

New RSOC 119 Course Theme: Mormon Fundamentalists and the Media



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RSOC 119 Media and Religion
MWF 1:00-2:05, Spring 2017
Dr. Michelle Mueller
Religious Studies
Santa Clara University

RSOC 119 Media and Religion (52421)
Section theme: Mormon Fundamentalists and the Media
MWF 1:00-2:05
Classroom: OCONR 201

Instructor: Dr. Michelle Mueller
Email: mbmueller@scu.edu
Office hour: 2:10-3:10 PM in Kenna 300-D

Catalogue course description: Examination of the religious, theological and ethical issues and perspectives raised by various media: print, visual, audio, multimedia, and virtual. Special attention will be given to the nature of their relationship and the religious and spiritual issues currently present in their interface.

Section description: In this section of RSOC 119 Media and Religion, we examine the impact of media on the religious minority through the example of Mormon fundamentalists in the United States. The mainstream Mormon (LDS) Church taught polygamous marriage until, under pressure from the federal government, the Church disavowed the practice in 1890. Fundamentalists not associated with LDS have continued the practice since the late nineteenth century. Although the LDS Church has taught monogamous marriage since the turn of the nineteenth century and has grown to become a worldwide church of over fifteen million members, the popular image of Mormons continues to be influenced by its polygamous past and the marginal fundamentalists.

Furthermore, Mormon fundamentalists, a population of forty to fifty thousand in North America, are of diverse groups themselves (e.g., Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (FLDS), Apostolic United Brethren (AUB, a.k.a. Allred Group), Centennial Park, and independents). Despite the diversity of Mormon fundamentalists in the US, the popular image of Mormon polygamists is informed almost exclusively by news media about FLDS, a sect whose dress customs and gender roles are far more specific than in other groups.

Yet, two series in popular television have completely transformed the image of Mormon polygamists. They are HBO's *Big Love* (fictional drama) and TLC's *Sister Wives* (reality television). These series, in contrast with media representing only negative aspects of polygamous communities, portray balanced images of consensually polygamous women in meaningful relationships with sister-wives and who are responsible, well-rounded parents. Other media, Lifetime's reality television series, *Escaping Polygamy*, and Showtime's documentary *Prophet's Prey*, continue to emphasize crimes, control of women, and abuse of children. While showing only select fundamentalist groups, *Escaping Polygamy* and *Prophet's Prey* claim these patterns are universal in polygamous groups.

This seminar is concerned with the role media plays in reinforcing and untangling stereotypes about the religious minority. While our readings and lesson plans focus on this specific example, students will strengthen their abilities to speak about the interplay between media and lived religion.

Our meeting schedule consists of **Media Mondays**, **Working Wednesdays**, and **Focus Fridays**. On Media Mondays, we view television episodes and film clips that represent Mormon fundamentalism and record observations in a Media Log. On Working Wednesdays, we apply critical thinking in discussions about the media we recently watched in conversation with academically rigorous essays about Mormon history and Mormon fundamentalist communities. On Focus Fridays, we hone in on specific questions and issues regarding the impact of the media industry on lived religion. Reading Responses (a.k.a. "Interface Issues") are due on Focus Fridays prior to our class meeting.

Prerequisite: Intermediate level course (SCTR 20-99, TESP 20-99, or RSOC 20-99) or another course approved as fulfilling the intermediate level Core requirement in Religious Studies and completion of 88 quarter units.

Digital Age Pathway:

This course is associated with the Digital Age Pathway. If you declare this Pathway, you may use a representative piece of work from this course as one of the Pathway materials you will upload via eCampus during your junior or senior year. Therefore, we recommend that you keep electronic copies of your work using Dropbox or Google Docs, in addition to saving copies on your own computer or flash drives. This may ensure you will have a range of choices for retrieving your saved files when you analyze and assemble your Pathway materials in preparation to write the Pathway reflection essay.

About Religion, Theology and Culture (RTC) 3: Building on the first two courses, the third course in RTC applies insights from the study of religion to difficult, open-ended questions of vital interest to contemporary societies. From historical or current perspectives, this course takes critical engagement to a creative level either in theory or practice.

Learning Goals for Religion, Theology and Culture 3

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

Ethical Reasoning: Drawing on ethical traditions to assess the consequences of individual and institutional decisions.

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

Perspective: Seeking out the experience of different cultures and people, striving to view the world through their eyes.

Learning Objectives for Religion, Theology and Culture 3

3.1 Identify diverse perspectives on and evaluate ethical implications of past or present issues of enduring relevance. (Critical Thinking; Ethical Reasoning; Perspective)

3.2 Evaluate and apply insights from the study of religion to open-ended issues facing societies, past or present.

Textbook: The textbook for this section is a specially prepared reader. The course reader is available at the SCU Campus Bookstore only. Your reader is prepared in accordance with publishing standards, which means that the cost of the reader includes the cost of royalties to the various presses responsible for the individual publications. In order to keep your costs down, I have left out from the reader required readings that are available in electronic format through the SCU Library. These readings are marked in the following reading schedule.

Assignments:

General participation (10 points)

As an advanced (RTC3) level religious studies course, "Media and Religion" is designed to examine, study and integrate issues and problems at the interface of several different areas of culture as they impact and inform the study of religion and theology. With no formal tests, this course relies heavily on on-time attendance and participation, reading and discussion of various cultural and religious texts, as well as writing and creatively considering the various aspects of the interplay between religion, spirituality, pop culture and media. Any additional assignments not listed below will count under Participation.

Attendance (13 points) – Therefore, all students are expected to be present, on time, prepared and active participants at class for presentations and discussions which constitute the core of this course. That being said, your instructor understands that illnesses and emergencies occur and prefers that students not attend class when they are likely contagious. In accordance, every student is permitted two absences without penalty. We have 28 class meetings. Each class is worth one half-point towards a total of 13 grade points. Each absence beyond the first two will result in a drop of one half-point. I do not distinguish between "excused" and "unexcused" absences. An absence is an absence. Lateness or early departure from class results in partial credit for the day.

Media Note Log (9 points) – On Media Mondays, we observe films and television episodes that we will continue to analyze throughout the week. As part of participation, every student should keep a "Media Note Log" (a.k.a. media journal) and take notes of her or his observations each Monday. **At the top of each entry, clearly state the date and the piece of media you are observing.** You are welcome to record many types of observations. *Describe the events represented in the media; characters portrayed; interventions from directors and camera technicians; etc. You may wish to jot down direct phrases or dialogue from the media, and even your personal reflections and conclusions about the storyline or the media.* The point is to record your observations so that you have these to refer back to in later discussions. At the end of the quarter, submit scans on Camino of three of your strongest (most detailed) entries for review. Students should not edit their entries before submitting; you are simply selecting a sample to demonstrate that you have indeed participated appropriately. If the page you are scanning shows more than one entry, place an asterisk (*) at the date of the entry you are submitting for

review. Each of the three entries counts for up to three grade points towards your final grade. Full credit will be given for adequate participation in this activity. While I do not anticipate this as a problem, entries that show a lack in effort may receive reduced points.

Reading Responses: (18 points (9 responses, 2 points each))

Each class's readings and any related assignments are to be completed prior to the start of the specific class. It is required that these assignments be deposited in their assigned "Drop Box" on CAMINO by 12:59pm on the day of the specific class they are due. Late assignments are not accepted, except in emergency situations as determined by instructor. Reading Responses (a.k.a. "Interface Issues") are due prior to the start of class on Focus Fridays. Prompts and "Drop Boxes" for these assignments will be on Camino. "Interface Issues" are issues at the intersection of religion, media and culture in our contemporary world and are related in some way to the readings. Students' responses to these issues will be considered and discussed in class on the day they have been assigned. Students' Reading Responses to the "Interface Issues" should be AT MINIMUM one half-page single-spaced point 12 font.

Midterm Project: (25 points)

Due Date: 5/23 by midnight. Length requirement: a minimum of four double-spaced pages (12 point font).

Option 1] Autobiographical essay reflecting on Religious/Spiritual, Cultural and Media Shaping

Write a four page essay (12 point font, double-spaced) where you examine and describe the ways that media, religion, spirituality and pop culture have shaped your identity. This requires a bit of social analysis – an examination of how media, pop culture and religion have operated in your life to "normalize" what you have come to believe about the world. What have you learned from this examination about the role of the media, religion, spirituality and pop culture and how they influence who you are? What are some of the benefits and drawbacks, as well as the implications of this shaping? Paper must reference appropriate academic sources from media studies.

Option 2] Review film/TV show with an implicit religious/spiritual dimension.

Project #2: View a contemporary film or one episode of a recent television series (other than one we have watched in class). Write a four page essay (12 point font, double-spaced) that analyzes and interprets this film or television series that deals with religion or spirituality in some way.

Final Project: (25 points)

Due Date: 6/9 by midnight.

Option 1] A research paper (6-8 double-spaced pages in 12 point font) that is due during the week of exams. This paper should address a theme or issue at the interface of media and religion as suggested in the course, with reference to actual media content. The paper should engage with a minimum of two appropriate

academic sources. In addition, it should be a topic best addressed in a text based (essay) treatment. Standard format (MLA or Chicago Manual of Style) is acceptable.

Option 2] A multimedia presentation exploring one issue of religious significance developed or suggested by the course. It is important to discuss the contours of this option with the professor ahead of time. Comprised of at least 15 slides this is a multimedia presentation. You are also free to use other mediums to explore an issue at the intersection of media and religion. Please note that this is a multimedia format and if your topic is better treated in a text intensive format, option #1 above should be used.

Option 3] Design your own project. Must be approved by instructor.

If appropriate, students might present Option 2 or Option 3 to the class. We will discuss this possibility in class meetings.

INSTRUCTOR AND COURSE POLICIES

All standard College policies apply.

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism or academic dishonesty in any form (as described in the Student Conduct Code) will result in a failed grade for the project, and possibly for the course. All allegations of academic dishonesty will be reported to the department chair and Office of Student Life. For a full presentation of University policies concerning plagiarism, see:

<http://scu.edu/studentlife/resources/upload/Academic-Integrity-brochure-2014.pdf>

In order to avoid the sanctions applied to cases of academic dishonesty, please make sure that you properly cite all sources that you utilize in your writing, including works that are directly quoted or paraphrased, as well as works used as a source of information. This includes both print and online sources. Your paper submissions must consist of your own writing, and any direct quotations or paraphrasing from other works must be properly cited.

Disability Accommodations

If you have a disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact Disabilities Resources, Benson 216, 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](tel:408-554-4109).

Attendance and Absences Policy

Students are entitled to miss two classes without penalty to grade. If you are sick, please take advantage of the available no-penalty absences. I appreciate when students stay home if they may be contagious. I do not make exceptions for class attendance, except in extreme circumstances, such as if a student has been hospitalized or recommended by a physician to refrain from class or work for an extended period of time, or in the case of death in the family and necessary travel. If you miss more than four classes because of extreme circumstances, email instructor at mbmueller@scu.edu.

Our class is discussion based. There is no real way to "make up" a Working Wednesday or Focus Friday class that has been missed. (Speak with instructor about making up a Media Monday class.) If you miss a class, I encourage you to ask a classmate about our activities. I may, when able, post related notes or resources from a class meeting on Camino website, but our class meeting is often something I cannot replicate in such a form.

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 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. Reports may be submitted online through www.scu.edu/osl/report or anonymously through Ethicspoint: www.ethicspoint.com <http://stage-www.scu.edu/hr/quick-links/ethics-point/>

Reporting Practices

While I want you to feel comfortable coming to me with issues you may be struggling with or concerns you may be having, please be aware that there are some reporting requirements that are part of my job at Santa Clara University. For example, if you inform me of an issue of harassment, sexual violence, or discrimination, I will keep the information as private as I can, but I am required to bring it to the attention of the institution's EEO and Title IX Coordinator. If you inform me that you are struggling with an issue that may be resulting in, or caused by, traumatic or unusual stress, I will likely inform the campus Student Care Team

(SCU CARE).

If you would like to reach out directly to the Student Care Team for assistance, you can contact them at www.scu.edu/osl/report. If you would like to talk to the Office of EEO and Title IX directly, they can be reached at [408-554-3043](tel:408-554-3043) or by email at bguthrie@scu.edu. Reports may be submitted online through www.scu.edu/osl/report or anonymously through Ethicspoint: www.ethicspoint.com. Additionally, you can report incidents or complaints to the Office of Student Life (OSL), Campus Safety Services, and local law enforcement. For confidential support, contact the Counseling and Psychological Services office (CAPS), the YWCA, or a member of the clergy (for example, a priest or minister).

Finally, please be aware that if, for some reason, our interaction involves a disruptive behavior, a concern about your safety or the safety of others, or potential violation of University policy, I will inform the Office of Student Life. The purpose of this is to keep OSL apprised of incidents of concern, and to ensure that students can receive or stay connected to the academic support and student wellness services they need.

Technology in Class

In general, I am comfortable with students' use of technology in the classroom. Students are welcome to use laptops for recording notes during class discussion, or for accessing class materials shared online. Phones should be silenced. Texting during class merits a loss of participation points for that class. Be respectful in your use of technology; stick to course work and remain present with us—do not search internet unless you are seeking something for class discussion. Be forthright if you just searched and found something that might help us. Please avoid using smartphones for notetaking, as I will have difficulty discerning whether you are using the phone for class purposes or other. If I find that use of technology has become distracting in the classroom, I can change this policy at any time. I prefer receiving assignments as directed on the Camino website, but I understand that every website occasionally goes down unexpectedly. If you are in danger of missing a deadline because of technical difficulties with Camino website, email your work to mbmueller@scu.edu. Emailing ensures that your work will have a time and date stamp for my verification.

Schedule:

Date	Reading Due	Activity in class
Apr 3	None (1 st class meeting)	Introduction to course; Media Monday: "Spotlight on a Young Polygamist Family," <i>Our America with Lisa Ling</i> (Oprah Winfrey Network)
Apr 5	Recommended: Pages 1-20 of D. Michael Quinn, "Plural Marriage and Mormon Fundamentalism," <i>Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought</i> 31.2: 1-68. (URL - Camino)	Working Wednesday: Analyze images from "Big Love," "Sister Wives," and "Prophet's Prey"
Apr 7	D. Michael Quinn, "Plural Marriage and Mormon Fundamentalism," <i>Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought</i> 31.2: 1-68. (URL - Camino)	Focus Friday: "fake news"
Apr 10	Stuart A. Wright and James T. Richardson, "Introduction," <i>Saints Under Siege: The Texas State Raid on the Fundamentalist Latter Day Saints</i> (New York: NYU Press, 2011), pp. 1-24. (Electronic resource in University Library catalog.)	Media Monday: news stories from 2008 raid on Yearning for Zion ranch (Eldorado, TX)
Apr 12	Karen D. Austin, "Reality Corrupts; Reality Television Corrupts Absolutely," from <i>Peculiar Portrayals: Mormons on the Page, Stage, and Screen</i> , edited by Mark T. Decker and Michael Austin (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2010), pp. 183-196. (Electronic resource in University Library catalog.)	Working Wednesday: exploration of biases re: Mormon fundamentalists and polygamy
Apr 14	None (Good Friday holiday) LDS' Meet the Mormons, 1 hr 17 mins Other Meet the Mormons (?) 46 mins PBS' The Mormons (1 hr 37 mins)	No class
Apr 17	Michael Austin, "Four Consenting Adults in the Privacy of Their Own Suburb: <i>Big Love</i> and the Cultural Significance of Mormon Polygamy," from <i>Peculiar Portrayals: Mormons on the Page, Stage, and Screen</i> , edited by Mark T. Decker and Michael Austin (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2010), 37-61.	Media Monday: <i>Sister Wives</i> and <i>Big Love</i> clips
Apr 19	Pamela L. Morris and Charissa K. Niedzwiecki, "Odd or Ordinary: Social Comparisons Between Real and Reality TV Families," from <i>Reality Television: Oddities of Culture</i> , edited by Alison F. Slade, Amber J. Narro, and Burton P. Buchanan (Lanham, MD: Lexington	Working Wednesday: TBD

	Books, 2014), pp. 143-162.	
Apr 21	Ken Driggs, "Twenty Years of Observations about the Fundamentalist Polygamists," from <i>Modern Polygamy in the United States</i> , edited by Cardell K. Jacobson and Lara Burton (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 77-100.	Focus Friday: Dr. Mueller reports back about Sunstone Short Creek conference
Apr 24	Craig L. Foster, "Doing Violence to Journalistic Integrity: Review of Jon Krakauer, <i>Under the Banner of Heaven</i> ," <i>The FARMS Review</i> 16.1: 149-74.	Media Monday: <i>Prophet's Prey</i> (2015)
Apr 26	Janet Bennion, "The Variable Impact of Mormon Polygyny on Women and Children," from <i>The Polygamy Question</i> (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2016), pp. TBD. (Electronic resource in University Library catalog.)	Working Wednesday: Finish <i>Prophet's Prey</i>
Apr 28	Janet Bennion, "The Variable Impact of Mormon Polygyny on Women and Children," from <i>The Polygamy Question</i> (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2016), pp. TBD. (Electronic resource in University Library catalog.)	Focus Friday: TBD
May 1	James D. Tabor, "Apocalypse at Waco," from <i>Sociology of Religion: A Reader, Second Edition</i> , edited by Susanne C. Monahan, William A. Mirola, and Michael O. Emerson (New York: Routledge, 2011), pp. 313-318. Recommended: Douglas E. Cowan and David G. Bromley, "The Siege at Waco and the Problem of Mass Media," from <i>Cults and New Religions: A Brief History, Second Edition</i> (Malden, MA: Wiley, 2015), pp. 131-137. (Electronic resource in University Library catalog.)	Media Monday: <i>Escaping Polygamy</i> episode TBD
May 3	Carole Cusack, "Both Outside and Inside: 'Ex-Members' of New Religions and Spiritualities and the Maintenance of Community and Identity on the Internet."	Working Wednesday:
May 5	US Weekly article about Escaping Polygamy lawsuit (URL – Camino).	Focus Friday:
May 8	Janet Bennion, "Media and the Polygamy Narrative," from <i>Polygamy in Primetime</i> (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2012), pp. 163-194.	Media Monday: clips from <i>Sister Wives</i> "Divorce" and <i>Big Love</i> "D.I.V.O.R.C.E."
May 10	Michelle Mueller, "Plural Families, Media, and the Law."	Working Wednesday: TBD
May 12	Pete Ward, "Introduction," from <i>Gods Behaving Badly: Media, Religion, and Celebrity Culture</i> (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2011), 1-8.	Focus Friday: religion and tabloids

May 15	TBD	Media Monday: <i>Sister Wives</i> anniversary episode
May 17	Brady Williams, "Progressive Polygamy," <i>Sunstone Magazine</i> (Summer 2016): pp. 50-53.	Working Wednesday: TBD
May 19	Esteve Sanz, "The Cultural Economy of Postconsensus Television," <i>International Journal of Communication</i> 8: 1-19; Andrew Ross, "Reality Television and the Political Economy of Amateurism," from <i>A Companion to Reality Television</i> , edited by Laurie Ouellette (Malden, MA: Wiley, 2017), pp. 29-39. (Electronic resource in University Library catalog.)	Focus Friday: religion, reality TV, and economy
May 22	Leslie Rasmussen, "Catfished: Exploring Viewer Perceptions of Online Relationships," from <i>Reality Television: Oddities of Culture</i> , edited by Alison F. Slade, Amber J. Narro, and Burton P. Buchanan (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2014), pp. 237-248.	Media Monday: <i>Sister Wives</i> episode TBD
May 24	Stewart M. Hoover and Curtis D. Coats, <i>Does God Make the Man?: Media, Religion, and the Crisis of Masculinity</i> (New York: NYU Press, 2015), pp. 65-95.	Working Wednesday: gender in contemporary Mormon fundamentalist families
May 26	Joe, Alina, Vicki, and Valerie Darger and Brooke Adams, "Introduction: A Matter of Principle," <i>Love Times Three: Our True Story of a Polygamous Marriage</i> (New York: HarperCollins, 2011), 1-16.	Focus Friday: Skype call with Dargers ???(polygamist authors of <i>Love Times Three</i>)
May 29	None (Memorial Day holiday)	<i>No class (holiday)</i>
May 31	TBD	Working Wednesday: <i>Book of Mormon The Musical</i>
Jun 2	Readings on Mormon fundamentalists and race TBD	Focus Friday: Mormonism, media, and race
Jun 5	TBD	Media Monday: <i>Sister Wives</i> episode TBD
Jun 7	TBD	Student Multimedia Presentations (tentative)
Jun 9	TBD	Student Multimedia Presentations (tentative)