

Dr. Maria Jaoudi

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Office Hours: T 4:00-6:00pm; M & W 3:00-5:00pm online; 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

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

In this online learning course students practice reading and study skills and, with assistance from the professor, improve critical thinking and questioning abilities. With face-to-face and online contact with the professor, and with testing, students will be able to interact, understand and integrate the reading, research, and films for the course into a lifetime of intellectual exploration.

Required Texts

Understanding Movies. Louis Giannetti. 11th edition

Living Religions. Mary Pat Fisher. Exam questions are based on the 7th or 8th editions only.

Required Films

Students are responsible for films assigned. Available to purchase/ rent through Netflix, e.g.

A selection of several films for the class is available at the Library Media Center.

Check [HRS 183 SacCT for Web Links on Reading and Note-taking Strategies](#)

Lecture and Study Guides are available on SacCT on a prearranged schedule for the weeks the film is studied. The Lecture and Study Guides will no longer be accessible after that time. Be sure to make a copy insuring that you will be able to have the material in conjunction with the schedule listed on the syllabus and for each of the exams.

Recommended Texts

Christian Mysticism East & West. Maria Jaoudi
Medieval and Renaissance Spirituality.

Confucius: The Secular as Sacred. Herbert Fingarette

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

Film as Religion. John Lyden

Freedom in Exile: The Autobiography of the Dalai Lama. His Holiness the Dalai Lama

An Autobiography: My Experiments with Truth. Mohandas Gandhi

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 Miracle of Mindfulness. Thich Nhat Hanh

The Story of Film: A Worldwide History. Mark Cousins

Class Schedule

Lecture & Discussion

Film

Reading Assignments

Weeks 1 & 2

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

[Seven Years in Tibet](#)
Jean-Jacques Annaud

Living Religions, Chapters 1, 5
Understanding Movies, Chapter 1

Week 2

Why a Taboo?

• [Departures](#)
Yōjirō Takita

Week 3

Seasons of Spiritual Maturity

[Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter. . . and Spring](#)
Kim Ki-duk

Living Religions, Chapter 5
Recommended reading: The Miracle of Mindfulness by Thich Nhat Hanh
Understanding Movies, Chapter 2

Weeks 4 & 5

[Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter. . . and Spring](#)

Religion as Oppression

[Water](#)
Deepa Mehta

Living Religions, Chapter 3
Recommended reading: An Autobiography: My Experiments with Truth by Mohandas Gandhi
Understanding Movies, Chapter 3

Weeks 6 & 7

First Exam

Wednesday 10 October 12:30am – Thursday 11 October 11:00pm

**First Exam includes: Living Religions, Chapters 1, 3, and 5
Films Weeks 1-5**

After the First Exam: **Living Religions, Chapter 6**
Understanding Moveies, Chapter 4

Confucian Values

[Together](#)
Chen Kaige

● [The Curse of the Golden Flower](#)
Zhang Yimou

Living Religions, Chapter 6

Recommended reading: Confucius: The Secular as Sacred by Herbert Fingarette
Understanding Movies, Chapter 5

Week 8

Sufism and the Complexities of Love

[The Color of Paradise](#)
Majid Majidi

Living Religions, Chapter 10

Medieval and Renaissance Spirituality, especially Chapter 7 *Islamic Love Mysticism: Rabi'a and Rumi* by Maria Jaoudi

Weeks 9 & 10

[The Color of Paradise](#)
Majid Majidi

- [In the Land of Blood and Honey](#)
Angelina Jolie

A Star is Born

[Bonjour Monsieur Shlomi](#)
Shemi Zarhin

[Living Religions](#), Chapter 8
[Understanding Movies](#), Chapter 6

Midterm Exam

Wednesday 24 October 12:30am – Thursday 25 October 11:00 pm

**Midterm Exam includes: [Living Religions](#), Chapters 6, 8, and 10
Films Week 6-10**

Weeks 11, 12, & 13

Third Exam

Wednesday 14 November 12:30am – Thursday 25 November 11pm

Third Exam is only on: [Understanding Movies](#), Chapters 1-6

After the Third Exam:

[Living Religions](#), Chapter 9

Recommended reading: [Night](#) by Elie Weisel; [Medieval and Renaissance Spirituality](#), especially Chapter 6 *The Jewish Mystical View: The Kabbalah* by Maria Jaoudi

[Understanding Movies](#), Chapters 7, 8, 9

The Cost of Miracles

[Ushpizin](#)

Giddi Dar

True Stories

• [Joyeux Noël](#)
Christian Carion

“The law changes, conscience doesn’t”

[Sophie Scholl: The Final Days](#)
Marc Rothemund

Weeks 14 & 15

“Love never ends”

[The Mission](#)
Roland Joffe

Living Religions, Chapter 9

Recommended reading: Christian Mysticism East & West

Understanding Movies, Chapters 10 & 11

Week 16

Final Exam

Wednesday 12 December 12:30am – Thursday 13 December 11:00pm

Final Exam includes: Living Religions, Chapter 9

Understanding Movies, Chapters 7 - 11

Films Weeks 11-15

Course Policy for Dr. Jaoudi’s HRS Courses

Intellectual exploration is encouraged: The professor is available for additionally scheduled Office Hours for student reflections, discussions, and questions on the reading and film assignments.

Students are responsible for reading assignments, lecture materials, exams, and films, depending on the class syllabus.



Reminder: An online class demands even more self-motivation and discipline than a face-to-face class. For example, there is no professor standing in person reminding students about an exam; students have to remind themselves of the details of the class conveyed through the syllabus and SacCT. Because many of us are frequently online, there may be an automatic reflex to peruse written instructions. Therefore, be mindful, the online class is different from browsing the net. Enjoy your studies, and be aware of the fact that student success is determined online primarily by student commitment and circumspection.

There are four on-line exams; see the Syllabus Schedule. The exams are not cumulative. For example, exam #2 begins where the previous exam ends.

Each on-line exam contains multiple choice and true/false questions based on ideas and vocabulary obtained from notes on lectures, class discussions, hand-outs, reading assignments, and films, depending on the course content. Each exam contains 30-35 questions. Please check your Syllabus on SacCT for the exact on-line exam times and dates.

For one-on-one walk-in and by appointment tutoring help with **SacCT**, contact the Student Technology Center at stc@csus.edu/telephone (916) 278-2364/Academic Computing Resources building Room 3007.

*******Please read carefully:** Students are required to take the Exams in the Student Technology Center insuring assistance with any technology issues. If a student does not take the Exams at STC, he/she takes **full responsibility** to resolve any technical issues on their own. Do not contact the professor concerning any technological problems, if you did not take the exam in the Student Technology Center.

It is the student's responsibility to remember answers given to the online test questions, in order to benefit from the responses after the exam.

There are no make-up exams; if an exam is not taken, the student is automatically assigned an F grade. **Therefore, make sure the exact dates and times of exams are duly noted.**

There is no extra credit.

At no time is it appropriate to ask the professor to increase a grade in order to accommodate an individual desire for a higher GPA without matching grade performance.

A student may drop themselves from the class during the official student drop period. After the official drop period ends, any drops, withdrawals, or incompletes, will only be considered for faculty signature, if there is documented evidence of an unforeseen emergency, death, or surgery. Invalid reasons include: Not being able to keep up with the reading, receiving a poor grade on an exam(s), work schedule, moving to an apartment, or going on vacation.

Students with disabilities who require special accommodation must provide disability documentation at SSWD, Lassen Hall 1008 (916) 278-6955. **Students with special testing needs must provide the appropriate forms at least two weeks prior to an exam in order to schedule with the Testing Center.**

In **HRS 152, HRS 155, and HRS 183**, each exam is 1/4 of the grade.