

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

*Psyches, Personae,
& Characters*

Human Selves in Film

Faith, Film, Philosophy Seminar
October 9-11, 2025



<https://www.gonzaga.edu/ffp2025seminar>

**Keynote speakers: Thomas Hibbs (Philosophy, Baylor University)
Vern Cisney (Interdisciplinary Studies, Gettysburg College)
Joel Mayward (Theology, George Fox University)**

Film offers a rich medium for exploring psychological aspects of human experience. Movie watchers can observe how characters emerge from the crucible of situation and action as they do in written fiction, but the audiovisual medium adds additional dimensions for displaying and revealing complexities of personality. And while written fiction facilitates narrators or characters themselves telling us about characters' inner lives, film has the power to *depict* inner lives not only indirectly through social interaction, facial expression, body language, and dialogue, but also directly through voiceovers, flashbacks, and visual representation of inner experience.

Examples of films that explore the multiple dimensions of selfhood are classic and recent character studies like *The Great Gatsby* (multiple versions) and *A Hidden Life*. Characters that have lives outside of film are realized in intriguing ways in historical, literary, or biblical epics such as *The Passion of the Christ*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and *Oppenheimer*. Mysterious selves appear enigmatically and remain just out of focus in films like *Pale Rider*, *Se7en*, or *Shutter Island*. Shattered, broken, and self-divided psyches stumble through chronicles of addiction and abuse like *Requiem for a Dream*,

Traffic, or *Notorious* or thrillers like *Taxi Driver*, *Memento* or the recent series *Severance*. Mask-wearing personae conceal themselves in *The Usual Suspects*, *The Dark Knight*, or *Mother*, while heroic characters emerge in films like *Saving Private Ryan*.

What possibilities for examining selfhood do films offer? How does film unveil the self? What films are particularly successful in revealing aspects of human psychology or psychological development? What can we learn about human selves from particular films? What films or directors develop promising analyses of human selfhood?

This set of questions is the focus of the **Faith, Film, and Philosophy 2025 seminar**, set for **October 9-11, 2025**, on the Gonzaga University campus in Spokane WA. The Seminar employs a unique approach in which 12-15 scholars read and discuss one another's papers in a collegial setting over a weekend. Each participant will have approximately ten minutes for a summary presentation and thirty-five minutes for questions, discussion, and feedback directly focused on his or her paper.

Individuals interested in participating in the seminar must submit a proposal of no longer than 500 words, in .doc, .docx, or .pdf format. Proposals should be submitted via email to the Director of the Faith & Reason Institute at faithandreason@gonzaga.edu no later than midnight on **Monday, August 18, 2025**. For further information please contact David H. Calhoun, Director, Gonzaga University Faith & Reason Institute at faithandreason@gonzaga.edu.

Things to know about the seminar:

- The seminar begins with a keynote address Thursday night at 7 pm and ends with a banquet on Saturday evening. Seminar participants are expected to attend all sessions from Thursday through Saturday
- **Cost:** There is no registration cost for the seminar. While participants are responsible for travel and lodging costs, all meals on Friday and Saturday of the seminar will be provided by the Faith & Reason Institute, including a concluding banquet
- **Travel stipend:** Each participant traveling to Spokane from a distance greater than 500 miles is eligible to apply for a travel stipend of \$300. Stipends are awarded based on the quality of the submitted proposal
- **Submission schedule:** Proposals are due Monday, August 18, 2025, at 12 midnight. Acceptances will be communicated by Friday, August 22. Final papers (target length 3000-3500 words) are due Wednesday, September 24, and will be distributed to seminar participants prior to the seminar