

Santa Clara University  
FALL 2015

SCTR 33:  
New Testament  
Narratives & Cinema:  
Ongoing Revelations  
[27610]



MW – 7:20-9:05 PM  
Kenna 308



Prof. Joe Morris, Ph.D.  
Office: Kenna 315  
Office Hours:  
MW 5:30 - 6:30 PM or after  
class or by appointment.  
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### Course Description

This class will explore select themes emerging from the narratives of the New Testament both in their historical and cultural contexts and in their reimagining in contemporary cinema. [Three themes will be selected from the following: civic engagement; poverty/wealth; gender; conversion; cultural and religious diversity; death and afterlife; non-violence and peace; suffering; evil; oppression; character and identity; kinship, family and community, creation; God's reign, etc.]

The RTC 2 course should:

- approach the study of religious phenomena through multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary means (2a)
- focus on complex and diverse religious phenomena (2b)
- integrate critical inquiry and reflection on beliefs (2c)

### Course Objectives: RTC 2 -- Explorations

1. Students will develop skills to analyze select New Testament themes in two types of texts: the New Testament and contemporary cinema.
2. Students will be able to integrate and compare the selected narratives from the New Testament and their re-imagining in film through historical, social, rhetorical and narrative critical methods of study that are constitutive of these twin discourses.
3. Students will be able to clarify and express their beliefs and questions, as well as probe the religious dimensions of human existence by tracing the intertextual transformations, re-imaginings and ongoing revelations of these New Testament themes in cinema today.
4. Students will be able to make an argument about the significance of scriptural allusion within the structure of the film as a whole.

### Required Texts

Reinhartz, Adele. *Bible and Cinema: An Introduction*. New York: Routledge, 2013.

*New Testament*. Online versions will be provided, but your own copy of the New Testament is also useful provided it is a version in modern English.

**CAMINO course site** will contain all the readings and other materials required for the course.

### Assessment and Grading

#### 1] **Class Attendance & Participation:**

Evaluation is based on attendance, completion of readings, film viewings, small and large group discussions and engagement in class generally as well as through the group project. [15%] [Students learn to *analyze* diverse religious narratives in the New Testament and contemporary film (2a) with the help of contextual analysis (2b). Students will then *clarify* and *express* in reading responses and discussions their beliefs and understandings in light of their

analyses of these narratives in their New Testament context and their iterations in film and identify the rhetorical situations that crafted these cultural transformations (2c.)

**2] Two Projects:**

The first project will focus on explicit films about Jesus' life, death and resurrection. Although films will be group assigned, this is an individual project. This project has two foci: examination of a scene from an explicit Jesus film and discussing it in light of the NT portrayal of the scene; and examining the crucifixion scene in light of the portrayal in the NT. This project will be a four page response. The second project will be comprised of a writing assignment [four pages] that selects a film with a NT reference and then analyzes the context in the film in dialogue with the expression and context of the NT passage. [20%; 10% each] [The projects will provide an opportunity for students to employ the *various disciplinary approaches to analyze* the cultural and rhetorical situations that birthed these narrative texts; to *integrate* and *compare* the two sets of narratives around the select religious theme; to *clarify* and *express* how this comparison provides insight into cultural and religious re-imaginings and ongoing revelation (2a, 2b, 2c).]

**3] Reading Responses and Reflections:**

There will be 15 reading responses. Questions designed to assist discussion and reflection will be distributed with the assigned readings and/or film viewings. These short responses are due the class of the scheduled discussion of the assigned readings/films and are to be submitted in the drop box provided at the CAMINO course site. [15%] [These reading responses will focus on integrating the readings in light of the *different disciplinary approaches* to assist in *comparing* the select religious themes in their New Testament context and their re-expression in film(s) (2b, 2c).]

**4] Group Project:**

Each student will participate in a group project throughout the quarter culminating in an in-class group presentation in Week 10. Each group will select a theme or issue from the Christian Scriptures and after an analysis of the historical and cultural context of the text(s) for emerging Christianity, provide an accounting of the ways that they have been re-imagined in contemporary film(s) and the challenge this proposes. [25%] [This project will assist the students in gaining insight into the cultural transformations around religious phenomena, as well as the ongoing relevance and importance of the New Testament for today (2a, 2b, 2c).]

**5] Individual Final Project:**

A 6-8 page essay on a New Testament issue, theme or narrative and its reimagining in contemporary film(s). This paper should both analyze the cultural and historical situations of the New Testament and film narratives, as well as reflect on what this comparison yields regarding the selected issue or theme.[25%] [2a, 2b, 2c]

**Grading Scale**

95%-100%	A
90%-94%	A-
87%-89%	B+
83%-86%	B
80%-82%	B-
77%-79%	C+
73%-76%	C

70%-72%	C-
67%-69%	D+
63%-66%	D
60%-62%	D-
59% & below	F

Feedback on Reading Responses, Examinations and Final Project will be provided in writing; Group project feedback will be communicated through consultation.

Students will evaluate the course formally at the end of the quarter by the narrative evaluation provided by the Religious Studies department.

**OTHER INFORMATION:**

**Disabilities Syllabus Statement**

If you have a disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact Disabilities Resources, Benson 216, [www.scu.edu/disabilities](http://www.scu.edu/disabilities) as soon as possible to discuss your needs and register for accommodations with the University. If you have already arranged accommodations through Disabilities Resources, please discuss them with me during my office hours. Students who have medical needs related to pregnancy or parenting may be eligible for accommodations.

While I am happy to assist you, I am unable to provide accommodations until I have received verification from Disabilities Resources. The Disabilities Resources office will work with students and faculty to arrange proctored exams for students whose accommodations include double time for exams and/or assisted technology. (Students with approved accommodations of time-and-a-half should talk with me as soon as possible). Disabilities Resources must be contacted in advance to schedule proctored examinations or to arrange other accommodations. The Disabilities Resources office would be grateful for advance notice of at least two weeks. For more information you may contact Disabilities Resources at 408-554-4109.

**Title IX Syllabus Statement**

Santa Clara University upholds a zero tolerance policy for discrimination, harassment and sexual misconduct. If you (or someone you know) have experienced discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence or stalking, we encourage you to tell someone promptly. For more information, please go to [www.scu.edu/studentlife](http://www.scu.edu/studentlife) and click on the link for the University's [Gender-Based Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct Policy](#) or contact the University's EEO and Title IX Coordinator, Belinda Guthrie at [408-554-3043](tel:408-554-3043) or by email at [bguthrie@scu.edu](mailto:bguthrie@scu.edu). Reports may be submitted online through [www.scu.edu/osl/report](http://www.scu.edu/osl/report) or anonymously through Ethicspoint: [www.ethicspoint.com](http://www.ethicspoint.com)

**Academic Integrity Policy**

The University is committed to academic excellence and integrity. Students are expected to do their own work and to cite any sources they use. A student who is guilty of a dishonest act in an examination, paper, or other work required for a course, or who assists others in such an act, may, at the discretion of the instructor, receive a grade of F for the course. In addition, a student found guilty of a dishonest act

may be subject to sanctions up to and including dismissal from the University as a result of the student judicial process as described in the Community Handbook. A student who violates copyright laws, including those covering the copying of software programs, or who knowingly alters official academic records from this or any other institution is subject to similar disciplinary action.