

Mr. McBride
AP Language and Composition

Pi Assignment

Pi Essay

100 Points

Due Wednesday, November 8

We will be watching writer/director Darren Aronofsky's film *Pi* this week in AP Language class. The plot of the film focuses on a brilliant but troubled mathematician who believes he has found a pattern to all of nature in the apparently irrational and random sequence of numbers that comprises the stock market. This pattern is also manifest in the irrational numerical representation of pi, the ratio of a circle's diameter to its circumference. As he comes closer and closer to divining the pattern, he begins to be followed by both a group of Wall Street investors and a group of religious numerologists, though it remains unclear exactly as to what is truth or delusion in the mind of the protagonist. The film won the director's award in the drama category at the 1998 Sundance Film Festival, and it provides an excellent opportunity to experience, discuss, and write about a thought-provoking modern fable.

Students will be writing a 1000 to 1200 word analytical essay on the film. It should make analysis of the plot and theme, supported with specific commentary on cinematography, music, acting, casting, photography, or any other aspect of the film necessary to support your discussion. The best papers will consider the film in the light of all that we have learned and discussed this quarter. You should attempt to analyze the meaning of the film in a larger philosophical context, while grounding your discussion with specific reference to the details of the film.

So, without over-reliance on gratuitous and/or tenuous references to long dead philosophers, try to draw on three thousand years¹ in your evaluation of *Pi*.

¹ "He who cannot draw on three thousand years is living from hand to mouth." – Johann Goethe