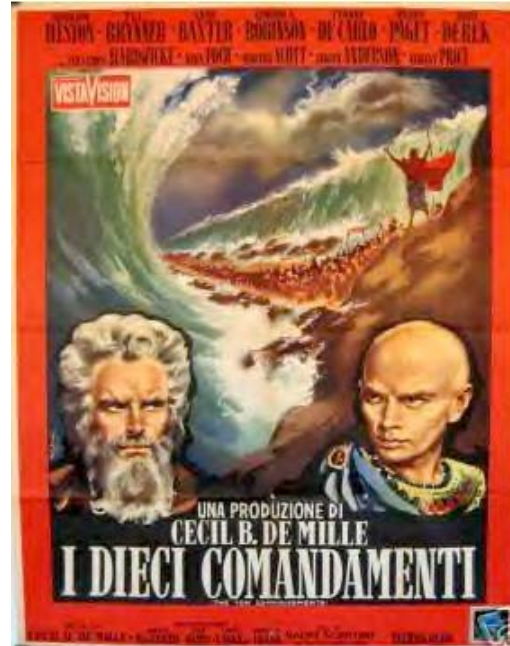


**RELIGION AND THE CINEMA**  
**RAST 2300**  
**PROFESSOR MICHAEL MORRIS, O.P., DSPT**



THIS COURSE WILL SURVEY THE TREATMENT AND THEMES OF RELIGION IN THE JUDEO-CHRISTIAN TRADITION AS PORTRAYED IN THE HISTORY OF THE CINEMA, THE MOST POPULAR ART FORM OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY. WEEKLY LECTURES WITH SLIDES AND FILM CLIPS WILL EXPLORE A WIDE RANGE OF TOPICS. A SPECIALLY SELECTED FEATURE FILM CONSIDERED A MASTERPIECE OF ITS GENRE WILL FOLLOW EACH LECTURE.

### **SYLLABUS & SCHEDULE OF LECTURES**

I. JESUS ON THE SILVER SCREEN

II. JESUS ON THE SILVER SCREEN, PART 2

III. BIBLE STORIES & BIBLICAL BLOCKBUSTERS

IV. CHRISTIAN STORIES SET IN HISTORY

V. THE CLOISTERED CINEMA: MONKS AND NUNS

VI. THE ROMAN COLLAR: PRIESTS, POPES, & CARDINALS

VII. PREACHERS, MINISTERS, & EVANGELISTS

NO CLASS. READING WEEK. TAKE-HOME MID-TERM.

VIII. HORROR

IX. SAINTS, VISIONARIES, LEGENDS & MIRACLES

X. ANGELS AND DIVINE COMEDY

XI. WAR AND PEACE

XII. UTOPIANISM

GUEST LECTURE

FINAL EXAMS AND DSPT FILM FESTIVAL

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

It is the objective of this class to teach students how heavily the Judeo-Christian tradition informs the art of the cinema, especially in the United States but also in Europe. This class will broaden the scope of what is ordinarily considered “religious cinema” by focusing first on films drawn from the Bible and extending our categories to films depicting the subject matter and people of religion. Finally, the categories of religious film will delve into issues of morality, war and peace, and utopianism. Thus the student, through the means listed below, will be given a comprehensive overview of the history of religious film, and be able to organize and present a film appreciation program for the classroom and/or parish.

## THE “RULES OF THE GAME”

**WARNING:** This course is an encyclopedic survey on how religion is treated in the art of film from a Judeo-Christian perspective. While the emphasis will be on Hollywood films (both silent and talkies), important foreign films will be discussed when applicable to the thematic character of this lecture course.

**LAB FEE:** Because of the high cost of producing a course like this, a lab fee of \$10 will be levied on each student (including auditors) to help defray the cost of maintaining the equipment, making slides, and buying new videos and DVDs. Payment must be made after registration and before the mid-term date.

**COURSE READER:** Each week, reading assignments will accompany the lecture and film screening. These readings will focus on the relationship between film and religion in general or address the film that will be shown that week. Students will be expected to integrate these readings into their reflection papers, mid-term, and final exam.

**ATTENDANCE:** Attendance is required and absences will be noted and result in the lowering of a student’s grade.

**GRADES:** The following will be tabulated in the compilation of a final grade for each student:

- 1) **THREE (ONE-PAGE) REFLECTION PAPERS** (1/4 of total grade): As this is a lecture course covering an enormous amount of material, there is little time available for discussion. Therefore, three reflection papers will be required of each student in the course of the semester. The paper topic will be established by the professor in class. A hard copy will be due the following week. The paper is to be typed (single spaced) and represent a critical, reflective analysis of a given problem. Class lectures and the course reader will aid in this endeavor. Students are also encouraged to refer to the libraries at UCB and the Pacific Film Archive for further useful material.
- 2) **MID-TERM EXAM** (1/4 of total grade): Comprehensive exam questions will be distributed in class and the student is expected to return the typed answers in essay form. This is an open book exam, so outside sources can and should be consulted.

- 3) **FINAL EXAMINATION** (1/2 of total grade): A closed-book comprehensive examination will be administered in class during finals week. You are required to bring Blue Books. Immediately after the final exam, the Annual DSPT Student Film Festival will be held.
- 4) **FINAL EXAM ALTERNATIVES** (1/2 of total grade)
  - a. A Research Paper of 15 pages (not including pictures and bibliography): Typed in standard manuscript form with notes and bibliography, a research paper on a topic approved by the professor can be submitted in lieu of taking the final exam.
  - b. A Film Project: Students who choose this option will be expected to plan, write, direct, and produce a film of a religious nature. Two students may combine their talents for a single project. Project approval must first be obtained from the instructor. All technical problems and costs are assumed by the student(s) involved. Completed projects will be offered for inclusion in the DSPT Student Film Festival.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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