



From left to right: *The Passion of the Christ* (2004), *Spiderman 2* (2004, top), *Gran Torino* (2008, bottom), *Stigmata* (1999), and *The Good Wife* (Season 5, 2013).

# New Testament Narratives and Cinema: Ongoing Revelations

## 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. Some of the themes explored will be: 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; the Kingdom of God; and the apocalypse. These themes will be explored through both Jesus films that portray the life of the Jesus of the *New Testament* and through films that take up these various themes in allegorical and metaphorical ways.

## Core Curriculum and Course Objectives

Religion, Theology, and Culture 2 courses invite students to deeper engagement with the study of religion through the application of multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary approaches to complex religious phenomena, past and present. By providing multiple, integrated perspectives, this course seeks to enrich students' appreciation for the diversity of human religious expression.

**Course #:** SCTR 33  
**Semester:** Fall 2017  
**Time:** MW 7:20-9:05pm  
**Classroom:** Alumni Science, Room 120  
**Lecturer:** Jaime Wright  
**Office:** Kenna 315  
**Office hours:** Mon., 1-2pm; Wed., 11am-12pm.  
 \*And by appointment  
**Email:** jdwright@scu.edu

### *Learning Goals for Religion, Theology and Culture 2*

**Critical Thinking:** The ability to identify, reflect upon, evaluate, integrate, and apply different types of information and knowledge to form independent judgments.

**Complexity:** An approach to understanding the world that appreciates ambiguity and nuance as well as clarity and precision.

**Religious Reflection:** Questioning and clarifying beliefs through critical inquiry into faith and the religious dimensions of human existence.

### *Learning Objectives for Religion, Theology and Culture 2*

1. Analyze complex and diverse religious phenomena: students will develop skills to analyze select *New Testament* themes in two types of texts, i.e., the *New Testament* and contemporary cinema. Students will be able to make an argument about the significance of scriptural allusion within the structure of a particular film as a whole. (Complexity; Critical Thinking)
2. Integrate and compare several different disciplinary approaches to a coherent set of religious phenomena: students will be able to integrate and compare the selected narratives from the *New Testament* and their

- reimagining in film through historical, social, and critical methods of study that are constitutive of these twin discourses. (Complexity of Content as well as of Method; Critical Thinking)
3. Clarify and express beliefs through critical inquiry into the religious dimensions of human existence: 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, reimaginings, and ongoing revelations of these *New Testament* themes in cinema today. (Reflection; Critical Thinking)

## 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.

Additional readings and other materials will be included on **Camino**.

## Assessment and Grading

Class Attendance and Participation = 15%

Small Group Projects = 20%

Reading Responses and Reflections = 15%

Final Group Project = 25%

Final Paper = 25%

**Total = 100%**

### 1) Class Attendance & Participation (15%):

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.

- Students learn to analyze diverse religious narratives in the *New Testament* and contemporary film (Learning Objective 2) with the help of contextual analysis (Learning Objective 1). 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 (Learning Objectives 2 & 3).
- Film viewing: Movies required to view before Week 5 will be shown in class (or at least clips from them). Movies required after Week 5 will be made available on DVD. However, many you will be able to view using a personal Netflix or Amazon account (if you have one). You will need to view these movies before the day that we discuss them in class.

### 2) Small Group Projects (20%):

These small group 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 reimaginings and ongoing revelation (L.O. 1-3).

2a) Jesus Film Group Project: The first project will focus on explicit films about Jesus' life, death, and resurrection (i.e., Jesus films). 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*. Students will work together as a group and also each individual student will turn in a four-page paper. [10%]

2b) *NT* Theme Group Project: The second project will be comprised of a four-page writing assignment for each individual student. Students will work in a group and select a film with a *NT* reference and then analyze the context in the film in dialogue with the expression and context of the *NT* passage. [10%]

### 3) Reading Responses and Reflections (15%):

There will be 19 opportunities to complete reading responses. You will need to complete 15 out of 19. 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. These assignments are to be submitted through Camino.

- 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) (L.O. 1 & 3).

### 4) Final Group Project (25%):

Each student will participate in a group project throughout the quarter culminating in an in-class group presentation during Finals Week. 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 reimagined in contemporary film(s), and the challenge this proposes.

- 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 (L.O. 1-3).

### 5) Individual Final Paper (25%):

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 (L.O. 1-3).

## 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 and papers will be provided in writing; Group project feedback will be communicated through discussion and consultation.

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

## Course Policies

**Late submission policy:** Unless the student communicates with the instructor prior to the due date, the following will apply: For late papers, 5 percentage points will be deducted from the paper grade per day. No paper will be accepted more than 5 days after its due date. If you will not be able to come to class on the day a paper is due, please e-mail the instructor the paper and bring a hard copy to the next class you attend. There will be more than 15 opportunities to complete reading responses and reflections, therefore no late submissions will be accepted.

**Disruptive behaviors to avoid:** Students who exhibit behaviors that the instructor deems obstructive and disruptive to the class or its learning activities will be considered to be engaging in "disruptive behavior." Disruptive behavior can result in a zero for that day's class participation. If the behavior persists over one or more class periods, it will result in negative points for that day's class. Examples for disruptive behavior include:

- Improperly using your cell phone in class (letting your phone ring, texting, etc.) is considered disruptive because it distracts the instructor and the other students, and disrupts their learning.
- While in class, you may use your laptop for note-taking and reading assignment purposes only. Please note that surfing the Internet during class time distracts the other students sitting around you and is disrespectful to the instructor and is therefore strongly discouraged. If you do use a computer to take notes, you may be asked to sit in the front row.
- Coming in late and leaving early disrupt the class. Please talk with the instructor before or after class if there is an extraordinary circumstance that impels you to leave early or come in late on a particular day. Otherwise, you will be considered absent for that class.
- Interrupting others, talking out of turn, disrespectful behavior during group work, and verbal behavior that is disrespectful of other students or the faculty member are also considered disruptive behaviors. Students who exhibit such behavior may be temporarily dismissed from the class by the instructor and may be subject to disciplinary procedures. Such behavior will impact your attendance and participation grade.
- All students are expected to know the Student Conduct Code (see *Student Handbook*, p. 12-14) and adhere to it in this class. "Students who violate the code may be subject to disciplinary action and, if applicable, may also be subject to criminal prosecution" (*Student Handbook*, p. 14).

**Model behaviors to adopt:** The following types of behavior will help you in this course.

- Successful class participation includes consistent regular and punctual class attendance, coming to class prepared (i.e., having completed all assigned readings and assignments), taking notes, asking relevant questions, and active participation in class discussions.
- You will be regularly called on to answer questions during class, so coming to class prepared is of utmost importance.
- In discussions and questions, please adopt a tone that is respectful of me and the other students, and appreciates the diversity of the classroom.
- Please exchange e-mail addresses and/or phone numbers with at least one classmate. If you miss class, please ask your classmates for the class notes. Notes will not be available from the instructor.

Please feel free to see me in my office during my office hours (listed on p. 1 of the syllabus) if you have any questions or if there is an ongoing issue in class that you'd like to discuss with me.

**Writing Center:** Writing skills are necessary if you want to be a successful student. If you struggle with writing on any level – whether at the higher level of thesis development and essay organization or at the lower level of grammar and punctuation – please consider stopping by the Writing Center. Even if you consider yourself a proficient writer, it always helps to have another person offer feedback on your essay or point out bad grammar or punctuation habits. Contact information and hours: [www.scu.edu/provost/writingcenter](http://www.scu.edu/provost/writingcenter).

**Disabilities Resources:** If you have a disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact Disabilities Resources, Benson 216, <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.

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.

**Accommodations for Pregnancy and Parenting:** In alignment with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and with the California Education Code, Section 66281.7, Santa Clara University provides reasonable accommodations to students who are pregnant, have recently experienced childbirth, and/or have medical needs related to childbirth. Pregnant and parenting students can often arrange accommodations by working

directly with their instructors, supervisors, or departments. Alternatively, a pregnant or parenting student experiencing related medical conditions may request accommodations through Disability Resources.

**Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct (Title IX):** 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/dating violence, or stalking, I encourage you to tell someone promptly. For more information, please consult the University's Gender-Based Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct Policy at <http://bit.ly/2ce1hBb> or contact the University's EEO and Title IX Coordinator, Belinda Guthrie, at 408-554-3043, [bguthrie@scu.edu](mailto:bguthrie@scu.edu). Reports may be submitted online through <https://www.scu.edu/osl/report/> or anonymously through Ethicspoint <https://www.scu.edu/hr/quick-links/ethicspoint/>

**Academic Integrity:** The Academic Integrity pledge is an expression of the University's commitment to fostering an understanding of -- and commitment to -- a culture of integrity at Santa Clara University. The Academic Integrity pledge, which applies to all students, states:

I am committed to being a person of integrity. I pledge, as a member of the Santa Clara University community, to abide by and uphold the standards of academic integrity contained in the Student Conduct Code.

Students are expected to uphold the principles of this pledge for all work in this class. For more information about Santa Clara University's academic integrity pledge and resources about ensuring academic integrity in your work, see [www.scu.edu/academic-integrity](http://www.scu.edu/academic-integrity).

**Communication:** Please develop the habit of logging onto Camino every day (especially in the mornings on days you have class). All updates and announcements will be on the Camino page for this class: for example, if the instructor is sick or there is a change in office hours, etc.

## NT AND CINEMA (SCTR 33) MODULES – FA17

\*Reading and Assignments are subject to change. You will be notified in advance, if any change occurs.

### WEEK 1 (Sept. 18)

#### Module 1 (Monday)

- Links to free versions of NT: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/books-of-the-bible/>
- Links to film terms:
  - <http://film-english.com/>
  - <https://education.burnsfilmcenter.org/education/visual-glossary/featured>
  - <http://www.filmsite.org/filmterms.html>

#### Module 2 (Wednesday)

- Learning the Language of Film
- **Reading:**
  - Fraser and Neal Chapter 2: “Learning the Language,” *ReViewing the Movies*, p. 39-62. (Available on Camino)
  - The following link is an online primer to the fundamental elements of the language of film illustrated with a short film. It comes from the website “Film Language – How Film Works” and helps to visualize a bit some of the categories Fraser discusses.
    - <http://learnaboutfilm.com/film-language/>
  - Reinhartz, Ch. 1 “Introduction: ‘Seeking a Vision’ Bible Movies as Film Genre,” *Bible and Cinema: An Introduction*, p. 1-17.
- **Assignment:**
  - 1] Fraser: How is the language of film different from the language of literature? Why is this an important distinction?
  - 2] Select one of your favorite films and for each of the components of motion picture described in the article – *shot composition; photography; motion; editing; sound; acting; story* – choose an instance of each from your film and in one sentence for each component describe how your film illustrates that component.
  - 3] Reinhartz: What are some of the unique features (name three) of the Bible film genre that makes up its unique “language”?

### WEEK 2 (Sept. 25)

#### Module 3 (Mon.)

- Learning the Language of the Bible: Hebrew Scriptures and Christian Scriptures
  - This class will focus on introduction to the historical, social, and cultural context of early Christianity.
- **Reading:**
  - Erhman, Chapter 1 “What is the New Testament? The Early Christians and Their Literature,” and Chapter 2 “The World of Early Christian Traditions,” *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*. (Available on Camino)
- **Assignment:**
  - 1] Ch. 1 – If someone insisted that early Christianity was a monolithic creation of Jesus, how would you respond in the light of this chapter and its discussion of the

great diversity of early Christianity? Use some of the groups Erhman mentions to account for the diverse reactions to Jesus in the years following his death.

- 2] Ch. 1 – What is the canon of the NT and how was it formed?
- 3] Ch. 2 – This chapter discusses a series of contrasts with the way we usually characterize the early Christian context. Which one do you find the most striking and why?

#### Module 4 (Wed.)

- Christianizing the Hebrew Scriptures: The Old Testament Epic Film
- **Reading:**
  - Reinhartz, Chapter 2 “The Old Testament Epics,” *Bible and Cinema*, p. 19-56.
  - 2 Samuel 11
  - J. Cheryl Exum, “Plotted, Shot, and Painted: Cultural Representations of Biblical Women” from *The Religion and Film Reader*, eds. Joylon Mitchell and S. Brent Plate, p. 361-369. (Available on Camino)
- **Assignment:**
  - 1] Reinhartz: One of the ways that Reinhartz talks about context is the “then and now” aspects of the Bible and film. What are some of the “then and now” aspects of the Old Testament epic film (cite two and describe)?
  - 2] Exum: Compare the second reading which looks at a specific section of the Hebrew Scriptures – 2 Samuel 11 – with some of the characteristics of Old Testament epics cited by Reinhartz (cite two).
- **Project 1 Prep: Jesus Film Group Project (Due Module 6)**
  - Project 1: Jesus Film Group Project (see Project 1 handout)
  - Select from various Jesus films offered on DVD in class – one per group.
  - As a group, select a passage from the NT and scene from the group film upon which the scene is based.
  - Consider the following: How are the passage and select movie scene the same and/or different? How does the film reinterpret the scene in this medium and open it up or transform it completely? Also, look at the passion scene of the crucifixion of Jesus in the film and discuss the portrayal in light of Borg’s article.
  - You will work in groups, but turn in your own individual paper.

#### WEEK 3 (Oct. 2)

##### Module 5 (Mon.)

- Exodus and the Biblical Epic
- **Film:** *Exodus: Gods and Kings* (2014)
- **Reading:**
  - The story of the Exodus and Passover in Exodus chapter 1 through chapter 15 (access online version here: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/books-of-the-bible/>)
    - The film we will watch is based on these chapters of the Bible.
- **Assignment:**
  - 1] From the viewing of *Exodus: Gods and Kings* thus far, what are some of the features of biblical epic that Reinhartz discusses in chapter 2 that you see evident in the film? Are any of the characteristics she describes evident in this very recent biblical film? Cite one and where you have observed it.

- 2] After reading the biblical account of the Exodus and Passover, select one scene from the film thus far and discuss how its portrayal deviates, adds to, or reflects the biblical verses that inspire that scene. Does it enhance the scene in any way?

#### Module 6 (Wed.)

- A Closer Look at Jesus Movies
- Project 1: Jesus Film Group Project
- Project 1: Reading and Assignment
- **Reading:**
  - Borg, ch. 7: “Jesus” and Ch. 8 “The Death of Jesus,” *Speaking Christian: Why Christian Words Have Lost Their Meaning and Power – And How They Can Be Restored*, p. 85-105. (Available on Camino)
- **Project 1: Jesus Film Group Project (Due)**
  - 1] Choose one scene (describe as well as provide how many minutes into the movie the scene occurs) from the Jesus movie you viewed and find the passage from the gospel your group read that the scene is based on. Cite the passage. Please evaluate and assess how the selected scene opens up or closes down or takes a whole new approach to the meaning of the passage. (two pages minimum: Times New Roman, 12 pt., double-spaced; upload to Camino by 9am, day of class)
  - 2] All of the films you are all viewing have a crucifixion scene. Discuss the scene in light of what Borg says. (two pages minimum: Times New Roman, 12 pt., double-spaced; print and bring to class)

#### WEEK 4 (Oct. 9)

##### Module 7 (Mon.)

- What Would Jesus Do? – Lessons from the Small-town Passion Play and Immigration
- **Film:** *He Who Must Die (Celui qui doit mourir, 1957)*
- **Reading:**
  - Reinhartz, Chapter 5, “What would Jesus do? Epic and allegory,” *Bible and Cinema*, p. 108-127.
- **Assignment:**
  - 1] Of the four broad categories of biblical film conventions detailed by Reinhartz (p. 108-109), what category does *He Who Must Die* fit into? Briefly define the category and explain.
  - 2] How does *He Who Must Die* fit a “no-passion play film” category according to Reinhartz? Do you think this framework is effective in communicating some primary themes of Jesus’ life and death in the NT? Explain.

##### Module 8 (Wed.)

- A Social Scientific Interlude: Values, Feeling, and Experience
- **Reading:**
  - O’Connell, Chapter 5 “The Values People Live,” Chapter 6, “The Place of Feeling,” Chapter 7 “The Dynamics of Group Experience,” *Making Disciples: A Handbook of Christian Moral Formation*, p. 57-86. (Available on Camino)



- **Assignment:**
  - 1] Briefly describe how the social scientific insights from O’Connell’s chapters regarding values (ch. 5), feelings (ch. 6), and group experience (ch. 7) affect decision making.
  - 2] Using one of these insights, explain how this may affect our response to the movies we watch *or* discuss how the movies we watch may affect our actions in the world (use at least one movie from class in your answer).
- **Project 2: New Testament Theme Group Project (Due Module 14)**
  - Begin preparation for Project 2
  - See Project 2 Handout (Available on Camino)
  - As with Project 1, you will choose one film per group, but write your papers individually.
  - Paper format: After selecting a film that has a *New Testament* reference, write a four-page essay that
    - 1] describes the context of both the film and the passage; and
    - 2] compare and contrast the context of both around a theme, character, symbol, or concept and how the film transforms the *New Testament* text.
    - \*\* Your group is free to choose any film. See Camino for lists of “Non-explicit films” (those where the *New Testament* quotation is not explicit, but more thematic or symbolic) and “Christ Films” (more explicit parallels to the Jesus figure.) See Project 2 handout for a more detailed description of the project. I include a “suggested” way to approach uncovering the context of the *New Testament* passage.

## WEEK 5 (Oct. 16)

### Module 9 (Mon.)

- Jesus’ New Creation: The “Companionship of Empowerment,” Intertextuality, and the Re-written Bible
- **Film:** *The Truman Show* (1998)
- **Reading:**
  - Reinhartz, Chapter 1 “*The Truman Show* and the Great Escape from Paradise,” in *Scripture on the Silver Screen*, pp. 5-23. (Available on Camino)
  - O’Murchu, Chapter 2 “Jesus and the Paradox of Kingship,” in *Christianity’s Dangerous Memory: A Rediscovery of the Revolutionary Jesus*, p. 23-4. (Available on Camino)
- **Assignment:**
  - We will watch key scenes from *The Truman Show* in class. The first reading nicely integrates the use of the Bible (both the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures) in understanding the film. It uses both imagery and actual passages of scripture in the discussion to critique and subvert Truman’s world. The second reading by O’Murchu tries to demonstrate how Jesus critiqued, subverted and proposed a “new creation” or a new (actually old) understanding of God’s reign from “kingship” to “companionship of empowerment.”
  - 1] Compare and contrast the two readings around the ways Truman and Jesus critique, subvert, and then move to propose a new understanding of the worlds that they live in and their deeper purposes.

## Module 10 (Wed.)

- Another Reflection on the New Creation – Companionship of Empowerment
- **Film:** *Pleasantville* (1998)
- **Reading:**
  - Reinhartz, Chapter 10 “*Pleasantville* and the Nostalgia for Eden,” *Scripture on the Silver Screen*, p. 144-165. (Available on Camino)
  - Matthew 5:1-17 (Matthew’s Jesus gives the foundations for the new creation, or the companionship of empowerment; notice its culmination with the imagery of light which is important in *Pleasantville*, as well as the values and morals that are essential for the new creation Jesus envisions.)
- **Assignment:**
  - 1] Continuing our study of God's reign or Companionship of Empowerment as envisioned by Matthew's Jesus articulated in the Beatitudes, we want to focus on how the reading from Reinhartz (on *Pleasantville*) resonates with the passage from Matthew's gospel. In this light compare and contrast the two readings around the following themes: knowledge; values and light (or color). Does anything new emerge from this comparison for you?

## WEEK 6 (Oct. 23)

### Module 11 (Mon.)

- Discussing the Companionship of Empowerment
- **Reading:**
  - Mercadante, “The God Behind the Screen: *Pleasantville* & *The Truman Show*,” *Journal of Religion and Film* 5:2 (Oct. 2001) (Available on Camino)
- **Assignment:**
  - 1] Compare and contrast how God is portrayed implicitly and explicitly in *The Truman Show*, *Pleasantville* and the God represented by Matthew's Jesus in Matthew 5:1-17.

### Module 12 (Wed.)

- Immigration and the Stranger in Need
- **Film:** *Who is Dayani Cristal?* (2013)
  - Available via Kanopy:
    - <https://santaclarau.kanopystreaming.com/video/who-dayani-cristal>
- **Reading:**
  - Matthew 25: 35-40
  - Solano, ““Who Is Dayani Cristal?’ Review,” in *Journal of Religion and Film* 17:1 (April 2013) (Available on Camino)
  - Jasso, “The History of Immigration in the U.S.” and “Self-Selection, Push and Pull Factors, and Migration Dynamics,” *The Sociology Project 2.0*, p. 511-517. (Available on Camino)
- **Assignment:**
  - 1] How might we understand matters of immigrants and immigration, especially in the American context, in light of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5: 1-17) and the Matthew 25: 35-40?

- 2] Using O’Murchu’s conception of the “companionship of empowerment,” how might we understand our obligations to those who migrate due to factors such as violence and poverty?
- 3] Use something you learned in Jasso’s work on immigration that helps you to understand immigration in *Who Is Dayani Cristal?*

## WEEK 7 (Oct. 30)

### Module 13 (Mon.)

- *La Mission: Hope, Redemption, and Salvation*
- **Film:** *La Mission* (2013)
- **Reading:**
  - 1 Cor 13: 1-13
  - Johnston, “Can Watching a Movie Be a Spiritual Experience?” in *Religion and Popular Culture in America*, third edition, eds. Forbes and Mayhan, p. 373-389. (Available on Camino)
- **Assignment:**
  - 1] Describe the context of 1 Cor. 13. This involves the context of the letter. Describe what has gone before in the letter and how this particular passage fits in the unfolding narrative. Then summarize succinctly what the author is doing.
    - A paragraph on the context and a paragraph on how the passage can be understood in light of that context. (This is similar to explaining a film clip in light of the whole film. You are explaining a scripture passage by putting it into the larger work.)
  - 2] Discuss two of the following three themes as they occur in *La Mission* (1 Cor 13): hope, redemption (liberation), and Salvation.
  - 3] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the idea that watching film can be a spiritual experience as described by Johnston. How would you characterize your experience of watching *La Mission*?

### Module 14 (Wed.)

- Understanding Salvation/Redemption in *La Mission* and in the “Companionship of Empowerment”
- **Reading:**
  - Borg, Ch. 3 “Salvation,” from *Speaking Christian*, p. 36-54. (Available on Camino)
  - Reinhartz, Ch. 7 “One like the Son of Man: Christ-figure films,” *The Bible and Cinema*, p. 148-173.
- **Assignment:**
  - 1] Compare how Borg speaks about salvation in the Bible with the way salvation and redemption operate in *La Mission*. (Discuss two ways or aspects)
  - 2] Reinhartz: Compare and contrast the characteristics of Christ-figure films in the first part of the chapter with the ways that they are subverted in the last part of the chapter. (Two characteristics compared or contrasted).
  - 3] Using Reinhartz, discuss whether or not *La Mission* is a Christ figure film? Use examples from the movie to make your argument. (At least two examples.)

- 4] Describe two examples of religious imagery that inform the viewer that redemption or salvation/conversion are occurring.
- **Project 2: Project 2: *New Testament* Theme Group Project (Due)**

## WEEK 8 (Nov. 6)

### Module 15 (Mon.)

- Companionship of Empowerment, the Biblical Jubilee, and Race in *The Help*
- **Film:** *The Help* (2011)
- **Reading:**
  - Kinsler, “The Biblical Jubilee” (Available on Camino)
    - We will use some of the themes of the “Biblical Jubilee” as a lens in our viewing of *The Help* (2011).
  - Luke 4:14-30
  - Luke 7:18-28; Romans 12:14-21
  - Various Reviews and Opinions of *The Help*:
    - Miles, “A Review of *The Help*,” *Journal of Religion and Film* 15:2, Oct. 2011.
    - Teuth, “The Song of Aibileen: What *The Help* has to say,” *America* Sept. 12. 2011.
    - Dargis, “The Maids Have their Say”: A Review of *The Help*,” *New York Times* August 9, 2011.
    - “An Open Statement to the Fans of *The Help*” by the Association of Black Women Historians.
      - [http://aalbc.com/reviews/the\\_help\\_historical\\_context.html](http://aalbc.com/reviews/the_help_historical_context.html)
    - Ross, “Why I will Not See *The Help* – A Rant” Religion Dispatches. August 17, 2011.
      - <http://religiondispatches.org/why-i-will-not-see-ithe-help-i-a-rant/>
- **Assignment:**
  - 1] What are the origins of the biblical jubilee? What is it and how does it function?
  - 2] Explain how Jesus’ first sermon (Luke 4:14-30) in the Nazareth synagogue where he talks about his mission is based upon the Jubilee. Three aspects of his ministry will be sufficient and how they relate to the Jubilee.
  - 3] What are some of the themes present in Jubilee that could inspire or be the basis of contemporary films. (two themes are sufficient)
  - 4] Compare and contrast the two New Testament passages (Luke 7:18-28; Romans 12:14-21) and their illustrating some of the themes of Jesus’ companionship of empowerment with the film, *The Help*, and some of the themes of the companionship of empowerment it could be said to illustrate – focusing on some of the ways these themes resonate with each other. (Comparing or contrasting two ways that NT passages resonate with the film around the themes of the companionship of empowerment will be sufficient.) Some of the film’s themes that are related to the companionship of empowerment:
    - racism and its impact
    - moral blindness to daily injustice
    - discernment and ethical choices

- importance of faith and hope
  - gender and justice
  - solidarity in the face of injustice
  - small acts of courage as a way to change
  - how the personal and political connect
- 5] As you may or may not know during the time which *The Help* film opened at theaters and was enjoying quite a bit of financial success, many groups were quite vocal in articulating the historically inaccurate ways that the film represented these black maids working in white households in the south in the 1960s. After considering the arguments of the Black Women Historians Association and Rosetta Ross (see above), do you think that filmmakers have a responsibility to accurately represent their subjects, especially if there is a historical base to their story? Why or why not? Also, what would be some of the ways that the film could be transformed to address some of these inaccuracies?

#### Module 16 (Wed.)

- Intertextuality, Intersectionality, and Transcending Genres
- **Film:** Beyoncé's *Lemonade*, visual album (2016)
- **Reading:**
  - Pierce, "Black women and the sacred: with "Lemonade," Beyoncé takes us to church," *Religion Dispatches* (May 3, 2016) (Available on Camino or link below)
    - <http://religiondispatches.org/black-women-and-the-sacred-beyonce-takes-us-to-church/>
  - Reeves, "Beyoncé's 'Lemonade' Film Offers Stunning Visuals, Urgent Themes," *Rolling Stone* (April 24, 2016) (Available on Camino or link below)
    - <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/beyonces-lemonade-film-offers-stunning-visuals-urgent-themes-20160424>
- **Assignment:**
  - 1] Describe religious or religious-like imagery in *Lemonade*. Thinking about what we've learned in this course, how might you interpret that imagery?
  - 2] How does this video address matters of morality, race, and gender?
  - 3] Name and describe two to three NT themes that we have covered in this course that are present in *Lemonade* (these themes can be from the *New Testament* or other readings).
  - 4] Provide at least one example of both intertextuality and intersectionality in *Lemonade*.
  - 5] How does *Lemonade* cross and transcend multiple genres?

#### WEEK 9 (Nov. 13)

##### Module 17 (Mon.)

- Morality, Conversion, the Bible and Film
- **Film:** *3:10 to Yuma* (2007)
- **Reading:**
  - Reinhartz, Chapter 8 "'Justice, justice you shall pursue': Films and Morality," *Bible and Cinema*, p. 175-202.

- John 18:15-27 (Peter's Denial before Jesus' Trial and Crucifixion); John 21:15-19 (Peter's post-resurrection conversion)
- Bishop, "My Favorite Movies: *3:10 to Yuma*" (Available on Camino)
- Gordon, "The Greatest Moral Film of All Time" (Available on Camino)
- **Assignment:**
  - 1] Reinhartz: Discuss some of the ways (two ways) that the Bible and its imagery can be included in film to provoke reflections on moral conundrums.
  - 2] Using Reinhartz's threefold components necessary for a film to be considered a "Christ-figure film" (discussed earlier), identify the Christ-figure in *3:10 to Yuma* from the readings. Use the three components to describe that figure from the chapter's analysis.
  - 3] Consider some of the possible parallels (two such possible parallels) between Wade's conversion in *3:10 to Yuma* and Peter's denial and conversion in the *Gospel of John*.
  - 4] Bishop and Gordon: Name and discuss two of the moral conundrums that both Bishop and Gordon speak about as central to *3:10 to Yuma*. How are they addressed?

#### Module 18 (Wed.)

- Bible and Apocalyptic Film: *Children of Men* and a World Reborn?
- **Film:** *Children of Men* (2006)
- **Reading:**
  - Matthew Ch. 1-2 (Infancy Narratives in the Gospel of Matthew)
  - Reinhartz, Chapter 9 "In those days': Destruction and Redemption," *Bible and Cinema*, p. 203-229.
  - Schwartzman, "Children of Men and a Plural Messianism," *Journal of Religion and Film* 13:1 (April 2009). (Available on Camino)
- **Assignment:**
  - 1] Matt. 1 and 2: Compare and contrast the readings with the film. How is Matthew's account of the birth of Jesus opened up by the film?
  - 2] Reinhartz: What are some of the conventions of apocalyptic film (two examples) and how do they draw on the Bible in order to tell their story?
  - 2] The Schwartzman article raises some of the fundamental issues in *The Children of Men* that we have encountered in our ongoing consideration of Jesus' ministry and dream for the world and what we have referred to as the companionship of empowerment. What are some of the ways cinematically that the director of the film challenges us to consider some of these similar issues in the context of *The Children of Men*? (Two examples will be sufficient.)
- ***Children of Men* Discussion**
  - 1] After the viewing of the film you are asked to discuss the film and one of the scenes where the Bible appears specifically or is alluded to. You are also asked to respond to one other student's contribution.

#### **Thanksgiving Vacation (Nov. 20-24)**

**WEEK 10 (Nov. 27)**

Module 19 (Mon.)

- Final Group Presentations

Module 20 (Wed.)

- Final Group Presentations

**Exam Time Dec. 6 (Wed.) 6:30 pm – 9:30 pm**