

HIST 489.501: Special Topics: CHRISTIANITY IN FILM
RELS 489.501: Special Topics: CHRISTIANITY IN FILM
FILM 394.500: STUDIES IN GENRE

Spring 2006

INSTRUCTORS: Daniel Bornstein, John Lenihan

CONTACT INFORMATION:

	<u>Daniel Bornstein</u>	<u>John Lenihan</u>
office:	Glasscock Building 301	Glasscock Building 111B
office phone:	862-1314	845-7149
office hours:	T 1:00-4:00 and by appointment	MW 3:00-4:00 and by appointment
e-mail:	d-bornstein@tamu.edu	j-lenihan@tamu.edu

DESCRIPTION: This team-taught course will engage students in a study of film representations of beliefs and trends related to the history of Christianity. The first half of the semester will focus on how filmmakers from Cecil B. DeMille to Mel Gibson have envisioned biblical accounts in the New Testament; the remainder of the semester will be devoted to motion-picture depictions of various events and issues in the history of Christianity. Films will be examined in class together with assigned readings. Lengthier films will be screened out of class at EDMS in the Library Annex; these are required viewing at one of the designated times (see Schedule of Classes). Students will have the opportunity to explore other films on an assortment of related topics and issues in a paper.

CONTENT ADVISORY: Several of the films we will view are rated R for graphic violence and/or sexual content. Some of the assigned readings contain material that is at variance with orthodox Christian doctrine. Registering for this course entails a commitment on your part to view the assigned films and do the assigned readings.

REQUIRED READINGS: (Purchase Pelikan; others on Reserve)

New Testament (selections)

Jaroslav Pelikan, Jesus Through the Centuries

Cecil B. DeMille, Autobiography, ed. Donald Hayne, pp. 170-176, 274-285, 320-325, 342-345

Richard Maltby, "The King of Kings and the Czar of All the Rushes"

Charles Musser, "Passions and the Passion Play" (in Francis Couvares, ed., Movie Censorship and American Culture, pp. 43-72)

Oswald Stack, Pasolini on Pasolini, pp. 73-98

Walter Rauschenbusch, "Theology for the Social Gospel" (in Loren Baritz, ed., Sources of the American Mind, vol. 2, pp. 48-68)

S. Brent Plate, Re-Viewing The Passion, chapters 1, 5, 10, 11, 12, appendix: Marvin Perry and Frederick M. Schweitzer, "The Medieval Passion Play Revisited"; Darren J. N. Middleton, "Celluloid Synoptics"; Amy-Jill Levine, "Mel Gibson, the Scribes, and the Pharisees"; Neal King, "Truth at Last"; Robert H. Woods,

- Michael C. Jindra, and Jason D. Baker, "The Audience Responds to *The Passion of the Christ*"; "Appendix: Criteria for the Evaluation of Dramatizations of the Passion"
- Bart D. Ehrman, Lost Scriptures, pp. 19-28, 35-44
- Margaret Miles, Seeing and Believing, chapters 2, 3, 5
- Maria Wyke, Projecting the Past, chapters 1, 5
- Tom O'Brien, The Screening of America, chapters 11, 12
- John McManners, ed., The Oxford History of Christianity, chapter 5: Jeremy Johns, "Christianity and Islam"
- Michael Medved, Hollywood vs America, pp. 37-49, 87-91
- Michael Morris, "Of God and Man"
- Charles Lyons, "The Paradox of Protest" (in Francis Couvares, ed., Movie Censorship and American Culture, pp. 300-311)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Semester grade is based on a midterm (35%) and final (40%) exam and a paper (25%). Grades will not be curved.

Exams require thoughtful responses to essay questions covering lecture, discussions, films, and readings.

The paper is a 5-6 page analysis of at least one film (other than those screened for the course) on a topic related to the course subject. It will be graded for quality of analysis as well as stylistic correctness. Be sure to cite sources (including page numbers) from which you quote or derive material pertinent to your analysis. Books and articles that you consult should be listed in a bibliography.

Participation in class discussions is encouraged and everyone is expected to have completed the readings and film viewings assigned for each class to assure thoughtful deliberations. Notable contribution to class discussion grade will count for as much as 10% of your semester grade, with a proportionate decrease in the weight given to your lowest exam score (e.g. a midterm grade could be reduced from 35% to 25% of your semester grade).

No semester grade higher than a B will be granted for more than one unexcused absence and no higher than a C for more than 2 unexcused absences.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND PLAGIARISM STATEMENT:

Students need to consult the University's information regarding plagiarism on-line at <http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor>. Plagiarism is a form of cheating. According to the aggie honor website, "plagiarism" can be understood as "the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results or words without giving appropriate credit." Plagiarism may involve uncited or uncredited use of papers or materials taken in whole or in part from other persons or references, such as from Internet Web sites, books, magazines, journals, or newspapers, or from other students' papers. If you are unsure of the meaning of this description, confer with the professor. As a practical guideline, if you take five or more words in sequence from any source, place them in quotations marks and credit the source. Committing plagiarism will result in receiving an 'F' on the assignment, possibly an 'F' in the course, and may lead to expulsion from TAMU.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT:

The *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Department of Student Life in Cain Hall (845-1637).

CHRISTIANITY IN FILM
WEEKLY TOPICS AND FILMS

* Films marked with an asterisk must be viewed in library (EDMS) at one of the following screenings in the week prior to class: Thursday 4 or 7 pm, Sunday 7 pm, Monday 4 pm.

- 1/17 Introduction.
Readings: Pelikan, pp 1-33
- 1/24 Gospel According to DeMille. King of Kings (1927)*, clip from Intolerance
Readings: Maltby; Musser; DeMille pp 274-85; Pelikan, pp 57-70
- 1/31 Gospel According to Pasolini. The Gospel According to St. Matthew*
Readings: New Testament, gospel of Matthew; Rauschenbusch; Stack; Pelikan, pp 71-94
- 2/7 Gospel According to Gibson. Passion of the Christ*, clips from Braveheart, Sebastiane
Readings: New Testament passion narratives (Matthew 26:1-27:66; Mark 14:1-15:47; Luke 22:1-23:56; John 18:1-19:42); Perry and Schweitzer; Levine; King; Woods, Jindra, and Baker; "Criteria" (=Plate chs 1, 10, 11, 12, appendix); Pelikan, pp 95-108
- 2/14 Non-Canonical Gospels. The Last Temptation of Christ*, Life of Brian
Readings: Ehrman (gospels of Thomas, Mary, Philip); Middleton (=Plate ch 5); O'Brien chs 11, 12; Lyons pp 300-18; Morris; Medved pp 37-49, 87-91
- 2/21 Modern Stagings of the Passion. Jesus of Montreal*, clip from Jesus Christ, Superstar
Readings: Miles ch 2
- 2/28 MIDTERM EXAM
- 3/7 "There's No Place Like Rome, M'Boy." Clips from The Silver Chalice, Sign of the Cross, The Robe
Readings: Wyke chs 1, 5; DeMille pp 320-25; Pelikan, pp 34-56
- 3/14 SPRING BREAK
- 3/21 The Saints. Simon of the Desert; clips from Brother Sun, Sister Moon, Francesco, Passion of Joan of Arc, Joan the Woman
Readings: DeMille 170-76; Pelikan, pp 109-121, 133-144

- 3/28 Christianity and Islam. Clips from The Crusades, Robin and Marian, Kingdom of Heaven
Readings: Johns (=McManners ch 5); DeMille pp 342-45; Pelikan, pp 168-181
PAPERS DUE
- 4/4 New Worlds. Clips from Captain from Castile, The Mission, Black Robe
Readings: McManners ch 9; Miles ch 3; Pelikan, pp 206-233
- 4/11 Virgin Visions. The Miracle; clips from Song of Bernadette, The Virgin Spring,
and Hail Mary
Readings: Pelikan, pp 122-132
- 4/18 “Take Up Your Cross and Follow Me”. Clips from Elmer Gantry, The Apostle
Readings: Pelikan, pp 145-167, 182-193
- 4/25 Apocalypse Now. Clips from The Rapture and Mediggo
Readings: Miles ch 5
- 4/28 FINAL EXAM (7:30-9:30 am – date and time subject to change by agreement of
the class)