: https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/17454661/ • Rubin, D. C. (2008). Memory in PTSD (open access): https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC2597428/ • Plantinga, C. (2021). Collective Memory in Historical Fiction Film (PDF): https://journals.publishing.umich.edu/g/article/855/galley/36/view/ 	
12	Chapter 6 — Emotion, Empathy & Audience Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empathy, • Catharsis, • Audience Emotions. <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decety & Jackson (2004). Empathy review (PubMed): https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/15537986/ • Riess, H. (2017). The Science of Empathy (open access): https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5513638/ • TEDx talk — Helen Riess: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=baHrcC8B4WM 	Activity: empathy mapping exercise with film clip.
13	Chapter 7 — Media, Mental Health & Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Film Portrayals of Mental Illness, • Stigma, • Recovery Narratives. <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corrigan, P. W. (2002). Stigma impact (open access): https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC1489832/ • Wahl, O. (1995). Media Madness (Internet Archive): https://archive.org/details/mediamadnesspub10000wahl_k3x0 	Debate: Do films help or hurt understanding of mental illness?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CMHA review on media & stigma: https://ontario.cmha.ca/wp-content/files/2012/07/mass_media.pdf	
14	Revision	Revision	