

Rel 350: Religion and Film

Spring 2018

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Office: CCC 489a
Office hours: Mon/Wed 2:00 to 2:30
Tues 3:30 to 4:00 (or appt)

Required Texts Rel 350 Course Pack

Course Description Religion and Film explores how the aesthetic, cultural, and historical dimensions of cinema have engaged with the topic of religion, and with religious communities, for over a century. Students will learn how different religious communities have engaged with the medium of cinema and how movies have represented, maligned, or promoted religions and religious concepts over time.

Gen Ed Arts
Learning Outcomes 1. Describe, analyze or critique creative works utilizing knowledge of relevant aesthetic criteria or stylistic forms.
2. Identify and explain the relationship between particular traditions or genres of creative expression and their social, historical or cultural contexts.

Requirements
and Expectations 1. **Preparation:** Students are expected to watch the films and complete the assigned readings each day. Additionally, coming to class prepared requires that you have the daily assigned readings with you in class. Our ability to critically analyze texts depends on your having the material in front of you. Readings posted to D2L should be printed out and brought to class as well.
2. **Participation:** Good participation requires active reading of the assigned texts, engagement with the materials in class, thoughtful involvement in class discussions, and active listening to your classmates. Laptops should be closed and cell phones should be silenced at the start of class.
3. **Civility:** Students are expected to show respect for course content, classmates, and opinions that may differ from their own in deference to the educational atmosphere. Civil discourse means that we can disagree and challenge colleagues while maintaining an atmosphere of respect for people and ideas.
4. **Due Dates:** Missed quizzes and exams cannot be made up unless arrangements have been made prior to the absence. Papers submitted late will receive a letter grade deduction for each late day. Students who miss an assignment because of illness or serious emergency should contact me as soon as possible. Students who know ahead of time that they will be absent should speak to me at least a week prior to the absence.
5. **Communication:** During the semester, if a personal event or circumstance impacts your ability to succeed in our course, please come speak to me right away—before

the problem becomes insurmountable. If you have a learning disability that might impact your work in our course, please speak to me in person (not via email) at the beginning of the semester.

Email Policy

As a general rule, it is unwise to email me if you have a time-specific question (e.g., "What's on the exam on Monday?") Also, do not email me because you want to know what you missed in class. For concerns such as these, speak with me in person. Good reasons to email me include:

- Letting me know about a technical problem with D2L that is affecting your preparation for an upcoming class,
- Scheduling a time to meet face-to-face,
- Informing me as to why you missed class,
- Sharing your personal thoughts about our course material.

* When emailing me, always include the name of our class and section in your subject line.

Attendance Policy

It is expected that you will arrive to class each day on time. Over the course of the semester, you may miss three class periods (for whatever reason) without penalty. Students who miss more classes can expect to lose 3% percentage points from their final grade for each absence. If you have a severe illness or personal emergency that will affect your attendance, speak with me outside of class.

Tutoring- Learning Center

The TLC is an excellent service every student should use. One-on-one tutors can help with writing papers, reading challenging assignments, preparing for exams, lab reports, resumes, research papers, and personal statements. To sign up, call 346-3568 or stop by the bottom floor of the Media Resource Center, room 018.

Academic Integrity

The full text of the Community Rights and Responsibilities guidelines is available online in the Rights and Responsibilities section at: www.uwsp.edu/admin/stuaffairs. Students will be expected to adhere to all university expectations. In particular, please familiarize yourself with the definition of plagiarism and the disciplinary process. According to chapter 14 section 3 of the Student Academic Standards and Disciplinary Procedures, "Examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to: cheating on an examination; collaborating with others in work to be presented, contrary to the stated rules of the course; submitting a paper or assignment as one's own work when a part or all of the paper or assignment is the work of another; submitting a paper or assignment that contains ideas or research of others without appropriately identifying the sources of those ideas...." If you have questions about this policy, contact me. Infractions will be reported to the university and the minimum penalty for a violation of academic integrity is a failure (zero) for the

assignment, although more severe infractions may be assessed. To ensure a fair assessment process in this course, students will be required to submit their papers to the D2L dropbox prior to the due date in class. D2L has plagiarism detection software, and will flag papers that are derivative of published texts, websites, and other student writing.

Assignments

Attendance and Participation	50 points
Group Presentation	200 points
Short papers.....	50 points each
Quizzes.....	10 points each
Film Viewing Handouts	50 points each
Unit One Paper	200 points
Final Paper	200 points

Rel 350: Religion and Film
Reading Schedule

Week 1

Tues Jan 23	<u>Introductions!</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Welcome!
Thurs Jan 25	<u>What is Film Criticism?</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Read: “Chapter 1: The Art of Watching Films” [D2L] prior to class today <input type="checkbox"/> Complete: D2L quiz, “Watching Films” prior to class today

Week 2

Unit I: The Elements of Movies

Tues Jan 30	<u>Describing a Film</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Prior to class, watch the film “Defending Your Life” (dr. Albert Brooks, 1991). Available on e-reserve. <input type="checkbox"/> Prior to class, write a 350-word summary of the plot of “Defending Your Life” and submit to the dropbox. Also, bring a printout of your summary to class today. Your paper will simply be graded by whether it was completed or not. The word count is important. Your paper should not be fewer than 300 words or more than 400.
Thurs Feb 1	<u>Identifying Themes</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Read: “Chapter 2: Thematic Elements” [D2L] (remember to bring to class) <input type="checkbox"/> Complete: Chapter 2 quiz “Thematic Elements” prior to class today

Week 3

Tues Feb 6	<u>Identifying Themes</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion of Thematic Elements reading
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Thurs	<u>Identifying Themes (day 2)</u>
Feb 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Prior to class, watch West Bank Story – The Musical (available on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mgQfCUNf0no) <input type="checkbox"/> Prior to class, watch “High Maintenance” (available on Vimeo: https://vimeo.com/11098509)

Week 4

Tues	<u>Fictional and Dramatic Elements</u>
Feb 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Read:</u> “Chap 3: Fictional and Dramatic Elements” [coursepack pages 1-25] prior to the start of class today <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Complete:</u> reading quiz on chapter 3 prior to the start of class today <input type="checkbox"/> <u>In class:</u> Group 1: give a presentation on “Chap 3: Fictional and Dramatic Elements” [coursepack] <input type="checkbox"/> <u>In class:</u> Group 2: Apply insights from chapter 3 in analyzing Denys Arcand’s “Jesus of Montreal” (1989). (The link for the film will be posted in D2L.)
Thurs	<u>Cinematography and Special Effects</u>
Feb 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Read:</u> “Chap 5: Cinematography and Special Effects” [coursepack] prior to the start of class today <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Complete:</u> reading quiz on chapter 5 prior to the start of class today <input type="checkbox"/> <u>In class:</u> Group 3: give a presentation on “Chap. 5: Cinematography and Special Effects” [coursepack] <input type="checkbox"/> <u>In class:</u> Group 4: apply insights from chapter 5 in analyzing Mel Gibson’s “the Passion of the Christ” (2004). (The link for the film will be posted in D2L.)

Week 5

Tues	<u>Sound Effects and Music</u>
Feb 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> <u>Read:</u> “Chapter 8: Sound Effects and Dialogue” [coursepack] prior to the start of class today<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Read:</u> “Chapter 9: Musical Score” [coursepack] prior to the start of class today<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Complete:</u> reading quiz on “Sound and Music” prior to the start of class today<input type="checkbox"/> <u>In class:</u> Group 5: Apply insights from chapters 8 & 9 in analyzing David Greene’s “Godspell” (1973). The link for the film is on e-reserve on our D2L site.<input type="checkbox"/> <u>In class:</u> Group 6: Apply insights from chapters 8 & 9 in analyzing Norman Jewison’s “Jesus Christ Superstar” (1973). The link for the film is on e-reserve on our D2L site.
Thurs	<u>Film Editing</u>
Feb 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> <u>Read:</u> “Chap 6, “Editing” [coursepack] prior to the start of class today.<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Complete:</u> reading quiz on chapter 6 prior to the start of class today.<input type="checkbox"/> <u>In class:</u> Group 7: apply insights from chapter 6 in analyzing Mel Gibson’s “The Passion of the Christ” (2004). The link for the film will be posted in D2L.<input type="checkbox"/> <u>In class:</u> Group 8: apply insights from chapter 6 in analyzing Martin Scorsese’s “Last Temptation of Christ” (1988). The link for the film will be posted in D2L.

Week 6

Unit II: Portraying Religions on Screen

Tues	<u>Critical Assessment</u>
Feb 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> <u>Read:</u> “Chap 12: Analysis of the Whole Film” [coursepack] prior to class today.<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Read:</u> Dr. Andrea Berlin and Jodi Magness, “Two Archaeologists Comment on The Passion of the Christ” [coursepack] prior to class today.<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Complete:</u> reading quiz on today’s readings prior to the start of class today.
Thurs	<u>Muslims in Movies</u>
March 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> <u>Read:</u> first half of chapter, Stephen Prothero, “Islam” (stop at “Sharia” subheading) prior to class today.

	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete: Reading quiz, “Islam” prior to class today.
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Week 7

Tues	<u>Muslims in Movies</u>
March 6	<input type="checkbox"/> Read: complete chapter, Stephen Prothero, “Islam” prior to class today. <input type="checkbox"/> Submit: Unit #1 paper to dropbox prior to class today.

Thurs	<u>“Orientalism”</u>
March 8	<input type="checkbox"/> Read: Chris Klassen “Chapter 7: Orientalism” [coursepack] prior to class today.

Week 8

Tues	<u>Buddhism in Movies</u>
March 13	<input type="checkbox"/> Read: Steven Prothero, “Buddhism: The Way of Awakening” [coursepack] <input type="checkbox"/> Complete: reading quiz “Buddhism” prior to the start of class today.

Thurs	<u>Buddhism in Movies</u>
March 15	<input type="checkbox"/> Watch the film “Little Buddha” (1994) [e-reserve] prior to class today. <input type="checkbox"/> Submit completed “Film Viewing” handout to D2L prior to class today.

Week 9

Tues	<u>Indigenous Americans in Film</u>
March 20	<input type="checkbox"/> No reading for today.

Thurs	<u>Indigenous Americans in Film</u>
March 22	<input type="checkbox"/> Finish watching “Dances With Wolves” (1994) [e-reserve] prior to class today. <input type="checkbox"/> Submit completed “Film Viewing” handout to D2L prior to class today.

Spring Break: March 23rd to April 1

Week 10

Unit III: Portraying Religious in Film

Tues April 3	<u>Angels in Movies</u> <input type="checkbox"/> No reading today.
Thurs April 5	<u>Angels 2: Angel Food Cake</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Read: “Angels” entries from <i>The Encyclopedia of Religion</i> [coursepack] prior to class today <input type="checkbox"/> Read: “Angels” entries from <i>Religions of the World</i> [coursepack] prior to class today <input type="checkbox"/> Complete: quiz on “Angels” prior to class today

Week 11

Tues April 10	<u>Angels 3: Angels in the City</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Watch: “Wings of Desire” (available through Kanopy library streaming.) prior to class today. <input type="checkbox"/> Submit completed “Film Viewing” handout to D2L prior to class today.
Thurs April 12	<u>Satan in Movies</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Read: “Satan” entry from <i>The Encyclopedia of Religion</i> [coursepack] prior to class today <input type="checkbox"/> Read: “Devils” entry from <i>The Encyclopedia of Religion</i> [coursepack] prior to class today <input type="checkbox"/> Read: “Deals with the Devil” entries <i>Storytelling: An Encyclopedia of Mythology and Folklore</i> [coursepack] prior to class today <input type="checkbox"/> Complete: quiz on “Angels” prior to class today

Week 12

Tues April 17	<u>Satan 2: Hell in a Handbasket</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Watch: “Devil’s Advocate” [e-reserve] prior to class today. <input type="checkbox"/> Submit completed “Film Viewing” handout to D2L prior to class today.
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Thurs	<u>Satan 3: Hail Satan</u>
April 19	<input type="checkbox"/> No reading today

Week 13

Tues	<u>Purgatory</u>
April 24	<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Read:</u> Garrett, <i>Purgatory</i> , 156–189 [coursepack] prior to class today. <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Complete:</u> Purgatory quiz on D2L prior to class today.

Thurs	<u>Purgatory 2: Still Purgatory</u>
April 26	<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Watch:</u> “Groundhog’s Day” [e-reserve] prior to class today. <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Submit</u> completed “Film Viewing” handout to D2L prior to class today.

Week 14

Tues	<u>The Afterlife</u>
May 1	<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Read:</u> “The Afterlife: An Overview” entry from <i>The Encyclopedia of Religion</i> [coursepack] prior to class today. <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Read:</u> “Afterlife: Chinese Concepts” entry from <i>The Encyclopedia of Religion</i> [coursepack] prior to class today. <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Read:</u> “Afterlife: Christian Concepts” entry from <i>The Encyclopedia of Religion</i> [coursepack] prior to class today. <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Read:</u> “Afterlife: Germanic Concepts” entry from <i>The Encyclopedia of Religion</i> [coursepack] prior to class today. <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Complete:</u> Afterlife quiz #1 on D2L prior to class today.

Thurs	<u>Afterlife 2: Afterlifer</u>
May 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Read: “Afterlife: Greek and Roman Concepts” entry from <i>The Encyclopedia of Religion</i> [coursepack] prior to class today. <input type="checkbox"/> Read: “Afterlife: Islamic Concepts” entry from <i>The Encyclopedia of Religion</i> [coursepack] prior to class today. <input type="checkbox"/> Read: “Afterlife: Jewish Concepts” entry from <i>The Encyclopedia of Religion</i> [coursepack] prior to class today. <input type="checkbox"/> Complete: Afterlife quiz #2 on D2L prior to class today.

Week 15

Tues	<u>Apocalypse</u>
May 8	<input type="checkbox"/> Read: “Apocalypse: An Overview” entry from <i>The Encyclopedia of Religion</i> [coursepack] prior to class today. <input type="checkbox"/> Introducing final exam paper today
Thurs	<u>Apocalypse 2: 2 Fast 2 Apocalypse</u>
May 10	<input type="checkbox"/> Read: Ostwalt’s “Apocalyptic Cinema” entry from <i>The Encyclopedia of Religion</i> [coursepack] prior to class today. <input type="checkbox"/> Complete: Apocalypse quiz on D2L prior to class today.

Last Day of Classes: May 11

Reading Day May 12

Religion and Film Final Exam: May 17. Submit final paper to D2L.

Last Day of Semester: May 18

Commencement: May 19