

JESUS IN FILM AND LITERATURE
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Summer I, 2004

Do books as oral reports by students: one each
See one or two films in class.

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Mon/Wed/Fri
8:30-1:00

Prerequisites: Students enrolled in this class must have had either B520 Introduction to the Bible or its equivalent.

Purpose: Students will study the interpretation of the life of Jesus in modern films and novels. We will do this not simply by reading literature and viewing movies, but by actively engaging in critical theological thinking. This means that we will learn to ask searching questions at every step of the interpretive process. We will also seek to understand the the various stories we examine as works of art, in which each visual or verbal element has a purpose and function that is not always immediately discernible. At the same time, we will strive to place the stories in a cultural context so that we comprehend that the meaning of a story exists first within a particular social, economic, political, and religious framework. In doing this, we will endeavor to understand the life of Jesus as a motivating symbolic force that shifts and transforms in different circumstances and settings.

Requirements:

1) **Attendance and informed class participation** are required and will constitute **20%** of the total grade. Thoughtful questions and discussion are encouraged.

At the beginning of each class, everyone will sign an attendance sheet. Unexcused absences and chronic lateness will result in automatic lowering of the student's grade at the discretion of the instructor. Excused absences (which do not include circumstances over which one does have personal control) are allowed, but more than one absence may lead to lowering of the grade at the discretion of the instructor. Please do not telephone the instructor about an impending class absence or a prior class absence, but send an email describing the situation.

2) Students will complete a **journal** that focuses on particular scenes, images/symbols, or characters from three films and one novel per week. Each entry should focus on a specific element from one of the stories we are viewing or reading. I am not interested in any general commentary on the overall significance of a book or movie, but rather in particular details that have some importance within the

overall framework of the story. Each entry should have a length of approximately two pages. This journal is worth **35%** of your final grade.

3) Each class I will ask two or three students to comment on a particular scene of my choice from a film or novel. They will then spend ten to fifteen minutes offering commentary and engaging in a dialogue with the instructor. This is worth **10%** of the grade.

4) A **take-home final exam** that will consist of some ID's and an essay question (worth **35%** of your final grade).

REQUIRED BOOKS

Sholem Asch, The Nazarene (1938)

Mikhail Bulgakov, The Master and Margarita (1966)

Nikos Kazantzakis, The Last Temptation of Christ (1955)

Lloyd Baugh, Imaging the Divine: Jesus and Christ-Figures in Film (2000)--Please check the appropriate entries this book as we progress in the course.

FILMS FOR VIEWING

Iphigenia

High Noon

Jesus of Montreal

Passion of Joan of Arc

The Mission

Miracle Maker

Last Temptation of Christ

Gospel According to Saint Matthew

Dark City

The Magician

Romero

We will show some films in class. We will set up alternative times to see other films.

CLASSES

May 24

May 26

May 28:

Please complete reading Mikhail Bulgakov, The Master and Margarita

June 1

June 2

June 4

Please complete reading Nikos Kazantzakis, The Last Temptation of Christ

June 7

June 9

June 11

Please complete reading Sholem Asch, The Nazarene