

Religion 326 "Religion and Film"

Tue/Thu 1:00 – 2:20 111 Bowne Hall

Gail Hamner 512 Hall of Languages (x-5716) Office Hour: Mondays 9:30-10:30 and Tuesdays 9-11 am

mghammer@mailbox.syr.edu

TA: Alyssa Beall, Office hour: Tuesdays 2:45-3:30 and by appointment ajbeall@syr.edu

Reading having been redrawn in contemporary theory,
Perhaps it is now time to restructure our concept of learning itself.
Fredric Jameson

This course accepts religion as a pervasive and active cultural event. Side-stepping the dilemmas inherent in defining the term, the course approaches religion through the interaction (dissonances, synergy) of filmic texts, linguistic texts and conversation. As one religionist has said, religion is less an 'object' of analysis than an 'occasion' for analysis. Over the weeks of this course we can use our own and others' understandings of religion as occasions for analyzing the conditions of being human, namely, how the religious crystallizes and reflects the political, economic, social, and sexual parameters of human cultures.

The Course text (Understanding Movies by Louis Giannetti) is on sale at both the Student Union and Marshall Square bookstores. The Course-pack is on sale at the Copy Center at Marshall Square.

Week I, Introductions

Tuesday August 29	Introductions; settle on time for screenings
Thursday, August 31	Lyden, "To Commend or to Critique: The Question of Religion and Film Studies" , and Marsh, "Religion, Theology and Film in a Postmodern Age: A Response to John Lyden"

Week II, The Stranger Part One

Tuesday, September 5	Read Giannetti, Chapter 1 (Photography), Ritchie, "Dersu Uzala," and Kopper, "Akira Kurosawa's <i>Dersu Uzala</i> and the Imperial Vision" (course pack)
Thursday September 7	Watch Dersu Uzala (Kurosawa, 1974: 140m) and answer questions for group work.

Week III, Morality Framed by (as) Religion

Tuesday,	Read Giannetti, Ch 2 (Mise en Scene), Fallows, "George Bailey in the Vital Center: Postwar Liberal Politics and
----------	---

September 12	"It's a <i>Wonderful Life</i> ", and Mortimer, "The Grim Enchantment of <i>It's a Wonderful Life</i> "
Thursday, September 14	Watch <i>It's a Wonderful Life</i> (Capra 1946: 130m) and answer questions for group work

Week IV, Holocaust: Religion and (in the face of) Power

Tuesday, September 19	Read Giannetti Ch 3 (Movement), Hansen, <i>Schinder's List</i> is not <i>Shoah</i> : The Second Commandment, Popular Modernism, and Public Memory," and Horowitz, "But is it Good for the Jews? Spielberg's Schindler and the Aesthetics of Atrocity"
Thursday, September 21	Watch <i>Schindler's List</i> (Spielberg, 1993: 197m) and answer questions for group work

Week V, African-American Experience and Religion

Tuesday, September 26	Read Giannetti Ch 4 (Editing) and the <i>Cineaste</i> articles, "Malcolm X Symposium: By any Reviews Necessary"
Thursday, September 28	Watch <i>Malcolm X</i> (Lee, 1992: 194m) and answer questions for group work

Week VI, The Stranger Part Two

Tuesday, October 3	Read Giannetti Ch 5 (Sound) and Jowett, "Hollywood Discovers Apartheid."
Thursday, October 5	Watch <i>Cry, The Beloved Country</i> (Roodt, 1995: 106m) and answer questions for group work

Week VII, Ingmar Bergman

Tuesday October 10	Work on your midterm paper (due today unless you observe Yom Kippur, in which case see me by the first of October)
Thursday October 12	Watch <i>The Seventh Seal</i> (1957: 92m) and read Ferlita, "Film and the Quest for Meaning." We'll work on group questions together

Week VIII, Religion and Violence

Tuesday October 17	Read Giannetti Ch 6 (Acting), Heath, "God, Faith and Film: Breaking the Waves," Makarushka, " Transgressing Goodness in <i>Breaking the Waves</i> ." Bjorkman, "Naked Miracles, and Nelson, "The New Expressionism" (this can be found by searching for author Victoria Nelson in the MLA Bibliography Database (Scroll through the M's to it))
Thursday October 19	Watch Breaking the Waves (Lars von Triers, 1996: 158m) and do questions for group work

Week IX, Those Who Save

October 24	Read Giannetti, Ch 7 (Drama), Casillo, "Scorsese in the Land of Snows," Mullen, " Orientalist Commercializations ," and Smith, "The Art of Vision"
October 26	Watch Kundun (Scorsese, 1997) and answer questions for group work.

Week X, Buñuel

October 31	Read Giannetti, Ch 8 (Story), Felita, "Luis Bunuel" and Wood, " 'God Never Dies: Buñuel and Catholicism"
November 2	Watch <i>The Milky Way</i> (1969 105m) and answer questions for group work.

Week XI, Pasolini

November 7	Read Giannetti, Ch 9 (Writing), Cesare, "Pasolini's Theorem," Testa, "To Film a Gospel...and Advent of the Theoretical Stranger," and Friedrich, "Teorema: the bourgeoisie from the inside."
November 9	Watch Teorema (1968: 98m) and answer questions for group work.

Week XII, Religion and Madness

November 14	Read Giannetti, Ch 10 (Ideology) and
November 16	Watch Sling Blade (Thornton, 1996: 135m) and answer questions for group work.

Week XIII, Thanksgiving

November 21	<u>No class</u> American Academy of Religion Meeting in Boston
-------------	--

November 23	<u>No class</u> Thanksgiving Break
-------------	------------------------------------

Week XIV, Evangelism

November 28	Read Giannetti, Ch 11 (Theory), Blizek and Burke, " the Apostle: an interview with Robert Duvall ", and Smith, "A Lifetime in the Moment"
-------------	---

November 30	Watch The Apostle (Duvall, 1997: 134m) and answer questions for group work
-------------	--

Week XV, Hollywood's Angels

December 5	Watch Dogma (Smith 1999: 130m) (may it be on video by then!)
------------	--

December 7	Wrap-up discussion
------------	--------------------