**HRS 183  Religion and Film**

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Office Hours: MW 9:00-10:00am; MW 4:15-5:15pm; and by appointment

**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**

Film as Religion: Myths, Morals, and Rituals. John Lyden

World Religions Today. John Esposito, Darrell Fasching, Todd Lewis. 2nd edition

**Recommended Texts**

Christian & Islamic Spirituality. Maria Jaoudi

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

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.

Tsotsi. Athol Fugard
Class Schedule

Lecture & Discussion

Films
(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

World Religions Today, pages 2-33

Week 2
The Power of the Mind

The Matrix
Andy & Larry Wachowski

World Religions Today, pages 340-415

Week 3
Seasons of Spiritual Maturation

Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter... and Spring
Kim Ki-duk

World Religions Today, pages 340-415

Week 4
Buddhist Film Noir?

Why has Bodhidharma come from the East?
Yong-Kyun Bae

World Religions Today, pages 340-415

Week 5
Religion as Oppression

Water
Deepa Mehta

World Religions Today, pages 270-339

Week 6
“Intoxicated with Life”

Monsoon Wedding
Mira Nair

World Religions Today, pages 270-339

Week 7

Midterm Exam
14 March 2007
Hinduism in Pennsylvania

World Religions Today, pages 270-339

Week 8
Islamic Mysticism: The Color of God

World Religions Today, pp. 194-269
Christian & Islamic Spirituality
(Recommended)

Week 9
Color It a Fable

World Religions Today, pp. 194-269
Christian & Islamic Spirituality
(Recommended)

Week 10
A Star is Born

World Religions Today, pp. 64-129

Week 11
A Spiritual Race

World Religions Today, pp. 64-129 & 130-193
Christian & Islamic Spirituality; Chapter V on the Jewish Sabbath
(Recommended)

Week 12
The Depiction of Christianity in the Cinema

World Religions Today, pp. 130-193
Christian & Islamic Spirituality
(Recommended)

Week 13
Humor and Profundity: Forget the Vacation!

World Religions Today, pp. 130-193
Christian & Islamic Spirituality
(Recommended)
Week 14

Filmmaker *Par Excellence* Dreams
Akira Kurosawa

*World Religions Today*, pp. 416-494; 496-531

Week 15

Second Exam

Research Paper Due
16 May 2007

Redemption & Values Tsotsi
Gavin Hood

*World Religions Today*, Review pages 2-33; new pages 34-62 (especially “Cataclysms of Colonialism”)

*Tsotsi*, Athol Fugard
(Recommended)

**Research Study Paper – See Course Policy**

Utilizing your text, *Film as Religion*, explain each of the following Chapters. Outline through narrative, the text’s content in your own words.

Each Chapter is to have a page and a half typed pages, double-spaced. Additional pages are optional and encouraged to voice your own opinions agreeing or disagreeing with the points Professor Lyden develops in *Film as Religion*.

1. Existing Approaches to Religion and Film
2. The Definition of Religion
3. Myths about Myth
4. Rituals and Morals
5. The Religion-Film Dialogue as Inter-religious Dialogue