

Rev. Dr. L. Mercadante
Office: 740-362-3442
Lmercadante@mtso.edu

Film and Theology

J-Term 2009

COURSE DESCRIPTION

We live in a media-saturated age and this has affected our lives in ways we do not yet fully realize. It has changed our window on reality, our self-perceptions, and our expectations. One aspect of modern media, film, has become a key storyteller for our culture. Story-telling is very important, for stories have always had a prime place in religion and culture. They can both shape and reflect our views of reality, as well as our actions. One task of theology is to reflect upon the story of the Gospel and the way it gives meaning to our lives. But how is meaning made *now*, when media has become our “common culture” and when one powerful resource for this meaning-making is the “symbolic inventory” arrayed in film?

CONTACTING THE INSTRUCTOR

Students may email me (Lmercadante@mtso.edu) or telephone my office at any time (740-362-3442). If necessary, leave a voice mail message. Students may contact me at my home office *during business hours* if the matter is urgent (614-848-3455). Students are invited to make an appointment to discuss the course work any time this becomes necessary.

Course Requirements

1. **Attendance and participation** at every session is expected. Students are to come prepared, having read the material, prepared any assigned activity, having seen any assigned films and ready to take part in discussion. Be an active member of the class. *[In an intensive, missing class will seriously jeopardize your grade.]* (20%)
2. **Class presentations and written assignments.** (30%)
3. **Two-Part Final Project** (50%)
 - a) One research paper in proper format, with foot or end-notes and bibliography [10 pgs].

b) Report on a film discussion group which you will lead, based on your research paper [3 pgs]. *Instructions below.*

PROGRESS OF THE COURSE

I Theology, Film, and Culture

1/5

Our media practices and choices

Living in a media-saturated age

Media, especially film, as common-culture and resource

Spirituality and religiosity today

Experience, belief and action

Discussion of pre-class reading and assignment

PowerPoints on Film and Theology

Reading Assignment

- a) Deacy and Ortiz, *Theology and Film*, chap. 1, pp.3-75
- b) Mitchell and Plate, *The Religion and Film Reader*, pp. 306-336 [articles by Deacy, Johnston, Marsh, May], 407-426 [Dorsky, Lyden, Martin]
- c) *Reframing Theology and Film*, pp.29-50 [Detweiler], 73-87 [Ortiz], 145-161 [Marsh]; 205-218 [Lyden]

Written Assignment:

This paper will be turned in and graded; it should be about 5 pages.

1. Write a one paragraph reflection on each article [11] in this assignment.
 - Explain the most important thing you learned from this article (repeat for each).
 - Then briefly discuss all these insights theologically (for example, reflect on truth, inspiration, a particular doctrine, authority, human nature, revelation, idolatry, church, religious experience, world religions, etc.)
2. Make a list of the 3 to 5 films which have made the largest impression on you over your life-time.
 - Explain why in a sentence or two.
 - Then jot down key scenes from them which you remember or can replay in your mind.
 - Obtain one of these films and find at least one short clip from it [maximum 5 minutes] and bring it in to class.
3. Write a page or so:
 - From your readings, what role does film play in culture today? What are some ways that film functions 'religiously' or 'spiritually' in the lives of viewers today?

1/6

A. Reading Assignment:

- a) Graham Murdock, "The Re-Enchantment of the World: Religion and the Transformation of Modernity," 85-100, in Hoover and Lundby, Rethinking Media, Religion, and Culture
- b) Peter G. Horsfield, "Changes in Religion in Periods of Media Convergence," 167-183, in Rethinking...
- c) Stewart M. Hoover, "Media and the Construction of the Religious Public Sphere," 283-297, in Rethinking...

B. Written Assignment:

Write a paragraph on each article, explaining the most important thing you learned. Think of examples from films to illustrate your points. Explain what impact this has had on your theology and/or what theological questions it has raised for you.

C. Additional Reading for Class Contribution:

Each student will be assigned *one* additional reading and prepare a 1-2 page summary of its content and most important point(s) (make copy for each class member and instructor). You will have 10 minutes to present this to the class, primarily using an example (from film, personal experience, or anecdotal) which illustrates a key point of your reading [10 mins. maximum].

- a) Gregor Goethals, "Escape from Time: Ritual Dimensions of Popular Culture," 117-132, in Rethinking...
- b) Gabriel Bar-Haim, "The Dispersed Sacred: Anomie and the Crisis of Ritual," 133-145, in Rethinking...
- c) Janice Peck, "Psychologized Religion in a Mediated World," 227-245, in Rethinking...
- d) Stewart Hoover, "From medium to meaning: the evolution of theories about media, religion, and culture," (pp.26-44) in Religion in the Media Age.
- e) Stewart Hoover, "Media and religion in transition," (pp.45-83) in Religion in the Media Age.
- f) Stewart Hoover, "Articulating life and culture in the media age: plausible narratives of the self," (pp.84-112), in Religion in the Media Age.
- g) Stewart Hoover, "Reception of religion and media," (pp.113-146), in Religion in the Media Age.
- h) Lynch, "Film and the Subjective Turn," in Reframing Theology and Film, 109-125
- i) Taylor, "The Colors of Sound," in Reframing Theology and Film, pp. 51-69

Film Suggestion:

My Big Fat Greek Wedding (2002, 95 mins.)

Make notes in class on cinematic techniques. Do preliminary ideological, mythological and theological critiques.

II. Film in Itself; Theology and Film

1/7

A. Film as Film

- a. Familiarize yourself with these topics in cinematic technique. For your assigned topic, write up a one-page summary and make enough copies for each class member and come to class ready to analyze a film from that perspective.
 - i. Mise-en-scene
 - ii. Editing and transitions
 - iii. Sound and music
 - iv. Characterization and casting
 - v. Camera shots, angle, shot size
 - vi. Special effects
 - vii. Color and lighting
 - viii. Story
 - ix. Film theories and ways of interpreting [theological, mythological, ideological, etc.]

B. Theology and Film: Doctrines and Themes

Redemption

- Read in *Theology Goes to the Movies*, chap. 7 (93-107)
- Read in *Theology and Film Reader*, Arriaga, (244-246); Allen, (240-243)
- Read in *Flickering Images*, "The Color Purple," chap. 23, (271-278)

Film Suggestions:

Crimes and Misdemeanors (1989, 104 mins.)

21 Grams (2003, 124 mins)

1/8

Eschatology

- Read in *Theology Goes to the Movies*, chap. 10, (141-156)
- Read in *Theology and Film*, "Heaven, Hell, and the Sweet Hereafter: Theological Perspectives on Eschatology and Film," (178-199)
- Read in *Screening the Sacred*, "Hollywood and Armageddon: Apocalyptic Themes in Recent Cinematic Presentation," (55-63)

Written Assignment: Write up a short (1-2 pages) theological review of yesterday's film. Keep plot summary to a few sentences and do not quote dialogue unless very relevant. Briefly discuss relevant cinematic techniques. Then discuss the film theologically. Use your space efficiently and wisely. Add foot- or end-notes for the sources you consult.

Film Suggestions:

After Life (1999, 118 mins, Japan)

What Dreams May Come (1998, 113 mins)

1/9

Human Being

- Read in *Theology Goes to Movies*, chap.5 (60-78)
- Read in *Explorations in Theology and Film*, "Liberation in Awakenings," pp.97-114; Ortiz and Roux, "Hi-Tech Holiness and the Human Condition," 141-154.
- Read in *Flickering Images*, "Blade Runner: On the Definition of Humanity," 341-345.

Presentation Assignment: View one of the films mentioned in these articles and come in with an illustrative film clip of no more than 5 minutes to help us think theologically about this scene/film. Summarize the plot in a few sentences only, getting at the main theme. Write up 3-5 questions and lead a brief class discussion.

Possible Films:

Trembling Before God (2001, 84 mins, Israel)

Bicentennial Man (1999, 132 mins)

1/9

Church and sacraments

- Read in *Theology Goes to the Movies*, chaps. 8, 9 (109-140)
- Read in *Flickering Images*, "Witness," chap. 19, (247-250); chap. 17 "The Mission," (233-240)

Film Suggestions:

The Apostle (1997, 134 mins.)

The Mission (1986, 126 mins)

Babette's Feast (1987, 102 mins)

Written Assignment: Write up a short (1-2 pages) theological review of yesterday's film, if time permitted. If not, view a film which you believe can be discussed from the perspective of theological anthropology and write a brief review of it. Again, do not waste space on extensive plot summary or dialogue. Set the plot in a few sentences, describe relevant cinematic techniques briefly, and then do a theological analysis.

1/12

- a. God/ Jesus/Christ figures
- Read in *Theology Goes to the Movies*, chaps. 4 (47-59)
 - Read in *Theology and Film Reader*, Baugh, pp.203-207, Scorsese, 267-8, Mitchell and Plate, 343-347; Anker, 303-305
 - Read in *Explorations in Theology and Film*, Telford, "Jesus Christ Movie Star," pp.115-139.
 - Read in *Flickering Images*, "Bucking the System: One Flew Over the Cuckoos Nest," chap.8, (113-122)
 - Peter Malone, "Jesus on Our Screens," in May, *New Image of Religious Film* (57-71)

Weekend Assignment: Choose a film on the life/death of Jesus (do not use a Christ figure film). It can be from any time period. Write a short [2-3 pages] theological critique of to be turned in. Keep plot summary to a few sentences and do not quote dialogue unless very relevant. Discuss briefly any relevant cinematic techniques. Use your space efficiently and wisely. Add foot- or end-notes for the sources your consult.

Film Suggestions:

The Truman Show (1998, 103 mins)

One Flew Over the Cuckoos Nest (1975, 133 mins)

Edward Scissorhands (1990, 105 mins.)

1/13

Gender, Race, Ethnicity

- Read in *Theology and Film*, "Woman as Spectacle: Theological Perspectives on Women and Film," (85-113)
- Apostolos-Cappadona, "From Eve to Virgin and Back Again: The Image of Woman in Contemporary (Religious) Film," in May *New Image of Religious Film* (111-127)
- Read in *The Religion and Film Reader*, "Spike Lee, with David Breskin," (257-260)
- Read in *Theology and Film Reader*, "Im Kwon-Taek, with David James," (149-152)
- Read in *Theology and Film Reader*, "Filming the Gods: Religion and Indian Cinema," (135-142)

Film Suggestions:

The Stepford Wives (1975, 115 mins)

Gataca (1997, 103 mins)

Do the Right Thing (1989, 120 mins)

1/15

Evil, Violence, and War

- Read in *Theology and Film*, "A Time to Kill? Theological Perspectives on Violence and Film," (123-142)
- Read in *Theology and Film*, "Dark Beauty: Theological Perspectives on War as Cinematic Mythology, (161-177)
- Read in *New Image of Religious Film*, Zwick "The Problem of Evil in Contemporary Film" (72-91)

Film Suggestions:

Slingblade (1996, 135 mins)

All Quiet on the Western Front (1930, 138 mins)

Unforgiven (1992, 131 mins)

Written Assignment: Come with a short (1-2 pages) written plan for your final project.

1/16

Film: TBA

Additional Readings that Can Provide Guidance for Final Project

- Marsh and Ortiz, Explorations in Theology and Film, Introduction, Part One, pp.1-43; chaps. 17-18, pp.235-255.
- John Lyden, Film as Religion, chap. 1, "Existing Approaches to Religion and Film, (pp.11-35)
- John Lyden, Film as Religion, chap. 5, "The Religion-Film Dialogue as Interreligious Dialogue," (pp.108-136)
- Joel Martin and Conrad E. Ostwalt, Screening the Sacred, "Introduction: Seeing the Sacred on the Screen," pp.1-17, "Conclusion: Religion, Film, and Cultural Analysis," 152-9.
- Gerard Loughlin, "In the Lobby," (pp.ix-xxii); Chap. 1, "Desiring Bodies," (pp.3-23), Chap. 2, "Seeing in the Dark," (pp.35-57), Chap. 3, "Visionary Screen," (pp.65-95), Chap. 5, "God's Sex," (pp.133-162), Chap. 7, "Want of Family," (pp.201-220), in Alien Sex: The Body and Desire in Cinema and Theology.
- Miles, Seeing and Believing, Preface and chap. one, ix -25, 182-193
- Robert K. Johnston, Reel Spirituality, chap. 3 (pp. 41-62), chap. 4 (pp. 63-86), chap. 7

- Ambros Eichenberger, "Approaches to Film Criticism," pp. 3-15, in May, ed., New Image of Religious Film.
- John R. May, "Contemporary Theories Regarding the Interpretation of Religious Film," pp. 17-34, in New Image...
- Peter Hasenberg, "The 'Religious' in Film: From *King of Kings* to *The Fisher King*," pp.41-55, in New Image
- Michael Paul Gallagher, "Theology, Discernment and Cinema," pp.151-160, in New Image.
- Peter Malone, "Jesus on Our Screens," pp. 57-71, in New Image...
- Reinhold Zwick, "The Problem of Evil in Contemporary Film," pp. 72-90, in New Image
- Diane Apostolos-Cappadona, "From Eve to the Virgin and Back Again: The Image of Woman in Contemporary (Religious) Film," pp. 111-126, in New Image...
- Irene Makarushka, "Women Spoken For: Images of Displaced Desire," in Martin and Ostwalt, Screening the Sacred
- Henk Hoekstra, "Film Education in a Christian Perspective: Some Contemporary Approaches," pp.181-194 in New Image...
- Robert A. White, "The Role of Film in Personal Religious Growth," pp.197-211, in New Image...
- Mark I. Plinsky, "The Disney Gospel," (pp.1-12); "Walt and Roy: The Christians," (pp.15-21); "Michael and Jeffrey: The Jews," (pp.121-137); "The Theme Parks: American Pilgrimage," (pp.229-237); "Conclusion," (pp.262-267), in The Gospel According to Disney.
- Eric G. Wilson, "Gnosticism in the Postmodern Age," (pp.vii-xvi); "Introduction: Gnosis and Film," (pp.1-32), Chap. 1, "Gnostic Cinema: The Blank Screen", (pp.33-70), Chap. 2, "Cabbalistic Cinema: The Illuminated Projector," (pp.71-104), Eric G. Wilson, Chap. 3, "Alchemical Cinema: The Dark Theatre," (pp.105-143) in Secret Cinema: Gnostic Vision in Film.

VII FINAL PROJECT Due 1/23

Topic Suggestions for Final Project: Research and Related Film Group

A. Possible Topics for Research Paper

1. *Gender, Ethnicity, or Race in film and its relationship to Christian theological anthropology*

- a) Search for texts on film, race, ethnicity and/or gender to guide you. Look also at the meaning of theological anthropology in Christian theology.
- b) Explore, compare and contrast at least two films but no more than three.
- c) Do not rehash plot or quote dialogue extensively.
- d) Choose one carefully delineated topic to avoid becoming overwhelmed.
- e) Discuss relevant cinematic techniques as they apply to your theme.
- f) Make your theme clear, discuss it in relation to each film, come to some conclusions.

2. *Key themes in Christian theology* (for example, God, Christ, sin, evil, grace, miracle, revelation, faith, eschatology). Choose one and trace it through 2-3 films

- a) This is not about institutional religion per se, but about a belief or major tenet.
- b) Same instructions as #1, but related to your doctrinal theme.

3. *The Changing Face of "Isms" in film*

- a) Choose 2-3 films that would be considered "religious" or amenable to theological interpretation, according to the standards set by Marsh and Ortiz in Explorations, and/or the writers in New Image...
- b) Explore the "ism" of your choice: racism, sexism, ageism, "handicapism," ethnocentrism, Gnosticism, etc.
- c) Films from any time period can be chosen, but try to show movement and change through time.
- d) Same instructions as #1, adapted to your topic.

4. *Christianity according to film*

- a) Choose 2-3 films that would be considered "religious" or amenable to theological interpretation, according to the standards set by Marsh and Ortiz in Explorations, and/or the writers in New Image....
- b) These films must explicitly deal with Christian religion in general, or some main aspect, such as ministry, church, mission, etc._ The focus here is more on the institutional aspect and its theological implications, than on doctrine per se.
- c) Explore the imagery there and the messages behind them. Films from any time period can be chosen, or you can compare changes through time.
- d) Same instructions as #1, adapted to your topic.

5. *Dealing with Gnosticism in film and culture*

- a) How prevalent is Gnosticism as a theme in contemporary film? Give examples.
- b) How do we deal with contemporary Gnostic themes in light of Christian theology, especially with youth and young adult audiences?

- c) What groups in American culture are drawn to Gnostic themes and why?
- d) Explain briefly the history of Gnosticism.
- e) How does Eric Wilson's book treat this theme?
- f) What distinguishes Christianity from Gnosticism?
- f) Choose several films to discuss.

6. *Topics of the student's own choosing* (written or presented) are welcome, but please submit a 1-2 page thesis statement and plan to the instructor by Jan. 15 in class, although feel free to discuss your project ahead of that date.

Instructions for Leading a Film Discussion Group Based on Your Final Project

1. Group Composition: Invite at least three members (not counting yourself). Use good judgment based on the rating and content of your film(s). Family, friends, congregants and/or fellow students are all potential members.
2. Film Viewing: This can happen with everyone together, over a series of days, or members can view the film(s) on their own. If the latter, be prepared to come to the discussion with a set of highlighted clips to help the conversation.
3. Write up a discussion guide:
 - a. The theme and premise of your project
 - b. The film(s) used and some information (when made, brief summary, cast, etc.)
 - c. Observational questions (e.g., attention to setting, sound, lighting, characterization, plot)
 - d. Preferential and speculative questions (e.g., Who did you identify with and why? Could the film have ended in another way? Was the theme plausible to you? Etc.)
 - e. Theological questions (e.g., What were the 'big questions' addressed in this film? How was evil/sin/after-life/God/etc. treated? [Note: Choose only one or two theological themes that emerge out of the film] Are there other ways to understand this theological concept? What position do you think the writer/director/producer has of this theme? Etc.)
4. Guide but do not dominate the discussion.
5. Write a 3 page report including:
 - a. Briefly describe group members
 - b. Include your discussion guide
 - Explain why you chose the theological issues to be discussed.
 - How did you guide the group?
 - Briefly discussion the group interactions, comments, etc.
 - What would you do differently (or the same) next time?

- Note well: No need to repeat dialogue at length from film or group interaction. Summarize. Be succinct and efficient.

If You Want Additional Help in Leading a Group:

Sara Vaux, Finding Meaning at the Movies, Appendix One
“Leading a Film Study Group,” pp.189-198.

Students Please Note: The Following Books are on Reserve at the Library

- Louis Giannetti, Understanding Movies (Tenth Edition), (Prentice Hall, 2005)
Stewart M. Hoover and Knut Lundby, Rethinking Media, Religion, and Culture, (Sage 1997)
Clive Marsh & Gaye Ortiz, Explorations in Theology and Film, (Blackwell, 1997)
Joel Martin and Conrad Ostwalt, Screening the Sacred, (Westview, 1995)
John R. May, editor, New Image of Religious Film, (Sheed and Ward, 1997)
Christopher Deacy and Gaye Williams Ortiz, Theology and Film: Challenging the Sacred/Secular Divide, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008)
Stewart Hoover, Religion in the Media Age, (Routledge, 2006)
Robert K. Johnston, ed., Reframing Theology and Film: New Focus For an Emerging Discipline, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007)
Clive Marsh, Theology Goes to the Movies: An Introduction to Critical Christian Thinking, (New York: Routledge, 2007)
Jolyon Mitchell and S. Brent Plate, eds., The Religion and Film Reader, (Routledge, 2007)
George Aichele and Richard Walsh, eds., Screening Scripture: Intertextual Connections Between Scripture and Film, (Harrisburg: Trinity, 2002)
Anthony J. Clarke and Paul S. Fiddes, eds., Flickering Images: Theology and Film in Dialogue, (Oxford: Regent’s Park College, 2005)
Robert K. Johnston, Reel Spirituality: Theology and Film in Dialogue, (Baker, 2000)
Gerard Loughlin, Alien Sex: The Body and Desire in Cinema and Theology, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004)
John C. Lyden, Film as Religion: Myths, Morals, and Rituals, (New York: NYC, 2003)
Joel W. Martin and Conrad E. Ostwalt, Jr., Screening the Sacred: Religion, Myth and Ideology in Popular American Film, (Boulder: Westview, 1998)
May, John R., ed. New Image of Religious Film, (Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1997)
Mark I. Pinsky, The Gospel According to Disney: Faith, Trust, and Pixie Dust, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004)
Eric G. Wilson, Secret Cinema: Gnostic Vision in Film, (New York: Continuum, 2006)

Texts

- Christopher Deacy and Gaye Williams Ortiz, Theology and Film: Challenging the Sacred/Secular Divide, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008)
- Stewart Hoover, Religion in the Media Age, (Routledge, 2006)
- Stewart M. Hoover and Knut Lundby, Rethinking Media, Religion, and Culture, (Sage 1997)
- Robert K. Johnston, ed., Reframing Theology and Film: New Focus For an Emerging Discipline, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007)
- Clive Marsh, Theology Goes to the Movies: An Introduction to Critical Christian Thinking, (New York: Routledge, 2007)
- Jolyon Mitchell and S. Brent Plate, eds., The Religion and Film Reader, (Routledge, 2007)

Supplemental Texts

- George Aichele and Richard Walsh, eds., Screening Scripture: Intertextual Connections Between Scripture and Film, (Harrisburg: Trinity, 2002)
- Anthony J. Clarke and Paul S. Fiddes, eds., Flickering Images: Theology and Film in Dialogue, (Oxford: Regent's Park College, 2005)
- Robert K. Johnston, Reel Spirituality: Theology and Film in Dialogue, (Baker, 2000)
- Gerard Loughlin, Alien Sex: The Body and Desire in Cinema and Theology, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004)
- John C. Lyden, Film as Religion: Myths, Morals, and Rituals, (New York: NYC, 2003)
- Clive Marsh & Gaye Ortiz, Explorations in Theology and Film, (Blackwell, 1997)
- Joel W. Martin and Conrad E. Ostwalt, Jr., Screening the Sacred: Religion, Myth and Ideology in Popular American Film, (Boulder: Westview, 1998)
- May, John R., ed. New Image of Religious Film, (Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1997)
- Mark I. Pinsky, The Gospel According to Disney: Faith, Trust, and Pixie Dust, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004)
- Eric G. Wilson, Secret Cinema: Gnostic Vision in Film, (New York: Continuum, 2006)

Recommended Texts

- Lloyd Baugh. Imagining the Divine: Jesus and Christ-Figures in Film, (Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1997)
- Ian Bradley, You've Got to Have a Dream: The Message of the Musical, (Westminster John Knox, 2004)
- Neil Gabler, An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood, (New York: Anchor, 1988)
- Edward McNulty, Praying the Movies: Daily Meditations from Classic Films (Geneva, 2001)
- Margaret Miles, Seeing and Believing: Religion and Values in the Movies, (Beacon, 1996)
- John R. May, Image and Likeness: Religious Visions in American Film Classics, (Paulist, 1992)

David Morgan, The Lure of Images: A History of Religion and Visual Media in America, (New York: Routledge, 2007)

Sarah Vaux, Finding Meaning at the Movies, (Abingdon, 1999)

Melanie J. Wright, Religion and Film: An Introduction, (New York: Tauris, 2007)

Resources on Specific Films

George Aichele and Richard Walsh, eds., Screening Scripture: Intertextual Connections Between Scripture and Film, (Harrisburg: Trinity, 2002)

Lloyd Baugh. Imagining the Divine: Jesus and Christ-Figures in Film, (Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1997)

Cripps, Thomas R. Making Movies Black: The Hollywood Message Movies from World War II to the Civil Rights Era, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992)

Craig Detweiler, Into the Dark: Seeing the Sacred in the Top Films of the 21st Century, (Baker)

Greg Garrett, The Gospel According to Hollywood

John C. Lyden, Film as Religion: Myths, Morals, and Rituals, (New York: NYC, 2003)

Joel W. Martin and Conrad E. Ostwalt, Jr., Screening the Sacred: Religion, Myth and Ideology in Popular American Film, (Boulder: Westview, 1998)

May, John R., ed. Image and Likeness: Religious Vision in American Film Classics. New York: Paulist, 1992

John C. McDowell, The Gospel According to Star Wars: Faith, Hope, and the Force, (Westminster John Knox, 2007)

Mark I. Pinsky, The Gospel According to Disney: Faith, Trust, and Pixie Dust, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004)

Bryan Stone, Faith and Film: Theological Themes at the Cinema, (Chalice)

Eric G. Wilson, Secret Cinema: Gnostic Vision in Film, (New York: Continuum, 2006)

Melanie J. Wright, Religion and Film: An Introduction, (New York: Tauris, 2007)

Additional Recommended Reading

Timothy B. Cargal, Hearing a Film, Seeing a Sermon: Preaching and Popular Movies

Michael Coyne, Hollywood Goes to Washington: American Politics on Screen

Rachel Dwyer, Filming the Gods: Religion and Indian Cinema, (Routledge, 2007)

Paul V.M. Flesher and Robert Torry, Film & Religion: An Introduction

Peter Francis, William R. Telford and Eric S. Christianson, eds., Cinema Divinite: Readings in Religion and Film, (2005)

Louis Giannetti, Understanding Movies (Eleventh Edition), (Prentice Hall, 2006)

Goethals, Gregor. The Electronic Golden Calf: Images, Religion and the Making of Meaning. Cambridge, MA:Dowley, 1990.

Lyon, David, Jesus in Disneyland: Religion in Postmodern Times (Polity, 2000)

Gabriel McKee, The Gospel According to Science Fiction: From the Twilight Zone to the Final Frontier, (Westminster John Knox, 2007)

Edward McNulty, Visual Parables Christian Reflections on Films and Videos (monthly) (P.O. Box 58, Topeka, Kansas 66601-0058)

David Morgan, The Lure of Images: A History of Religion and Visual Media in America, (Routledge, 2007)

Neil Postman, Amusing Ourselves to Death, (New York: Penguin, 1985)

Reel to Real: Making the Most of the Movies with Youth, Vols. available through Cokesbury

W. Barnes Tatum, Jesus at the Movies: A Guide to the First Hundred Years, (Polebridge, 1997)

Barry Taylor, Entertainment Theology: New-Edge Spirituality in a Digital Democracy, (Baker, 2008)

Richard Walsh, Finding St. Paul in Film, (Continuum, 2005)

More Relevant Resources

Adams, Doub and Diane Apostolos-Cappadona. Art as Religious Studies. New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1987.

Arthur, Chris. Religion and the Media. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1993.

Berger, John and Jean Mohr. Another Way of Telling. Cambridge: Granta, 1989.

Berger, Arthur Asa. Narratives in Popular Culture, Media and Everyday Life. London: Sage, 1997.

Berger, John. Ways of Seeing. New York: Penguin Books, 1977.

Bywater, Tim and Thomas Sobchack. Introduction to Film Criticism. New York: Longman, 1989.

Campbell, Heidi and Jolyon Mitchell, editors, Interactions: Theology Meets Film, Television and the Internet, (Centre for Theology and Public Issues and The Media and Theology Project, University of Edinburgh, 1999)

Chidester, David. Word and Light: Seeing, Hearing, and Religious Discourse. Urbana: University of Illinois, 1992.

Clifford, James. The Predicament of Culture. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988.

Cooper, John C. and Carl Skrade, eds. Celluloid and Symbols. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970.

Cottom, Daniel. Text and Culture. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989.

Crowley, David and Paul Heyer, eds. Communication in History - Technology, Culture, Society. Second Edition. New York: Longman, 1995.

De Lauretis, Teresa. Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984,

Detweiler, Robert, ed. Art/Literature/Religion: Life on the Borders. Chico: Scholars Press, 1983.

Dillenberger, John. A Theology of Artistic Sensibilities: The Church and the Visual Arts.

- New York: Crossroad, 1986.
- Dodaro, Robert and John Paul Szura. Theology and Mass Communication. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1997.
- Eliade, Mircea. Images and Symbols: Studies in Religious Symbolism. London: Harvill Press, 1961.
- Felita, Ernest and John R. May. Film Odyssey: The Art of Film as a Search for Meaning. New York: Paulist, 1976.
- Fore, William F. "Moving Images Challenge Theology," 7-9, in Media Development: Journal of the World Association for Christian Communication, 4/1995
- Freedberg, David. The Power of Images. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989.
- Gaillardetz, Richard R. Transforming Our Days: Spirituality, Community and Liturgy in a Technological Culture
- Geertz, Clifford. Interpretation of Cultures. New York: Basic Books, 1973
- Gurevitch, Michael and James Curran. Mass Media and Society. London: Edward Arnold, 1991.
- Hannerz, Ulf. Cultural Complexity. New York: Columbia University Press, 1992.
- Haskell, Molly. From Reverence to Rape: The Treatment of Women in the Movies. 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.
- Hebdige, Dick. Subculture: The Meaning of Style. London & New York: Routledge, 1988.
- Hill, Geoffrey, Illuminating Shadows: The Mythic Power of Film, (Shambhala, 1992)
- Hollander, Anne. Moving Pictures. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991.
- Holloway, Richard. Beyond the Image: Approaches to the Religious Dimension in the Cinema. Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1977.
- hooks, bell. Reel to Real: Race, Sex, and Class at the Movies. New York: Routledge, 1996
- Hurley, Neil P. Theology Through Film. New York: Harper & Row, 1970.
- Inglis, Fred. Media Theory. Oxford: Basic Blackwell, 1990.
- Jewett, Robert Saint Paul at the Movies: The Apostle's Dialogue with American Culture, (Westminster, 1993)
- , Saint Paul Returns to the Movies: Triumph Over Shame, (Eerdmans, 1999)
- Journal of the American Academy of Religion, "Thematic Issue on 'Religion and American Popular Culture,' Fall 1996
- Kael, Pauline. Deeper Into Movies. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1973.
- Leprohon, Pierre. The Italian Cinema. Translated by Roger Greaves and Oliver Stallybrass. London: Secker & Warburg, 1972.
- Mackey, James. P., ed. Religious Imagination. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1986.
- Marcel, Gabriel. Homo Viator. New York: Harper & Row, 1962.
- Martin, Thomas M. Images and the Imageless: A Study in Religious Consciousness and Film. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1981.
- McIntyre, John. Faith, Theology and Imagination. Edinburgh: The Handsel Press, 1987.
- Melquior, J.G. The Veil and the Mask: Essays on Culture and Ideology. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979.

- Monoco, James. How to Read a Film, revised ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981.
- Nolan, Steve, "The Books of Films: Trends in Religious Film-Analysis," 1-15, in Literature & Theology, March 1998
- Ong, Walter J. Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word. London: Methuen, 1982.
- Orr, John and Colin Nicholson, eds. Cinema and Fiction, 1950-1990 New Modes of Adapting. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992.
- O'Brien, Tom. The Screening of America: Movies and Values from 'Rocky' to 'Rainman'. New York: Continuum, 1990
- Pavelin, Alan. Fifty Religious Films. Chislehurst, Kent: A. P. Pavelin, 1990.
- Plate, S. Brent, "Religion/Literature/Film: Toward a Religious Visuality of Film," 16-38, in Literature & Theology, March 1998
- Prindle, David F. Risky Business: The Political Economy of Hollywood. San Francisco: Westview Press, 1993.
- Ray, Robert B. A Certain Tendency of the Hollywood Cinema, 1930-1980. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985.
- Robinson, Gillian and John Rundell, eds. Rethinking Imagination: Culture and Creativity. London: Routledge, 1994.
- Rossi, Philip J. and Paul Soukup, eds. Mass Media and the Moral Imagination. Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1994.
- Ryan, Michael and Douglas Kellner. Camera Politica: the Politics and Ideology of Contemporary Hollywood Film. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988.
- Scott, Bernard Brandon. Hollywood Dreams and Biblical Stories. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994.
- Seymour, Jack L. and Donald Miller, eds.. Theological Approaches to Christian Education. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990.
- Soukup, Paul. Communication and Theology: An Introduction and Review of the Literature. London: WACC/CSCC, 1983.
- Stout, Daniel A. and Buddenbaum, Judith M. Religion and Mass Media - Audiences and Adaptations. London: Sage, 1996.
- Thompson, John B. The Media and Modernity- A Social Theory of Media. Oxford: Polity, 1995.
- Thompson, John. Ideology and Modern Culture. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990.
- Weber, Derek. Discerning Images: The Media and Theological Education. Edinburgh: Centre for Theology and Public Issues, 1991.
- Williams, Peter W. Popular Religion in America: Symbolic Change and the Modernization Process in Historical Perspective. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989.
- Wollen, P. Signs and Meaning in the Cinema. London: Secker & Warburg w/BFI, 1972