

# WORLD FILMS, WORLD FAITHS

RELI 145 / Spring 2009

Instructor: Dr. Brent (Rodríguez) Plate

## **Course Goals and Aims:**

This course will introduce the mythical stories, ritual practices, communal activities, and intellectual beliefs of several major world religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism) through the medium of film. The course aims to show how religious people around the world live and struggle and find joy in their lives. Film allows us a chance to see and hear people (even when fictional) and to think about the *lived lives* of people in their *religious worlds*.

Ultimately, this is a religious studies course, not a film studies course. We'll spend some time on aspects of film (cinematography, editing, etc.), but the focus will always come back to religion. We will learn about specific religious traditions, and also about broader religious topics like myths, rituals, symbols, beliefs, and texts.

## **Course Materials:**

Students will need to purchase the following book, available in the bookstore:

-*The Illustrated Guide to World Religions*, Michael Coogan, editor

-In addition, many readings are available at Blackboard (Noted as BB in the course schedule below) website and/or through library reserves

## **Course Requirements and Grade Distribution:**

There are 1,000 points possible in this class. The breakdown is like this:

- 100 -Attendance and participation
- 100 -13 weekly response paragraphs (WRP), each one worth approximately 8points.
- 300 -Film Review Essay
- 250 -Midterm
- 250 -Final

## **Course Outline**

### **Introducing Religion**

- 19 Jan-Mon Introduction to class
- 21 Jan -Wed Readings: Read through the definitions of religion at Blackboard for today (BB). Think about what definitions of religion you agree with most, and disagree with most, and come to class prepared to discuss.
- 23 Jan -Fri Worlds: Readings, William Paden, "Worlds," (BB)

- 26 Jan-Mon Worlds on Film: Readings: Plate, "The Altar and the Screen" (BB)
- 28 Jan-Wed The Sacred: Lynda Sexson, "Boxes," from *Ordinarily Sacred*  
Evening Screening: *Baraka* (US, et al; dir. Fricke, 96min)
- 30 Jan-Fri **WRP #1 due**: How does *Baraka* relate to the analysis of "religious worlds"? Be sure to include comment on the "sacred" in relation to the images of the film.
- 2 Feb-Mon Myth: Readings: Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 68-113 (excerpts from these pages, BB)
- 4 Feb -Wed Ritual: Readings: Livingston, *Anatomy of the Sacred*, 97-115. (BB)  
Evening Screening: *Eve and the Fire Horse* (Canada; dir. Kwan, 92min)
- 6 Feb -Fri **WRP #2 due**: How do myths and rituals operate in the lives of people? How does *Eve and the Fire Horse* demonstrate this influence?

### **Judaism**

- 9 Feb - Mon Readings: *World Religions*, pp. 14-29
- 11 Feb-Wed Readings: *World Religions*, pp. 30-39  
Evening Screening: *Ushpizin* (Israel; dir. Dar, 92min)
- 13 Feb - Fri **WRP #3 due**: Prompt TBA
- 16 Feb-Mon Readings: *World Religions*, pp. 40-51
- 18 Feb-Wed Evening Screening: *Ocho Candelas* or *Kadosh* (Israel/France; dir. Gitai, 110min)
- 20 Feb -Fri **WRP #4 due**: Prompt TBA

### **Christianity**

- 23 Feb-Mon Readings: *World Religions*, pp. 53-67
- 25 Feb-Wed Readings: *World Religions*, pp. 68-79  
Evening Screening: *Son of Man* (South Africa; dir. Dornford-May, 86min)
- 27 Feb -Fri **WRP #5 due**: Prompt TBA
- 2 Mar-Mon Readings: *World Religions*, pp. 80-87
- 4 Mar -Wed Readings: On theodicy (BB)  
Evening Screening: *The Last Supper* (Cuba; dir. Gutiérrez Alea, 120min)
- 6 Mar - Fri **WRP #6 due**: Prompt TBA

- 9 Mar - Mon **Review**
- 11 Mar-Wed **Review**
- 13 Mar -Fri **MidTerm**
- 16-20 -Mar **Spring Break**

## Islam

- 30 Mar-Mon Readings: *World Religions*, pp. 89-103
- 1 Apr -Wed Readings: *World Religions*, pp. 104-111  
Evening Screening: *Le Grand Voyage* (France/Morocco; dir. Ferroukhi, 108min)
- 3 Apr -Fri **WRP #7 due:** Prompt TBA
- 6 Apr- Mon Readings: *World Religions*, pp. 112-123
- 8 Apr- Wed Evening Screening: *The Clay Bird* (France/Pakistan/Bangladesh; dir. Masud, 94min)
- 10 Apr -Fri **WRP #8 due:** Prompt TBA

## Hinduism

- 13 Apr-Mon Readings: *World Religions*, pp. 125-137
- 15 Apr-Wed Readings: *World Religions*, pp. 138-145  
Evening Screening: *Lagaan* (India; dir. Gowariker, 224min)
- 17 Apr-Fri **WRP #9 due:** Prompt TBA
- 20 Apr-Mon Readings: *World Religions*, pp. 146-161  
**FILM REVIEW ESSAY DUE TODAY**
- 22 Apr-Wed Evening Screening: *Water* (Canada/India; dir. Deepa Mehta, 117min)
- 24 Apr -Fri **WRP #10 due:** Prompt TBA

## Buddhism

- 27 Apr-Mon Readings: *World Religions*, pp. 163-177
- 29 Apr-Wed Readings: *World Religions*, pp. 178-185  
Evening Screening: *Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter . . . and Spring* (South Korea; dir. Ki-Duk, 103min)
- 1 May -Fri Readings: *World Religions*, pp. 186-197  
**WRP #11 due:** Prompt TBA
- 4 May- Mon Readings: *World Religions*, pp. 238-249
- 6 May- Wed Readings: *World Religions*, pp. 258-269  
Evening Screening: *Princess Mononoke* (Japan; dir. Miyazaki, 134min)
- 8 May-Fri Readings: none  
**WRP #12 due:** Prompt TBA
- 13 May- Wed **Final Exam: 9-12am**