

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES
FALL 2010

Religious Studies 399.01 L01: Watching Films Religiously

Dates & Times: Tues September 7 – Sat September 11, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Instructor: Dr. Anne Moore
Office: Social Sciences 1324
Office Hours: T-S 8:30-9:00 a.m., or by appointment
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Textbooks:

Course Articles posted on Blackboard
PRE-SESSION STUDY IS RECOMMENDED.

COURSE OUTLINE:

Block Week Course:

The course will run for five days (Tuesday-Saturday, September 7-11, 2010), eight hours a day (9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.). The course requires patience, endurance and fortitude. Attendance and participation are compulsory in order to complete all the requirements. All the requirements of the course must be completed and submitted. An incomplete or not submitted requirement will result in a grade of "F." No late papers will be accepted without medical certificates. There will be no extensions.

For your patience, endurance, fortitude and submission of all the requirements, you will earn a half-course credit. You will also hopefully acquire various skills including: 1) an understanding of the presence of religion within popular culture (film) and 2) an awareness and critical appreciation of the religious themes and symbolism present in films.

Please note the following University regulations regarding Block Week courses (see the University Calendar, p. 36 for more information):

- The last day to drop a Block Week course (without it appearing on the student's transcript) shall be the end of the first day of lectures.
- The last day to withdraw from a Block Week course shall be the final day of lectures during the Block Week.
- Final grades for Block Week courses will not be required until the end of the term in which the course is offered.

Outcome of the Course:

Part of the learning context for this course works from the observation that religion is a substantial force in society that demands there be an informed public capable of understanding it. The task is challenging because religions are elaborate and dynamic

entities, as demonstrated in varied beliefs and practices. The Department of Religious Studies seeks to provide students with an informed understanding of religious beliefs and practices through acquisition of basic knowledge of major world religions, as well as opportunity to analyze and critique claims religions make. Lectures, films and classroom discussion in RELS 399.01 will involve the following themes:

- How specific religious texts are foundational to our concerns of human nature.
- How religious texts and their interpretations have contributed to cultural ideas of human nature and gender.
- How the relationship between body/mind and soul has been viewed and how views of this relationship contribute to our concepts of human free will and mortality.
- How the body and experience of the body has been conceived.
- How human free will and evil are associated.

Self-Directed Study:

Students are expected to develop skills of independent learning in RELS 399. These skills are acquired primarily by dealing with assigned readings, reflecting on films viewed during class, study and preparation for course assignments and in performing critical analysis for the essay requirements.

The knowledge acquired in RELS 399 will allow students to demonstrate competencies specific to the research areas of Religion in Popular Culture - albeit at a 300 course level. In acquiring basic knowledge about religious ideas and themes within Popular Culture and reflecting on that knowledge in a critical manner (*krino*: "to judge, assess, analyze"), students should gain abilities that are transferable to other learning situations and career settings. Students should be aware that core educational competencies may be developed in the following contexts in this course (the list is not intended to be exhaustive):

- ability to acquire, organize and interpret information: lectures, assigned readings in preparation for viewing films and participation in classroom discussion.
- ability to read and think critically: working with assigned readings, lecture material and viewing films.
- ability to identify primary concepts, ideas, themes - and reflect on them: lectures, films, classroom discussion, preparation for examinations.
- ability to gain effective writing skills: reports and essays.
- acquiring cultural literacy in the area of Religion and Film.
- an awareness and ability to deal with diversity.
- particular social and communicative skills.

The Course and the Films:

Please Note: Several of the films are rated "18A" or "R" within Alberta. There are scenes of violence, nudity, and sex and there is the speaking of foul language. The respective directors have considered these elements integral to the development of their film and we therefore accept their artistic vision.

REQUIREMENTS

A schedule of each student's requirements will be provided on the first day of the course. This schedule will specify the particular questions and specific deadlines for the presentations and essays required of each student. These requirements and their deadlines must be followed in order to pass the course. Requirements that are incomplete or not submitted will result in a grade of "F." Assignments must be submitted in person. Electronic submissions will NOT be accepted without prior arrangement.

The articles on Blackboard are intended to provide ideas, considerations and thoughts for writing the various essays. I urge all students to review all these articles before writing any of the requirements.

1. Oral Report and Discussion 10%
 - a) Each day (at the start of class) 10-13 students will present a short oral report on the film viewed in class the previous day. Each student is assigned a specific question and will orally present a 5-minute (maximum) response to this specified question. The question will assume familiarity with the course articles posted on Blackboard and lecture material.
Students will be timed and stopped after 5 minutes. Therefore, it is vital that the presentations be fully prepared beforehand unless you are extremely confident at speaking. A mark will be assigned based on both the oral presentation and participation in the following discussion.
2. Revision of Oral Report 20%
 - a) Each student will then submit a written version of his or her presentation that demonstrates additional reflection in light of the in-class presentations and discussion. This written version of the revised presentation will be a maximum of 4-5 pages, double-spaced, font size of 10 or 12 with margins of 1 or 1.5 inches.
3. Individual Reaction Paper 25%
 - a) Based on an assigned question, each student will complete an individual reaction paper related to a film viewed in class. The deadline for these papers will be indicated in the schedule of requirements. The paper will draw upon material posted on Blackboard and the lectures. The maximum length will be 4-5 pages, double-spaced, font size of 10 or 12 with margins of 1 or 1.5 inches.
4. Test 10%
 - a) There will be a 30-minute test focused on the film shown the final day.
 - b) The question for the film will be provided on the same day of its showing. A response in essay format will be expected.
5. Individual Analysis of a Film 35%
 - a) The individual analysis will be based on a film selected by the student but addressing the question provided in the schedule of requirements. The analysis is due on **Tuesday, September 14** at noon in the Department of Religious Studies. Students

will need to include a narrative outline of the film with their analysis. Maximum length for the essay is 6-8 pages, double-spaced, font size of 10 or 12 with margins of 1 or 1.5 inches.

Written assignments will be judged by several criteria, including the following:

1. The completeness and effectiveness with which one fulfilled the stated requirements of the assignment.
2. The logic of the presentation (meaning the flow and development of your ideas and argument).
3. The ability to summarize and rephrase key ideas and concepts, thus revealing a clear understanding of those ideas and concepts drawn from the articles on Blackboard and the lectures.
4. The ability to see the complexity of an issue and discuss its various aspects.
5. Spelling, grammar, punctuation, and proper bibliographical format.

**There will be no Registrar scheduled final exam for this course.*

Grades

A numerical mark will be given for each course requirement. Following the final graded component, a letter grade will be assigned based on the number and letter grade scheme below:

A+	100 - 96	A	95 - 90	A-	89 - 85
B+	84 - 80	B	79 - 75	B-	74 - 70
C+	69 - 65	C	64 - 60	C-	59 - 55
D+	54 - 53	D	52-50	F	Under 50

Academic Honesty:

Plagiarism is not tolerated at the University of Calgary and has serious consequences. Your essays/presentations must be your own work and inadequate referencing may be seen as plagiarism. Please see the relevant sections on Academic Misconduct in the current University Calendar. If you have questions about correct referencing, please consult your instructor.

Gnosis:

Gnosis is the Religious Studies Student Club. For membership or more information please email: gnosis@ucalgary.ca or visit <http://www.ucalgary.ca/~gnosis>.

CLASS SCHEDULE

All students are strongly advised to read all the articles before the commencement of the course. The following schedule provides an indication of which of the articles will be emphasized on a given day. However, there are a number of overlaps between the material; so, all of the material is relevant.

TUESDAY

1. Kristen E. Kvam, Linda S. Schearing and Valerie H. Ziegler, eds. *Eve and Adam*. 15-40 and 69-73. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1999. [New Revised Standard Version].
2. Mark Twain, "Extracts from Adam's Diary," "Eve's Diary," "Diaries Antedating the Flood," In *The Bible According to Mark Twain*, edited by Howard G. Baetzhold and Joseph B. McCullough, 8-33 and 63-69. New York: Touchstone, 1996.
3. Mary Phil Korsak, "Eve: Malignant or Maligned?" *CrossCurrents* 44, no. 4 (1994/95): 453. 10p. <http://www.crosscurrents.org/evetxt.htm>.
4. Eric S. Rabkin. "Eat and Grow Strong: The Super-Natural Power of Forbidden Fruit," In *Violence, Utopia and the Kingdom of God: Fantasy and Ideology in the Bible*, edited by George Aichele and Tina Pippin, 8-23. London/New York: Routledge, 1998.

09:00 - 09:30 Introduction to the Course

09:30 - 10:30 Religion, Culture and Intertextuality

10:30 - 12:30 Scripture and Lived Interpretations

12:30 - 13:30 Break

13:30 - 15:00 Introduction to the Film

15:00 - 17:00 FILM

Overnight preparation for presentation and discussion.

WEDNESDAY

5. David F. Noble. "Paradise Restored." In *The Religion of Technology: The Divinity of Man and the Spirit of Invention*. 1997. Reprint, 43-56. New York: Penguin Books, 1999.
6. David F. Noble. "The Immortal Mind: Artificial Intelligence." In *The Religion of Technology: The Divinity of Man and the Spirit of Invention*. 1997. Reprint, 143-71. New York: Penguin Books, 1999.
7. E Brunner. "Modern Technology as an Expression of Rebellion," In *Ways of Being Religious: Readings for a New Approach to Religion*, edited by Fredrick J. Charles et al. 531-41. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1973.
8. Janice Hocker Rushing and Thomas S. Frentz. "The Intellectual Landscape," In *Projecting the Shadow: The Cyborg Hero in American Film*. 11-27. Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 1995.
9. N. Katherine Hayles. "The Seductions of Cyberspace," In *Rethinking Technologies*, edited by Verena Andermatt Conley on behalf of the Miami Theory Collective, 173-90. Minneapolis: U of Minneapolis, 1993.
10. David A. Halperin. "Gnosticism in High Tech: Science Fiction and Cult Formation," In *Psychodynamic Perspectives on Religion, Sect and Cult*, edited by David A. Halperin, 257-66. Boston: John Wright, 1983.
11. Jaron Lanier, "What is a Person," In *You are Not a Gadget: A Manifesto*, 3-72. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010.

12. Sue Short. "Body and Soul: A History of Cyborg Theory," In *Cyborg Cinema and Contemporary Subjectivity*, 34-54. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

09:00-10:30 Presentations and discussion
10:30-12:30 Creators and Their Creations
12:30-13:30 Break
13:30-15:00 Adam, Golem, Frankenstein and Cyborgs.
15:00-17:00 FILM

Overnight preparation for presentation and discussion.

THURSDAY

13. Constance Classen. "Introduction: Through the Looking-Glass," and "The Odour of the Rose: Floral Symbolism and the Olfactory Decline of the West," In *Worlds of Sense: Exploring the Senses in History and Across Cultures*, 1-36. New York: Routledge, 1993.
14. John O'Neill. "Our Two Bodies," In *Five Bodies: The Human Shape of Modern Society*, 15-25. Ithaca: Cornell Up, 1985.
15. Lynda Sexon. "Salt Cakes: Eating Dreams, Love and God." *Image: A Journal of the Arts and Religion* 10 (n.d): 98-113.

09:00-10:30 Presentations and discussion
10:30-12:30 Senses and Intellect; Ritual and Belief
12:30-13:30 Break
13:30-14:30 Strangers and the Other
14:30-15:00 Introduction to the Film
15:00-17:00 FILM

Overnight preparation for presentation and discussion.

FRIDAY

16. David Keys, "The Science of Sin," *BBC Knowledge* June 2010, 26-33.
17. Lars Svendsen, "Introduction," "The Anthropology of Evil," In *A Philosophy of Evil*, Translated by Kerri A. Pierce. 2001. Reprint, 17-38 and 77-88. Champaign/London: Dalkey Archive Press, 2010.
18. Bryan C. Barker. "Free Will, Determinism, and Schopenhauer (Oh, My!)," In *Battlestar Galactica and Philosophy: Mission Accomplished or Mission Frakked Up?*, edited by Josef Steiff and Tristan D. Tamplin, Vol. 33 of *Popular Culture and Philosophy*, edited by George A. Reisch, 261-69. Chicago/LaSalle, IL: Open Court, 2008.
19. Lars Svendsen, "Norman People and Extreme Evil," In *A Philosophy of Evil*, Translated by Kerri A. Pierce. 2001. Reprint. 163-96. Champaign/London: Dalkey Archive Press, 2010.

09:00-10:30 Presentations and discussion
10:30-11:00 Free will and evil, Augustine and Arendt

- 11:00-12:00 Break
- 12:00-13:15 Free will and evil (continuation)
- 13:30-15:00 Introduction to the film
- 15:00-17:00 FILM

Overnight preparation for presentation and discussion.

SATURDAY

20. Christopher, Christian. "Living in the Watchtower," In *Battlestar Galactica and Philosophy: Mission Accomplished or Mission Frakked Up?*, edited by Josef Steiff and Tristan D. Tamplin, Vol. 33 of *Popular Culture and Philosophy*, edited by George A. Reisch, 271-88. Chicago/LaSalle, IL: Open Court, 2008.
21. David Vessey. "The Meaning of a Deathless Life." In *Battlestar Galactica and Philosophy: Mission Accomplished or Mission Frakked Up?*, edited by Josef Steiff and Tristan D. Tamplin, Vol. 33 of *Popular Culture and Philosophy*, edited by George A. Reisch, 289-300. Chicago/LaSalle, IL: Open Court, 2008.
22. Donald Heinz. "Finishing the Story," In *The Last Passage: Recovering a Death of Our Own*, 103-27. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. 103-27.
23. Chris Shilling. "The Body, Self-Identity and Death," In *The Body and Social Theory*, 173-97. London: Sage Publication, 1993.

- 09:00-10:30 Presentations and Discussion
- 10:30-12:00 Human Mortality: The Ending of all Human stories
- 12:00-12:30 Student Survey
- 12:30-13:30 Break
- 13:30-15:30 FILM
- 15:30- 16:00 Break
- 16:00-17:00 Test