

**From:** Inform  
**Subject:** EM: New Class: RLST 171 - Religion and Film Fall 2024

**From:** Chavez, Linda

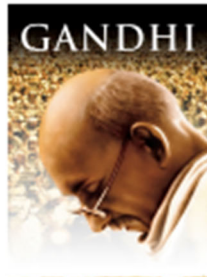
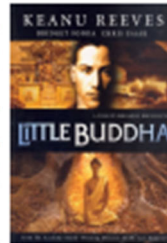
## RLST 171 – Religion and Film – Fall 2024

Prof. Gastón Espinosa

Thursday, 6-10 PM – CMC Roberts South 104



This course critically analyzes the role of religious symbols, beliefs, traditions, and ideologies in American film. After a crash course in screenwriting and film structure, it explores religious leaders, traditions, motifs, and sensibilities in film genres such as Epic (The 10 Commandments, Lord of the Rings, Gandhi), Science Fiction (Star Wars, The Matrix), Action-Adventure (Indiana Jones Raiders of the Lost Ark), Drama (The Mission, Little Buddha, The Messenger), War (Platoon), Comedy (Keeping the Faith), Horror (The Exorcist), and Musicals (Jesus Christ Superstar, Yentl). Films are an historical artifact and cultural canvas that imparts not only the writer and director's views and commentary about religion and society, but also those of the masses that consume them. We will compare and contrast how the elite critics and masses received the films and why. The primary goal of the course is to analyze how writers, directors, and producers use film to engage in social, religious, and political commentary about society. We will draw on mythological, ideological, feminist, critical race, and post-colonial theories and motifs to explore how films can function as a vehicle for social, religious, and political commentary, consciousness raising, and protest. We will examine themes like God(s), Messiah's, angels, demons, spirit possession, sacred texts, magic, witchcraft, sacrilege, race, class, gender, sexuality, beauty, evil, music, and salvation & redemption. Finally, the course analyzes how films can empower, marginalize, racialize and yet also reify the "other." Assignments include 3 four page movie reviews and a final 10 page paper or 5 minute short film instead of a paper. We end the class with a final dinner and presentations. For permission to add, send a perm request via the portal and come on out to class!





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