

*Dr. Maria Jaoudi*

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Office Hours: MW 9:00-10:00am; W 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**

*Used books will help you defray the cost.*

Understanding Movies. Louis Giannetti

Older editions are fine, but no further back than the 9<sup>th</sup> Edition. There are too many important recent films.

World Religions Today. John Esposito, Darrell Fasching, Todd Lewis.

Any edition.

### **Recommended Texts**

Christian & Islamic Spirituality. Maria Jaoudi

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

Film as Religion. John Lyden

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

Tsotsi. Athol Fugard

## **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

World Religions Today, pages 2-33; 340-415; 416-494

#### **Week 2**

**Seasons of Spiritual Maturation**

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

World Religions Today, pages 340-415; 416-494

#### **Week 3**

**The Power of the Mind**

The Matrix

Andy & Larry Wachowski

World Religions Today, pages 340-415; 416-494

#### **Week 4**

**Values and Redemption**

Tsotsi

Gavin Hood

World Religions Today, review pages 2-33; new pages 34-62 (especially, "Cataclysms of Colonialism")

Recommended Reading: Tsotsi by Athol Fugard

**Week 5**

**No Violence: Just a Confucian Story**

Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles

Zhang Yimou

World Religions Today, pages 340-415; 416-494

**Week 6**

**From Minimalist Storytelling to Excess**

The Curse of the Golden Flower

Zhang Yimou

World Religions Today, pages 316-449

**Week 7**

**12 March 2008**

**IN-CLASS WRITING REVIEW**

**(Remember: Do not be late)**

**Week 8**

**Religion as Oppression**

Water

Deepa Mehta

World Religions Today, pages 270-339

**Week 9**

**Intoxicated with Life**

Monsieur Ibrahim

François Dupeyron

World Religions Today, pp. 194-269

Recommended Reading: Christian & Islamic Spirituality

**Week 10**

**“The law changes, conscience doesn’t”**

Sophie Scholl: The Final Days

Marc Rothemund

World Religions Today, pp. 64-129

**Week 11**

**A Star is Born**

Bonjour Monsieur Shlomi

Shemi Zarhin

World Religions Today, pp. 64-129

**Week 12**

**Faith, Philosophy, and Political Choices**

Pope John Paul II

John Kent Harrison

World Religions Today, pp. 130-193

**Week 13**  
**Part II**

Pope John Paul II

World Religions Today, pp. 130-193

**Week 14**  
**The Depiction of Christianity in the Cinema**

The Mission  
Raoul Joffe

World Religions Today, pp. 130-193

Recommended Reading: Christian & Islamic Spirituality

**Week 15**

**14 May 2008**

**IN-CLASS WRITING REVIEW**

**(Remember: Do not be late)**

**Research Paper Due**

**Research Study Paper – See Course Policy**

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.

Kundun  
Martin Scorsese

Chapters 2, 6, and 8

Dead Man Walking  
Tim Robbins

Chapters 1, 3, 5, and 10

Little Buddha  
Bernardo Bertolucci

Chapters 4, 7, and 9