

# Religion and Hollywood

This course will examine the symbolic portrayal of religion in contemporary popular films produced within Hollywood.

We will critically view a series of films (including *The Matrix*, *Superman*, *Fight Club*, *The Green Mile*, and *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, among others) in order to discover the ways in which the screenwriters and directors have intentionally buried religious ideas deep within the plots. Although the audience is often unaware of the religious symbolism present within the film, we will examine how the medium of film has a growing influence upon the sphere of religious understanding (personal and scholarly), particularly in the West. We will also come to appreciate the degree to which Hollywood is shaped, sometimes surprisingly, by religious themes.

No prior study of religion or media is necessary. In fact, film will prove to be an interesting, entertaining way to learn about some of the various components of the religions under scrutiny. Particular religions covered by the films will include Judaism, Christianity, Gnostic Christianity, Zen Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism.

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\*no required books for purchase in Bookstore.

Regular course readings will be uploaded to Blackboard.

