



**FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS AND RELIGION
COURSE OUTLINE
Fall 2020**

COURSE NUMBER: RELS 399.01

COURSE NAME: Religion in Popular Culture (Watching Film Religiously)

CLASSROOM LOCATION: Electronic Course Through Desire2Learn

CLASS DAYS & TIMES: Asynchronous Delivery

INSTRUCTOR: Laura Jurgens

EMAIL: lkjurgens@ucalgary.ca

PHONE: (403) 220-5612 (Campus Office)

INSTRUCTOR EMAIL POLICY: Please use email as the primary contact method. Please note that all course communications must occur through your @ucalgary email. Please be courteous. Inquiries related to a test must be sent no less than 24 hours before. I am also happy to talk with students so please make an appointment with me over email, if you wish to chat.

OFFICE HOURS:

By appointment, so that I can schedule meetings based on student's needs and their schedules. Please email to set up appointment.

COURSE CALENDAR STATEMENT: The intersection of religion with popular culture is explored through specific topics.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will examine the presentation of religion and religious topics in popular culture, specifically focusing on religion and film. Students will discover how movies are a rich source for thinking about religion and religious practices in public life. In this course, students will explore various films, focusing mainly on modern movies, and students will analyze how these films relate to religion. Students will also explore various themes, such as religion in horror movies, as well as religion and violence in films. A few examples of the movies that we will examine include *Harry Potter*, *Borat*, *Pixar's Inside Out*, etc.

This course will take place **online** via Desire2Learn (D2L). This course will occur asynchronously. This means that there are no "real-time" or "live" lectures. Rather, students will complete the material for each module on their own time (example: complete the readings, watch videos, etc.). Students will have access to audio lectures recorded by the instructor.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Committed students will become familiar with the theories and methods of studying religion and film. Students will have the opportunity to reflect on key issues in the study of religion and film by reading various academic articles. Students will be able to recognize the way in which popular culture expresses religious symbols or ideas from examining various examples from modern movies. Students will recognize that movies are a rich academic source for thinking and learning about religion.

LEARNING RESOURCES

There is no required textbook for this course. However, there will be individual required readings. These readings will be listed on Desire2Learn and will be accessible through the University of Calgary library (as online resources) or available elsewhere, for free, online (like academic articles or sections of eBooks).

LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES AND REQUIREMENTS

There is a Desire2Learn site for this course which contains required readings and other relevant class resources and materials (see d2l.ucalgary.ca). Students will complete all assessments and submit them through Desire2Learn. There is no “live” or synchronous component to this class. In order to successfully engage in their learning experiences at the University of Calgary, students taking an online course, like this one, are required to have reliable access to the following technology:

- A computer with a supported operating system
- A current and updated web browser
- Broadband (strong) internet connection

CLASS SCHEDULE

<i>September 8 – First Day of Classes</i>		
Schedule	Topic	Readings
Weeks 1 & 2 (September 8 – September 22)	Module One: Studying Religion and Popular Culture	Jane Wright, Some Trends in Religious Film Analysis, 11-32
Week 3 (September 22 – September 29) Submit Reading Response #1	Module Two: Religion and Controversy in Film	Rachel Wagner, Bewitching the Box Office: Harry Potter and Religious Controversy, 1-16

on September 29		
October 1 – Test (Open from 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.)		
<p>Weeks 4 & 5</p> <p>(September 29 – October 13)</p> <p>Submit Reading Response #2 on October 13</p> <p>Submit Proposal and Bibliography by October 19</p>	<p>Module Three:</p> <p>Anti-Jewish Attitudes and Movies</p>	<p>Stephen Wylen, Anti-Semitism, 238-246</p> <p>William James, Borat and Anti-Semitism, 1-12</p>
<p>Week 6</p> <p>(October 13 – October 20)</p> <p>Submit Reading Response #3 On October 20</p>	<p>Module Four:</p> <p>Religion and Suffering in Cinema</p>	<p>Bertha Manninen, Suffering and Soul-Making in Disney/Pixar's Inside Out, 1-24</p>
<p>Weeks 7 & 8</p> <p>(October 20 – November 6)</p> <p>Submit Reading Response #4 on November 6</p>	<p>Module Five:</p> <p>Religion and Horror Movies</p>	<p>Bryan Stone, The Sanctification of Fear: Images of the Religious in Horror Films, 1-29</p>
November 8 – 14 – Reading Week (Weeks 9 & 10)		
<p>Weeks 11 & 12</p> <p>(November 16 – December 1)</p> <p>Submit Essay by November 27</p> <p>Submit Reading Response #5 on December 1</p>	<p>Module Six:</p> <p>Religion and Violence in Film</p>	<p>James Wellman and Kyoko Tokuno, Is Religious Violence Inevitable?, 291-296</p> <p>Bryan Stone, Religion and Violence in Popular Film, 1-22</p> <p>Rubina Ramji, Examining the Critical Role American Popular Film Continues to Play in Maintaining the Muslim Terrorist Image, Post 9/11, 1-16</p>
<p>Week 13</p> <p>(December 1 – December 9)</p>	<p>Module Seven:</p>	<p>Stanley Rothman, Is God Really Dead in Beverly Hills?, 272-279</p>

Submit Reading Response #6 on December 9	Future of Religion in Hollywood	
<i>December 9 – Last Day of Classes</i>		

EXAMINATIONS

There is no final exam for this course.

ASSESSMENT COMPONENTS

Deadline	Assessment	Weight (%)
On the last day of each module: ❖ September 29 ❖ October 13 ❖ October 20 ❖ November 6 ❖ December 1 ❖ December 9	Reading Responses (6 x 5% = 30%)	30%
On Thursday, October 1	Test	20%
By Monday, October 19	Proposal and Bibliography	15%
By Friday, November 27	Essay	35%

Assessment Descriptions:

Reading Responses (30%): You are required to complete a short reading response to the readings in Modules #2 – 7. You will write a short summary of the assigned readings for each of these modules and provide your own perspectives informed by the information that you have learned from the rest of the course. The responses are a minimum of one page and maximum of two pages (double-spaced). Be sure to highlight key issues, themes, or questions that you feel are important to these readings. Submit responses to the appropriate Dropbox folder on D2L by midnight on the assigned due dates.

Test (20%): The test will be completed through Desire2Learn and will be based on the required readings, the audio lectures, and videos from the first few weeks of class. The test will be available from 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. (Calgary time) on Thursday, October 1st. Students are expected to take the test within that period. The test will also be individually timed, requiring students to complete the test in one sitting and within a specified time limit. Students are expected to complete the test independently and students are

not allowed to work with others or have others write their test for them as this would count as academic misconduct.

Proposal and Bibliography (15%): You will write an essay proposal consisting of 500 words. The proposal should outline the topic that you have chosen, your approach to it (your method), and two of the sources that you are planning on using (proposed bibliography). Do not provide an annotated bibliography, but instead, simply provide a reference list of the sources that you intend on using in your essay. Please submit your proposal by Monday, October 19th at midnight

Essay (35%): You will write an essay composed of a maximum of 1,500 to 2,000 words (excluding citations and bibliography) that will explore a research topic of your own choice that is related to the course. You are expected to use at least **four** academic sources (example: books, academic journal articles, academic websites like the BBC or the New York Times, etc.). Make sure to use academic works, especially material that you can find at the U of C library or on Google Books. Your essay needs to include citations and a bibliography following whichever citation method that they normally use (ex: APA, Chicago, MLA, etc). Citations and works cited list should accurately follow the format that the student has chosen. Plagiarism will not be tolerated for any written work and any instances of plagiarism will be immediately reported. Essays are due by Friday, November 27th. I am happy to accept early submissions.

Extra Assignments: There are no extra assignments for this course. Students will not be given an opportunity to submit extra work or retake tests to increase their grade.

MISSED OR LATE ASSIGNMENTS

It is your responsibility to ensure that you complete all tests and assignments within the allotted time. If you do not complete a test within the specified time given, contact your instructor as soon as possible. If a student is unable to complete a test due to technical issues (interruption of Internet service or computer, server malfunction, etc.), the student must notify the instructor within 24 hours via email. It is important for students to ensure that they have access to dependable Internet and power sources. For example, if your battery dies, it will not be considered an acceptable reason for failing to complete the test. For students who experience technical issues, please contact the instructor as soon as possible. In the meantime, document your technical issues with a screenshot to show the instructor. With regards to assignments, they will be deducted 15% each day (24 hours) that it is overdue. For example, if the assignment is due on Monday by midnight, then the late penalty takes effect on Tuesday at 12:01 a.m. Then, 15% is deducted every day (15% on Tuesday, then another 15% on Wednesday at 12:01 a.m. etc.).

GRADING

A numerical mark will be given for each course requirement. A letter grade will be assigned on the following number and letter grade scheme, usually used within the Department of Classics and Religion:

A+	100 - 96	A	95 - 90	A-	89 - 85
B+	84 - 80	B	79 - 75	B-	74 - 70

C+	69 - 65	C	64 - 60	C-	59 - 55
D+	54 - 53	D	52-50	F	Under 50

A student's final grade for the course is the sum of the separate tests and assignments. It is not necessary to pass each test or assignment separately in order to pass the course. In other words, there are no assessments that are graded "pass/fail." The instructor will implement a standard measure of .5% adjustment for rounding up grades. For example, 59.5% will be rounded up to 60%. Only final grades are adjusted (individual tests are not rounded up). Please do not send emails asking the instructor to "round-up" your final grade. See the University's undergraduate grading system: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/f-1.html>.

EXPECTATIONS FOR WRITING

There is an expectation that all writing is your own. This means that you do not directly copy material from other sources or another person. This also means that you do not paraphrase (re-write) someone else's work in your own words without also citing (providing a citation, like a footnote) to show where you found the information. This is very important as plagiarism is not tolerated at the University of Calgary and has serious consequences. Your work must be your own and inadequate referencing may be seen as plagiarism. Please see the relevant sections on Academic Misconduct in the current University Calendar (section K, which can be found here: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>). If you have questions about correct referencing, please consult your instructor, or librarian staff.

All writing assignments (including the reading responses) will be assessed on both form and content. This means that writing skills are important for your writing assignments. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) but also general clarity and organization. If you need help with your writing, you may use the writing support services in the Learning Commons. For further information, please refer to the official online University of Calgary Calendar, Academic Regulations, E. Course Information, E.2: Writing Across the Curriculum: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-2.html>

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS

All written assignments must be submitted to the Dropbox on Desire2Learn. Assignments must be submitted in either a Word or PDF format. Submissions that do not adhere to these formats may be considered "late" until the proper format is provided. Assignments must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. (Calgary time) on their due dates.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Academic Misconduct refers to student behavior which compromises proper assessment of a student's academic activities and includes: cheating; fabrication; falsification; plagiarism; unauthorized assistance; failure to comply with an instructor's expectations regarding conduct required of students completing academic assessments in their courses; and failure to comply with exam regulations applied by the Registrar.

For information on the Student Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure please visit:

<https://ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-academic-misconduct-policy.pdf>

<https://ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-academic-misconduct-procedure.pdf>

Additional information is available on the Academic Integrity Website at <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/learning/academic-integrity>.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations according to the University policies and procedures listed below. The Student Accommodations policy is available at <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/access/prospective-students/academic-accommodations>. Students needing an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/procedure-for-accommodations-for-students-with-disabilities.pdf>). Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than Disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor.

SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/.

INSTRUCTOR INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Course materials created by instructors (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Wellness and Mental Health Resources: The University of Calgary recognizes the pivotal role that mental health plays in physical health, social connectedness and academic success, and aspires to create a caring and supportive campus community where individuals can freely talk about mental health and receive support when needed. We encourage you to explore the excellent mental health resources available throughout the university community, such as counselling, self-help resources, peer support or skills-building available through Student Wellness Services (Room 370 MacEwan Student Centre, <https://www.ucalgary.ca/wellness-services/services/mental-health-services>) and the Campus Mental Health Strategy (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/mentalhealth/>).

Student Success Centre: The Student Success Centre provides services and programs to ensure students can make the most of their time at the University of Calgary. Our advisors, learning support staff, and writing support staff assist students in enhancing their skills and achieving their academic goals. They provide tailored learning support and advising programs, as well as one-on-one services, free of charge to all undergraduate and graduate students. For more information visit:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success>

Student Ombuds Office: The Student Ombuds Office supports and provides a safe, neutral space for students. For more information, please visit www.ucalgary.ca/ombuds/ or email ombuds@ucalgary.ca. Please visit the Registrar's website at: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines>

Student Union (SU) Information: The SU Vice-President Academic can be reached at (403) 220-3911 or suvpaca@ucalgary.ca; Information about the SU, including elected Faculty Representatives, can be found here: <https://www.su.ucalgary.ca>