

Matthew CRIPPEN

Enhancing Teaching through Film and Other Media

When using media to teach evolution or Descartes, we typically show clips on Darwinism or biopics on Descartes. Doing so can be productive. Yet I hope to demonstrate more creative ways of using media – ways that help students make discoveries and grasp what could otherwise be very difficult. An example is when I showed paintings of Jesus, and asked students whom they were of, followed by film stills of a person posing as Jesus and the same question. In contemplating the different answers, students came to realize what Cavell and others have painstakingly worked out even though few majored in philosophy or film. I have experimented with other visual devices, as when I used aids to convey an admittedly impoverished but nonetheless helpful introduction to Plato’s notion of “resemblance” and his very arcane Idea of the Good. If asked to give a method on how to effectively employ media in the classroom, I will of course fail. It is, as they say, an art. But this means also it is a skill with which one can become increasingly more adept through practice, and in this paper I will discuss how we can become more practiced at the art.

Matthew CRIPPEN holds degrees in philosophy, psychology and film. He particularly researches intersections between aesthetics, phenomenology and pragmatism with an eye to contributing to cognitive science. While diverse, his research unites around “ecological” approaches that place objects of investigation in world-contexts. It also unites around a long-term goal of mitigating skeptical trends. Matthew has been pleased to teach a multicultural and international population of students first at York University and now at the American University in Cairo. Outside of the academy, he has spent years working as a musician, a mandolin and guitar teacher and a gymnastics coach. E-mail: crippenm@aucegypt.edu.

