

FILM AND LITERATURE OF BLINDNESS

Coordinator: Jan Adler

Most people consider blindness to be synonymous with helplessness and hopelessness. Yet sometimes the blind are believed to possess special gifts, powers or talents. We develop a better idea of reality of what it is like for people who cannot see by reading memoirs, mainly by people who have had to deal with going blind after having been able to see. We contrast that with how blindness has been depicted in literature such as King Lear and the Oedipus story as well as films such as Wait Until Dark, Ray and Scent of a Woman. We also read personal stories of people who are trying out new ways of coping with blindness and who are trying new scientific advances to restore some vision.

Readings and other Required Materials:

Andrew Potok, *Ordinary Daylight*, (available used from Amazon)

Coursepack of about 300 pages, approximate cost \$25.00

Jan Adler has coordinated a wide range of study groups.

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- Week 1 Introduction
Blindness: Is Literature Against Us? Address by Kenneth Jernigan, President National Federation of the Blind
Ordinary Delight (Pg 1-78)
- Week 2 Fear of Blindness
Why Do We Fear the Blind, NYT 1/4/14
Ordinary Delight (79-166)
- Week 3 Philosophy of Blindness
Ordinary Delight continued, Memoirs, plus web article
- Week 4 Blindness As Metaphor, Part 1- Oedipus
- Week 5 Blindness As Metaphor, Part 2- King Lear

Blindness Portrayed in Film

- Week 6 Wait Until Dark

Week 7 Ray
Week 8 Scent of a Woman
Week 9 Now I See You, Nicole C. Kear- Excerpts
Week 10 Now I See You, Excerpts, Daniel Kish and Echolocation
Week 11 New Approaches to Restoring Some Vision
Week 12 Contemporary culture-Daredevil, Growing Up Fisher