

**UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

Rels 399.05 L20 – *Religion and Popular Culture: The Bible and Film*

COURSE OUTLINE - SPRING 2010

Logistics

Prerequisites: *None*

Time: Tuesday and Thursday, 6:00-8:45pm

Location: ST 131

Instructor: Dr. David A. Bergen
dabergen@ucalgary.ca
403-220-7063

Office Hours (SS 1308): Tuesday and Thursday, 1:00-2:00pm

Textbooks: PDF and HTML materials posted in Blackboard (no textbook purchase required)

NRSV Bible (online version: <http://bible.oremus.org/>)

Course Description

Why does the hitman Jules repeatedly deliver a diatribe from the prophet Ezekiel in *Pulp Fiction*? What does *The Truman Show* have to do with Adam and Eve or *The Prestige* with Jesus? And why do so many moderns relish an escape into the virtual realities of film, yet also—even within the same day—escape into ancient biblical worlds? In comparing the Bible with modern cinematography, students will apply a variety of academic frameworks to analyze human engagements with framed realities. Of particular importance will be the primary themes of academic interest when studying religion: mythology, scripturality, suspension of disbelief, iconography, and ideology. As the course unfolds, students will explore the tendency to scripturalize virtual productions, a process that transforms virtual constructions into cognitive maps which enable humans to persevere in an environment which is often confused and hostile.

This course follows the academic mandate set out by Bruce Lincoln:

*When one permits those whom one studies to define the terms in which they will be understood, suspends one's interest in the temporal and contingent, or fails to distinguish between 'truths,' 'truth-claims,' and 'regimes of truth,' one has ceased to function as a historian or scholar. In that moment, a variety of roles are available: some perfectly capable (amanuensis, collector, friend and advocate) and some less appealing (cheerleader, voyeur, retailer of import goods). None, however should be confused with scholarship. ("Theses on Method," *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 8, 225-7; 1996)*

Learning Assessment

Five critical papers (due dates posted in Blackboard) 60%

These critical papers will involve a combination of group-work and individual effort. Students will view each film in preassigned viewing groups—following each viewing the groups will discuss the film *from the critical perspective associated with each particular film*. Then each student will write and submit a maximum one-page, double-spaced paper containing two parts: a few comments on the viewing experiences of the group (25%), and an insightful discussion of the film and its relationship to the Bible (75%). While each paper will be assessed as an individual product, the better the group discussion, the better the individual paper.

Midterm test (June 7)	20%
Take-Home final test (due June 28)	20%
	Total: 100%

**There will be no Registrar scheduled final exam for this course.*

Student Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> engaged class attendance intellectual knowledge and understanding of materials assigned and presented critical academic analysis and reflection on course topic(s) 												
Grading Scale	<p>A numerical grade is assigned for each course requirement. Following the final graded component, a letter grade is assigned, using the department-approved table of equivalencies:</p> <table> <tr> <td>A+ 100-96</td> <td>B+ 84-80</td> <td>C+ 69-65</td> <td>D+ 54-53</td> </tr> <tr> <td>A 95-90</td> <td>B 79-75</td> <td>C 64-60</td> <td>D 52-50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>A- 89-85</td> <td>B- 74-70</td> <td>C- 59-55</td> <td>F under 50</td> </tr> </table> <p>N.B. All written assignments will be graded with regard to both form and content.</p>	A+ 100-96	B+ 84-80	C+ 69-65	D+ 54-53	A 95-90	B 79-75	C 64-60	D 52-50	A- 89-85	B- 74-70	C- 59-55	F under 50
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A 95-90	B 79-75	C 64-60	D 52-50										
A- 89-85	B- 74-70	C- 59-55	F under 50										
Academic Honesty	<p><i>Plagiarism is not tolerated at the University of Calgary and has serious consequences. Your essays/presentations must be your own work and inadequate referencing may be seen as plagiarism. Please see the relevant sections on Academic Misconduct in the current University Calendar. If you have questions about correct referencing, please consult your instructor.</i></p>												
Important Dates	<p>Please note the information regarding withdrawals and fee refunds in the current University Calendar.</p>												
Academic Accommodation	<p>If you are a student with a disability who requires academic accommodation and you have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 403-220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. Once registered, please discuss any upcoming tests/examinations with the instructor two weeks before the scheduled date.</p>												
Course Withdrawal	<p>Please note the information regarding withdrawals and fee refunds in the Academic Schedule of the current University Calendar.</p>												
Lecture Recording	<p>Recording any part of any lectures in any form must be first approved by the instructor in writing and is for individual private study only. See current Calendar, Tape recording of Lectures.</p>												
Safewalk Program	<p>"You don't have to walk alone...." Call 403-220-5333 and a member of the Safewalk Team will walk you to your car, the LRT, or any destination on campus. Safewalk is available to all students, staff and faculty any time of the day or night. Look for the Campus Security Help Phones located throughout the University. Please don't hesitate to call!</p>												
Gnosis	<p>Gnosis is the Religious Studies Student Club. For membership or more information please email: gnosis@ucalgary.ca or visit http://www.ucalgary.ca/~gnosis.</p>												