Course Description

An examination of the religious and spiritual dimensions of selected films from around the world. The cinematic arts are examined in relationship to religious and spiritual concerns, concepts, and values.

Course Content and Learning Objectives

The course content and learning objective would be that by the end of the course students should be able to analyze spiritual and religious themes in the global selection of films we have watched in class. Students will be able to examine films by learning to interpret the cinematic elements of character, gender, dialogue, image, mise en scène, lighting, and music. Students will be able to identify and critique religious perceptions in film and interpret the cultural significance of each represented world religion and spiritual theme.

Required Texts

*Used books will help you defray the cost.*

Understanding Movies. Louis Giannetti
Older editions are fine, but no further back than the 9th Edition. There are too many important recent films.

Living Religions; 7th edition. Mary Pat Fisher
Only as far back as the 5th edition.

Recommended Texts

Christian & Islamic Spirituality. Maria Jaoudi

Explorations in Theology and Film. Edited by C. Marsh & G. Ortiz

Film as Religion. John Lyden

Guns, Germs, and Steel. Jared Diamond
Night. Elie Wiesel

Seeing and Believing: Religion and Values in the Movies. Margaret Miles

Screening the Sacred: Religion, Myth, and Ideology in American Film. J. Marin & C. Ostwalt, Jr.

The Story of Film: A Worldwide History. Mark Cousins

**No electronics:**

This includes cell phones and laptops which must be Off and out of sight during class.

**Class Schedule**

**Lecture & Discussion**

**Film**

(Films selected may vary)

**Reading Assignments**

**Week 1**

**Principle Concepts in the Study of Religion and Film**

**Cinematic Elements of Film Study**

**Seven Years in Tibet**

(Jean-Jacques Annaud)

**Living Religions**, pages 1-32; 134-181

**Week 2**

**Seasons of Spiritual Maturation**

**Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter. . . and Spring**

(Kim Ki-duk)

**Living Religions**, pages 134-181

**Week 3**

**The Power of the Mind**

**The Matrix**

(Andy & Larry Wachowski)

**Living Religions**, pages 134-181

**Week 4**
Religion as Oppression

Living Religions, pages 72-119

Week 5
The Curse of the Golden Flower
From Confucian Storytelling to Excess
Zhang Yimou
Living Religions, pages 182-213

Week 6
Bend It Like Beckham
Bridging Two Cultures
Gurinder Chadha
Living Religions, pages 434-454

IN-CLASS WRITING REVIEW
(Remember: Do not be late)

Week 7
14 October 2008

Week 8
The Complexities of Love
Yes
Sally Potter
Living Religions, pages 376-433
Recommended reading: Christian & Islamic Spirituality by Maria Jaoudi

Week 9
A Star is Born
Bonjour Monsieur Shlomi
Shemi Zarhin
Living Religions, pages 235-294

Week 10
“The law changes, conscience doesn’t”
Sophie Scholl: The Final Days
Marc Rothemund
Living Religions, pp. 235-294; 295-375
Recommended reading: Night

Week 11
No class – campus closed

Week 12 & 13
Mystic and Political Activist Karol: The Man Who Became Pope
Giacomo Battiato

Living Religions, pages 295-375
Recommended reading: Christian & Islamic Spirituality; Night

Week 14
The Depiction of Christianity in the Cinema
The Mission
Raoul Joffé

Living Religions, pages 295-375
Recommended Reading: Christian & Islamic Spirituality; Guns, Germs, and Steel

Week 15 9 December 2008

IN-CLASS WRITING REVIEW
(Remember: Do not be late)

Research Paper Due

Research Study Paper – See Course Policy

Please read carefully the California State University’s Advisory Standards for Writing.
www.csus.edu/acaf/umanual/advstndrds.htm

Utilizing your text, Understanding Movies, explain each of the following assigned films according to the specified chapters in Understanding Movies. Be sure to have at least 2 quotations from EACH Chapter assigned.

Each film assigned is to have three typed pages, double-spaced. Additional pages are optional and encouraged to voice your own opinions.

Amistad Steven Spielberg
Chapters 2, 6, and 8

The New World Terrence Malick
Chapters 1, 3, 5, and 10

The Color of Paradise Majid Majidi
Chapters 4, 7, and 9