

# Religion and American Film

Spring 1999

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## January 19: Approaches to the Study of Religion in Film

- John Lyden, "[To Commend Or Critique: The Question of Religion and Film Studies](#)," *Journal of Religion and Film*, 1:2 (Fall 1997).

## January 21: Social Reform and Early Cinema

**Film:** [Regeneration](#) (Raoul Walsh, 1915)

- Kevin Brownlow, *Behind the Mask of Innocence - Sex, Violence, Prejudice and Crime: Films of Social Conscience in the Silent Era*, 182-207
- Kay Sloan, *Loud Silents: Origins of the Social Problem Film*, 17-35
- Joseph Medill Patterson, "[The Nickelodeons: The Poor Man's Elementary Course in the Drama](#)," *Saturday Evening Post* (1907)
- Sam Fox Moving Picture Music Volume 1 (1913): (requires a sound card and a midi player)  
[Church Music](#); [Sailor Music](#); [Plaintive Music](#); [Death Scene](#)

## January 26 and 28: Imagining Religious and Racial Others

**Film:** [Broken Blossoms, or The Yellow Man and the Girl](#) (D.W. Griffith, 1919)

- Gina Marchetti, *Romance and the Yellow Peril: Race, Sex, and Discursive Strategies in Hollywood Fiction*, chapter 2
- Kevin Brownlow, *Behind the Mask of Innocence - Sex, Violence, Prejudice and Crime: Films of Social Conscience in the Silent Era*, 320-341
- Interview with Lillian Gish (1927)
- Sam Fox Moving Picture Music Volume 1 (1913): (requires a sound card and a midi player)  
[Chinese Music](#); [Oriental Music](#)

## February 2 and 4: Religious Voices

**Film:** [The Jazz Singer](#) (Alan Crosland, 1927)

- Michael Rogin, *Blackface, White Noise: Jewish Immigrants in the Hollywood Melting Pot*, chapter 4
- Laura Levitt, "[Redressing Jewish Difference in Tania Modleski's 'Cinema and the Dark Continent'](#)" *Journal of Religion and Film* 1:2 (Fall 1997)

## February 9 and 11: Hollywood Pictures an All-Black World

**Film:** [Hallelujah!](#) (King Vidor, 1929)

- Judith Weisenfeld, "For Rent: 'Cabin in the Sky': Race, Religion, and Representational Quagmires in

American Film," *Semeia* 74 (1996): 147-165

- Jessica Howard, "Hallelujah!: Transformation in Film," *African-American Review* (Fall 1996): 441-451.

## February 16 and 18: Gender, Religion, and Censorship

**Film:** [\*The Miracle Woman\*](#) (Frank Capra, 1931)

- Lea Jacobs, *The Wages of Sin: Censorship and the Fallen Woman Film, 1928-1942*, chapters 1 and 3
- "The Production Code," in John Belton, ed., *Movies and Mass Culture*

## February 23 and 25: Black Independents and Religious Melodrama

**Film:** [\*The Blood of Jesus\*](#) (Spencer Williams, 1941)

- Thomas Cripps, *Black Film As Genre*, selections.

## March 2 and 4: Picturing Catholics in Pluralist America

**Film:** [\*The Bells of St. Mary's\*](#) (Leo McCarey, 1945)

- Mary Gordon: "Father Chuck: A Reading of *Going My Way* and *The Bells of St. Mary's*, or Why Priests Made Us Crazy," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 93 (Summer 1994): 591-601.
- Francis G. Couvares, "Hollywood, Main Street and the Church: Trying to Censor the Movies Before the Production Code," in Francis G. Couvares, ed., *Movie Censorship and American Culture*

## March 9 and 11: Religious Passing and the Post-War Message Movie

**Film:** [\*Gentleman's Agreement\*](#) (Elia Kazan, 1947)

- Stephen J. Whitfield, "Our American Jewish Heritage: The Hollywood Version," *American Jewish History* 75 (March 1986): 322-340
- Rogin, *Blackface, White Noise*, chapter 7

## SPRING BREAK

## March 23 and 25: The Bible Epic

**Film:** [\*The Ten Commandments\*](#) (Cecil B. DeMille, 1956)

- Alan Nadel, "God's Law and the Wide Screen: The Ten Commandments as Cold War 'Epic'," *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 108:3 (May 1993): 415-30.
- Thomas Pauly, "The Way to Salvation: The Hollywood Blockbuster of the 1950s," *Prospects: An Annual Journal of American Cultural Studies* 5 (1980): 467-487.
- Stephen Powers, David J. Rothman, Stanley Rothman, "Religious Decline," in *Hollywood's America: Social and Political Themes in Motion Pictures*, 120-137.

## March 30 and April 1: American Film Takes on Fundamentalism

Film: [\*Inherit the Wind\*](#) (Stanley Kramer, 1960)

- [Tennessee v. John Scopes](#) (1925) - Famous Trials in American History Site
  - [Introduction](#)
  - [Tennessee's Anti-Evolution Statute](#)
  - [Textbook Used by Scopes](#)
- [\*Inherit the Wind\* in Popular Culture](#)

## April 6 and 8: Religion and Horror

Film: [\*The Exorcist\*](#) (William Friedkin, 1973)

- Mark Kermode, *The Exorcist* (British Film Institute, 1997), selections

## April 13 and 15: Memory and Black Feminist Cinema

Film: [\*Daughters of the Dust\*](#) (Julie Dash, 1993)

- Joel Brouwer, "Repositioning: Center and Margin in Julie Dash's *Daughters of The Dust*," *African American Review* 29 (Spring 1995):5-16
- [\*Secrets and Whispers Home Page\*](#)

## April 20 and 22: A Saint is Born

Film: [\*Household Saints\*](#) (Nancy Savoca, 1993)

- "The Domus-Centered Society," in Robert A. Orsi, *The Madonna of 115<sup>th</sup> Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem, 1880-1950*
- Edvige Giunta, "The Quest for True Love: Ethnicity in Nancy Savoca's Domestic Film Comedy," *MELUS* 22 (Summer '97), 75-89
- Aaron Baker and Juliann Vitullo, "Mysticism and the Household Saints of Everyday Life," in *Voices in Italian Americana* 7: 2 (Fall 1996): 55-68.

## April 27 and 29: The New Southern Religion

Film: [\*The Apostle\*](#) (Robert Duvall, 1997)

- Bill Blizek and Ronald Burke, ["The Apostle: An Interview with Robert Duvall."](#) *Journal of Religion and Film* 2:1 (Spring 1998)