

PHI\_202\_621\_Briel, Jan\_Spring 2020

PHI 202: Religion and Film  
Spring 2020 Syllabus

Instructor: Jan Briel

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Course Meeting Dates and Times

**Start and End Dates:** 1/31-2/1; 2/7-2/8; 2/14-2/15.

**Meeting Days and Times: Fridays 5:00pm – 10:00pm;  
Saturdays 8:00am – 5:30pm.**

Required Textbook/Course Materials

***Myth and the Movies***, Stuart Voytilla.  
(Michael Wiese Productions, 1999.)

Part 1: Course Information

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to examine the variety of religious experience and expression that is found in the leading modern art form. This will be accomplished by examining films which have either/both an overtly religious

subject matter, or a religious subtext in their style. The basic concepts, ethics and symbolism of religion systems will be applied to the study of film in order to show how film itself may serve as religious experience.

Credit hours: 3

### Topical Outline

- Representation of religion in film
- Specific: histories, biographies.
- Implied: symbolic, mythological, or philosophical.
- Approaches
- Film as hierophany: religious interpretation of film.
- Film and the quest for meaning.
- Mythological themes
- Joseph Campbell's Hero cycle
- World Cinema
- Visual symbolism and ethical implications in non-Western Films

### Part 2: Course Objectives

#### REQUIRED COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Open the students' film-going experience to the possibilities of a symbolic/religious dimension.

- Acquaint the student with the technical and historical background necessary to examine the symbolic and metaphoric connection between film and religious expression.
- Expose students to religious and cultural expressions which may be unfamiliar.

## GUARANTEED TRANSFER (GT) PATHWAYS COURSE STATEMENT

The Colorado Commission on Higher Education has approved PHI 111 for inclusion in the

Guaranteed Transfer (GT) Pathways program in the GT-AH3 category. For transferring students,

successful completion with a minimum C– grade guarantees transfer and application of credit in

this GT Pathways category. For more information visit the GT Pathways program website

[<http://higher.ed.colorado.gov/academics/transfers/gtpathways/curriculum.html>]

## ARTS & HUMANITIES (AHUM) CONTENT CRITERIA GT-AH3

Respond analytically and critically to ways of thinking, by addressing one or more of the following:

- Logic
- Ethics

- The different questions dealt with by leading philosophers and/or theologians and their positions on those questions.

## COMPETENCIES & STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSOCIATED FOR GT-AH3

- Explain an Issue
- Use information to describe a problem or issue and/or articulate a question related to the topic.
- Utilize Content
- Evaluate the relevance of context when presenting a position.
- Identify assumptions.
- Analyze one's own and others' assumptions.
- Understand Implications and Make Conclusions
  - Establish a conclusion that is tied to the range of information presented.
  - Reflect on implications and consequences of stated conclusion.

## STANDARD COMPETENCIES:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the critical issues related to the academic study of religion.(A, C, D, E, F)
  - Construct a working definition of religion

- List and define academic approaches to the study of religion.
- Scrutinize the presuppositions of each approach.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of each approach.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the challenge modernity/post-modernity poses to traditional religion. (A, C, D, E, F)
  - Identify the elements of traditional religion.
  - Identify elements of modernity/post-modernity which conflict with the teachings/values of traditional religion.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the way films function as texts to convey meaning. (A, C, E, F)
  - Identify elements of cinematic technique.
  - Evaluate the effectiveness of these techniques in communicating meaning.
- Analyze selected films for their religious content. (A, C, E, F)

- Employ close/critical viewing/reading techniques.
- Identify major themes
- Evaluate the arguments that support each theme.
- Identify the assumptions behind the themes.
- Evaluate each individual film`s treatment of religious issues.
- Demonstrate an ability to synthesize the information gathered in the course through individual, written analysis of films. (A, B, C, E, F, G)
  - Identify the procedure in writing about this literature.
  - Determine the appropriate tools and resources.
  - Defend the analysis of a film.

#### TOPICAL OUTLINE:

- The sequence for presentation of the following material is
  - at the discretion of the instructor.
  - The critical study of religion
    - Defining religion
    - Critical Approaches to religion

- `Traditional Religion`
- Film Technique
  - Elements of film
  - Basic approaches to film criticism
- The Challenges of Modernity
  - The crisis of faith
  - Nihilism
  - Darwin and modern science
  - Freud and modern psychoanalysis
    - Modern technology and the loss of meaning
    - Transformations of Jesus
    - The end of the world
- Analyzing film for religious content: writing an analytical paper
  - Interpretive/analytical procedure
  - Tools and resources
  - Defense of analysis

### Part 3: Course Policies

## Course Requirements/Expectations

The mission of the RRCC Philosophy Department is to inspire students to live dynamic and thoughtful lives by helping them develop ideas and intellectual virtues conducive to human flourishing. We do this by introducing the rich heritage of the philosophical tradition and teaching students to think critically and creatively. You as the learner play a vital role in the quality of class time. Please come to class prepared and engaged.

Attendance is mandatory. If you absolutely must miss a class, then you alone are responsible for finding out what you missed. If possible, please inform the instructor in advance if you are going to miss a class. Students are expected to attend all class sessions. The instructor will present material based upon the expectation that the reading has been done.

- Students are responsible to meet all deadlines for the course unless serious and unforeseen
  - events can be documented for the instructor.
  - Make copies of all material sent through the mail; the instructor is not responsible for
  - undelivered assignments. Students will be required to resubmit any missing material.



- Under extreme circumstances, the grade of "Incomplete" may be assigned. The grade requires
  - that the student make up the coursework, on their own, by the end of the following semester.

## Part 4: Grading Policy

### Methods of Evaluation

- Attendance/Participation: 50 points
- Field Experience: 25 points
- Paper 1-Hero: 25 points

## GRADED COURSE ACTIVITIES

### **Points**

### **Description**

50

Participation

25

Field Experience

25

Paper 1

100

Total Points Possible

## GRADES

**Letter Grade**

**Percentage**

**Performance**

A

90-100%

Excellent Work

B

80-89%

Good Work

C

70-79%

Average Work

D

60-69%

Poor Work

F

0-59%

Failing Work

- To receive an "Incomplete" the student must be in good standing in the course at the time that the Incomplete is requested. If the Incomplete is not

resolved by the end of the following semester, the grade will revert to "F".

## Religion and Film Schedule

1/31 Introduction

Film as Hierophany

"Myth and the Movies"

2/1 Cinematic Transfigurations of Jesus

Visual Story and Religious Interpretation of  
Film

2/7 Cinema, Religion, and Popular Culture

Film and the Quest for Meaning

2/8 The Demonic in American Cinema

Analogy of Action in Film

2/14 Field Experience

2/15 Non-Western Films

**Assignments due: 2/15/2020**

## Important Dates

**STUDENTS: PLEASE VERIFY THE SPECIFIC DROP AND WITHDRAW DATES FOR THIS COURSE IN YOUR “Detailed Student Schedule (with Drop-Withdrawal Dates)” LINK IN THE ROCK, UNDER THE STUDENT TAB ([https://erpdnssb.cccs.edu/PRODRRCC/wt\\_student\\_sched.P\\_DisplayStudentSched](https://erpdnssb.cccs.edu/PRODRRCC/wt_student_sched.P_DisplayStudentSched))**

### **DROP/Census Date (last day to drop with a refund)**

This is the last day you can remove yourself from this class without having to pay for the class and without the class showing on your permanent student record. If you are considering dropping the class, please talk to your instructor first. If you are on financial aid, you should also consult a financial aid advisor before dropping a class. All students are encouraged to see an academic advisor about how dropping may affect their goals.

### **Withdraw date (last day to withdraw with a “W”)**

This is the last day you can remove yourself from this class and receive a “W” for the class instead of a grade. You are responsible for payment. If you are considering withdrawing from the class, please talk to your instructor first. If you are on financial aid, you should consult a financial aid advisor before withdrawing from a class. All students are encouraged to see an academic advisor about how withdrawing may affect their goals.