

# RELG 325 Religion in Film



COASTAL CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGIOUS  
STUDIES

Spring 2022

MWF 11:00 - 11:50 - Prince 103

Final Examination: Friday, December 9, 11:00 in our regular classroom

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## Professor:

Dr. Ronald Green Office: AOC2 Phone: 349-2782  
Office hours in AOC2: M-W-F 12:00-2:00 and Tuesday 9:20-10:20

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**Course Description:** A critical study of religion through the medium of film. Students view films from around the world and analyze cinematic representations of religious narratives, beliefs, practices, communities, and institutions. Issues such as censorship, blasphemy, and political activism through film are also explored. S.

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## Course Objectives:

In the process of this study, students will come to

1. think critically about representations of religions in film;
  2. broaden their understanding of the term “religious” and realize its significance in the plot, narrative, and imagery of films;
  3. foster insights into the perspectives of various religious groups.
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## Student Learning Outcomes:

On completion of this course, students will have

1. demonstrated knowledge of the beliefs, practices, narratives and important persons associated with major religious traditions of the world.
  2. expressed themselves on issues concerning representations of religions in film.
  3. fostered appreciation of global diversity through understanding how religions contribute to and are affected by individual and collective behaviors.
  4. gained knowledge of the cultures, languages and social structures of other countries of the world (Goal 5B of the CCU Core Curriculum).
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## Required Texts:

The reading materials for our course consists entirely of academic articles available at the following internet sites plus two

handouts. (See Schedule of Courses below for specific readings.)

- The *Journal of Religion and Film* <http://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/jrf/>
  - IMDb, Internet Movie Database <http://www.imdb.com/>
  - Roger Ebert Film Reviews <http://www.suntimes.com/index/ebert.html>
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## Grading:

### 1. Three Tests and a Final Examination

There will be three tests and a final examination (see Schedule of Classes below for dates). Each of these is worth 20% of the final grade for the term. The Final Examination will be the same format and length as the three tests. Each of these (including the Final) will be on one of the four sections of the course, as listed below. The tests and the final exam will consist of thirty questions. Twenty of these will be multiple choice and ten will be short answer. The short answer questions will be graded on the basis of how well the student demonstrates familiarity with the readings and films as well as the quality/depth of independent reflection on these.

### 2. In-class Group Presentation

The class will be divided into groups of between three and five students for the purpose of group presentations. Eight films will be shown in this class and each group should choose one of these films, not to be duplicated by another group. The group presentation is worth 20% of the final grade for the term. All students in the group will receive the same grade, unless a problem student is identified within the group. Groups will have an entire 50-minute class session to present. Group members may decide among themselves what portion of the session should be used for the presentation and how best to present. Presentations should include the following content but do not have to be limited to this.



a. A summary or in-depth treatment of the religion under consideration or some aspect of it.



b. A summary or in-depth treatment of the film under consideration in terms of the religion.



c. An analysis/critique of the film in terms of representations of religion.



d. A reflection on representations of religion/s in the film, for example, what it could have done better.

**Note:** Students may use the assigned readings and/or other academic sources to facilitate their presentation.

According to the above two points, grading for the course may be summarized as follows:

Test 1: 20%

Test 2: 20%

Test 3: 20%

Group Presentation: 20%

Final Exam: 20%

**Final Examination:** Friday, December 9, 11:00 in our regular classroom

**\*Attendance Policy:** Students who miss 25% of classes (excused or unexcused) will receive a grade of 'F' for the term.

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## Schedule of Classes:

Monday, August 22: Introductory meeting: What are we doing in this course and why. Methodological and other issues in this course.

## 1. Indian Religions: Hinduism and Buddhism

<b>Week 1:</b> August 22-26	<i>Sita Sings the Blues</i> (Nina Paley, 2008, 82 minutes)  Reading: "Review of <i>Sita Sings the Blues</i> " in Journal of Religion and Film <a href="https://www.unomaha.edu/jrf/vol13.no2/reviews/SitaSings.html">https://www.unomaha.edu/jrf/vol13.no2/reviews/SitaSings.html</a>  and  "Sins against Sita: A review of <i>SITA SINGS THE BLUES</i> " at Vijayvaani.com <a href="http://www.vijayvaani.com/ArticleDisplay.aspx?aid=781">http://www.vijayvaani.com/ArticleDisplay.aspx?aid=781</a>
<b>Week 2:</b> August 29-September 2	Reading: "The Ramayana, A Summary" by Stephen Knapp <a href="http://hinduism.about.com/library/weekly/extra/bl-ramayana-summary.htm">http://hinduism.about.com/library/weekly/extra/bl-ramayana-summary.htm</a>
<b>Week 3:</b> September 7-9  Monday, September 5, 2016 Labor Day holiday no classes	<i>The Big Lebowski</i> (1998, Coen brothers, 117 minutes) Reading: "The Dude and the Zen Master" <a href="http://www.lionsroar.com/the-dude-and-the-zen-master-may-2013/">http://www.lionsroar.com/the-dude-and-the-zen-master-may-2013/</a>
<b>Week 4:</b> September 12-16	Reading: Basics of Buddhism: A Five Minute Introduction <a href="http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/5minbud.htm">http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/5minbud.htm</a>
<b>Week 5:</b> September 19-23	<b>Group Presentation</b>  <b>TEST 1 - Friday, September 23</b>

## 2. Native American Spirituality and Japanese Shintō

<b>Week 6:</b> September 26-30	<i>Skins</i> (Chris Eyre, 2002, 84 mins.) Reading: Review by Roger Ebert <a href="http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/skins-2002">http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/skins-2002</a> and <a href="http://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/films/reviews/view/5126">http://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/films/reviews/view/5126</a>
<b>Week 7:</b> October 3-5  Friday, October 7 Student Holiday no classes	Hurricane Matthew
<b>Week 8:</b> Friday October 14	<i>Onmyōji</i> (Yōjirō Takita, 2001, 116 minutes - beginning) Reading: A handout will be provided.

## 3. Chinese Religions: Confucianism, Daoism, Yin/Yang, and Five Elements

<b>Week 9:</b> October 17-21	<i>Onmyōji</i> (middle)  <i>Onmyōji</i> (concluded), discussion  <b>Group Presentation, Friday, October 21</b>
<b>Week 10:</b> October 24-28	<b>TEST 2 - Friday October 24</b>  <i>The Last Airbender</i> (M. Night Shyamalan, 2010, 103 mins) Reading: "The Yin Yang School" in <i>A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy</i> by Wing Tsit Chan pages 244-51: <a href="http://www.academia.edu/10087772/A_source_book_in_chinese_philosophy_-_wing-tsit_chan">http://www.academia.edu/10087772/A_source_book_in_chinese_philosophy_-_wing-tsit_chan</a>

<b>Saturday, October 29th Make Up Day</b>	Watch Part 1 of <i>The Pervert's Guide</i> to the Cinema on Moodle
<b>Week 11:</b> October 31-November 4	<b>Group Presentation, Wednesday, November 2</b> Reading: " <i>The Lao Tzu (Tao-te ching)</i> in <i>A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy</i> by Wing Tsit Chan page 139-76. <a href="http://www.academia.edu/10087772/A_source_book_in_chinese_philosophy_-_wing-tsit_chan">http://www.academia.edu/10087772/A_source_book_in_chinese_philosophy_-_wing-tsit_chan</a>

#### 4. Abrahamic Religions: Judaism, Christianity, Islam

<b>Week 12:</b> November 7-11	<b>TEST 3</b> Monday, November 7  <i>The Last Temptation of Christ</i> (162 minutes) Reading: "Jesus in Film: Hollywood Perspectives on the Jewishness of Jesus" by Adele Reinhartz in <i>Journal of Religion and Film</i> , Vol. 2, No. 2 October 1998 <a href="https://www.unomaha.edu/jrf/JesusinFilmRein.htm">https://www.unomaha.edu/jrf/JesusinFilmRein.htm</a>
<b>Week 13:</b> November 14-18	<i>The Last Temptation of Christ</i> (conclusion) Reading: "Screening the Temptation: Interpretation and Indeterminacy in Cinematic Transformations of a Gospel Story" by David B. Howell in <i>Journal of Religion and Film</i> , Vol. 11, No. 2 October 2007 <a href="https://www.unomaha.edu/jrf/vol11no2/HowellTempt.htm">https://www.unomaha.edu/jrf/vol11no2/HowellTempt.htm</a>  <b>Group Presentation, Wednesday, November 16</b>
<b>Thanksgiving Break - Monday, November 21 through Saturday, November 26, 2016</b>	
<b>Week 14:</b> November 28-December 2	<i>Donnie Darko</i> (Richard Kelly, 2001, 113 minutes) Reading: A handout will be provided and Review of <i>Buddhism and American Cinema</i> by Ronald S. Green <a href="http://www.globalbuddhism.org/jgb/index.php/jgb/article/download/155/168">www.globalbuddhism.org/jgb/index.php/jgb/article/download/155/168</a>
<b>Saturday, December 3 Make Up Day</b>	Watch Part 2 of <i>The Pervert's Guide</i> to the Cinema on Moodle
<b>Week 15:</b> December 5-7	<b>Group Presentation, Monday, December 5</b>
<b>Make Up Day Review Session</b>	On Moodle December 7th

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#### Contact information:

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