

## “Teaching *Firefly*”: Companion Material

Class Schedule for a Course on Joss Whedon and Philosophy  
by Professor James Rocha, Fresno State

The following schedule was used for a sophomore level philosophy course that was populated mostly by non-majors. The original idea for the course was to develop a popular culture philosophy course that would attract students from all over campus, which was meant to both introduce them to multiple philosophical ideas and theories and hopefully convince some of them to major or minor in philosophy. The course was quite successful at drawing Whedon fans from across the university (after a certain amount of advertising through posters and social media). Students were very engaged with both discussions of episodes and the readings.

Date	Show	Episode	Class Topic	Reading
M Week 1	Angel	2.15 “Reprise”	Intro	
W Week 1	Angel	4.22 “Home”	Intro	The Syllabus
M Week 2	Angel	5.4 “Hell Bound”	Ethics	
W Week 2	Angel		Ethics	Grinnell, Jason. 2011. “Aristotle, Kant, Spike, and Jayne.” In <i>The Philosophy of Joss Whedon</i> , 88-102. Edited by Dean A. Kowalski and S. Evan Kreider. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press.
M Week 3		No Class		Holiday
W Week 3	Angel	5.11 “Damage”	Torture	
M Week 4	Angel		Torture	Sussman, David. “What’s Wrong with Torture?” <i>Philosophy &amp; Public Affairs</i> 33.1 (2005): 1-33.
W Week 4	Angel	5.12 “You’re Welcome”	Death & Happiness	
M Week 5	Angel		Death & Happiness	Aristotle. 1999. <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> . Translated by Terence Irwin. Hackett. Read Book I (skip Chapter 6).
W Week 5	Angel	5.14 “Smile Time”	Rationality and Ethics	
M Week 6	Angel		Rationality and Ethics	Kant, Immanuel. 2012. <i>Groundwork</i> . Edited by Mary Gregor and Jens Timmermann. Cambridge University Press. Read Section 1.

Date	Show	Episode	Class Topic	Reading
W Week 6	Angel	5.15 "A Hole in the World"	Choices	
M Week 7	Angel		Choices	Le Guin, Ursula. 1993. "The ones who walk away from Omelas."
W Week 7	Angel	5.21 "Power Play"		
M Week 8	Angel			Reading Catch-Up Day
W Week 8	Angel	5.22 "Not Fade Away"	Anarchism	
M Week 9	Angel		Anarchism	Goldman, Emma. 1911. "Anarchism: What it Really Stands for." New York: Mother Earth Publishing Association.
W Week 9	Dr. Horrible	<i>Dr. Horrible's Sing-Along Blog</i>	Ethics	
M Week 10	Dr. Horrible		Ethics	Kowalski, Dean. 2011. "Plato, Aristotle, and Joss on Being Horrible." In <i>The Philosophy of Joss Whedon</i> , 71-87. Edited by Dean A. Kowalski and S. Evan Kreider. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press.
W Week 10	Firefly	1.2 "The Train Job"	Responsibility	
M Week 11	Firefly		Responsibility	Camus, Albert. 2007. "The Guest." In <i>Exile and the Kingdom</i> . Vintage.
W Week 11	Firefly	1.7 "Jaynes-town"	Political Philosophy	
M Week 12	Firefly		Political Philosophy	Lackey, Mercedes. 2004. "Serenity and Bobby McGee." In <i>Finding Serenity: Anti-Heroes, Lost Shepherds, and Space Hookers in Joss Whedon's Firefly</i> , 63-73. Edited by Jane Espenson. Dallas: BenBella Books.
W Week 12	Firefly	1.8 "Out of Gas"	Frontier Thesis	
M Week 13	Firefly		Frontier Thesis	Sturgis, Amy. 2011. "Just Get Us a Little Further." In <i>The Philosophy of Joss Whedon</i> , 24-38. Edited by Dean A. Kowalski and S. Evan Kreider. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press.

Date	Show	Episode	Class Topic	Reading
W Week 13	Firefly	1.13 "Heart of Gold"	Philosophy of Sex	
M Week 14	Firefly		Philosophy of Sex	Szabo, Tait. 2011. "Companions, Dolls, and Whores." In <i>The Philosophy of Joss Whedon</i> , 103-116. Edited by Dean A. Kowalski and S. Evan Kreider. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press.
W Week 14		No Class		Holiday
M Week 14	Firefly	1.14 "Objects in Space"	Existentialism	Zynda, Lyle. 2004. "We're All Just Floating in Space." In <i>Finding Serenity: Anti-Heroes, Lost Shepherds, and Space Hookers in Joss Whedon's Firefly</i> , 85-95. Edited by Jane Espenson. Dallas: BenBella Books.
W Week 14	Firefly		Existentialism	Baggett, David. 2011. "Firefly and Freedom." In <i>The Philosophy of Joss Whedon</i> , 9-23. Edited by Dean A. Kowalski and S. Evan Kreider. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press.
<b>Tue. Finals</b>				5:30 pm Final Exam
<b>Fr. Finals</b>				5 pm, term paper due

