

RELI/ENGL 4090. Film and Religion



Paul Flesher
Spring 2021: Tuesday. 6-9 pm
3 credits

When was the last time anyone (except bored parents) boycotted a Disney movie? You can almost guarantee crowds and picketing if religion is involved. Mix film and religion and you stand at the core of controversy. But Hollywood has always known that religion drives a good story and fills seats. Indeed, seemingly secular films often get their power from echoing the structures or terms of belief. This course considers the interplay of culture, film and religion from classic movies up to the most recent releases. Bringing the many perspectives of Religious Studies to bear, Professor Paul Flesher will teach you to decipher how films deploy religion to pursue social issues and energize culture to advocate religious perspectives—and always make a buck.

Religious concepts and forms can drive almost any type of film—from obvious subgenres like Biblical dramas and “Jesus” films to space opera, horror and family friendly feel-good movies. Units will likely include “Roman” movies; “Jesus” movies”; movies centered on Mary; eastern religions; comedy; science fiction and the posthuman; and whatever appears in Laramie theaters.

Assignments will include exams, mini-projects and short papers.

Prerequisite: 6 hours of 2000-level plus literature OR religion courses, or instructor permission.

