

CMST 4333: RELIGIOUS COMMUNICATION

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IMPORTANT NOTE: I ask that any email correspondence from you be from your uttyler email address, not your personal or other email. Thanks. Likewise, emails to you will be sent to your uttyler email address.

Seminar Description

This course will examine the symbolic construction of religion. It will explore the dialectic between the “sacralization” of the secular and the secularization of the sacred or religious.

Course Description and Learning Objectives

This seminar serves as an introduction to the interplay between religion, culture, and communication. Students will become familiar with:

- The symbolic construction and expression of religion
- A variety of critical approaches
- The adoption of symbolic popular culture in religion (secularization of religion)
- The “sacralization” of the secular

Student Learning Outcomes: At the completion of the course, students should be able to:

- Understand communication from a variety of theoretical perspectives. **(Competency: Theoretical Knowledge)**
- Appropriately apply communication theory to the communication rules, norms, listening skills, and rhetorical strategies used by the people around them. **(Competency: Theoretical Application).**
- Analyze the role of communication within organizations. **(Competency: Complex Organizations)**

Required Reading

Lyden, John C. (2003). *Film as Religion: Myths, Morals, and Rituals*. New York: New York University Press.
Oswalt, Conrad. (2012). *Secular Steeples: Popular Culture and the Religious Imagination*, 2nd ed. New York: Bloomsbury

Other assigned readings can be found in Blackboard.

Assignments

Film Critique	20%
Exam (Mid-Term or Final)	20%
Group Presentation	20%
Research Paper	20%
Weekly Activities	20%

Film Criticism: Critical analysis of one film of your choosing from one of the genres in *Film as Religion: Myths, Morals, and Rituals* employing John Lyden’s categories. Length: 3-5 pages. This essay seeks to assist students in examining a film through the three lenses (myths, morals, rituals) that it shares with religion and to compare and contrast how their selected film functions religiously under these categories. The assignment is crafted to attain familiarity and facility with this method and these categories in examining the representation of religion in an aspect of popular culture.
(Adapted from Joe Morris, Santa Clara University)

Group Presentation: Each group will present the “sacralization” (use of myths, morals, rituals) of popular culture (secular social spheres such as sport, in recreation, in music, in television, etc.) and the secularization of religion (i.e., the adoption of secular themes and devices in religious practice).

Categories from which groups will choose include:

1. PRE-TEXT: Space/Place (Sports, Commerce, Leisure);
2. PRE-TEXT Sound (Music, Internet & Virtual Communities);
3. TEXT: Print/books;
4. POST-TEXT: Video and TV
5. INTER-TEXT: Intermingling of Religion and Various sorts of texts

Mid-Term Exam or Final Exam

Research Paper: This paper will involve an extended analysis of a major media artifact, such as a film, book, television show or series, web site, media campaign, etc., that is directly related to course themes and content. All topics must be approved in advance. A one-page (ungraded) description of your topic, plan for achieving research goals, and request for approval will be due by February 22. **Failure to turn in the project description by the due date will result in a 10% reduction of the assignment grade.** All papers must be supported by substantial research into primary and secondary sources, including relevant discussion by literary, film, television, or applicable media critics, scholars, and historians discussing the secular-religious artifact(s) you have chosen for your analysis.

Weekly Activities: For most weeks, you will respond to designated reading material and/or visual material by posting your response to questions on the Canvas Discussion Board.

Grading

For each graded assignment, students will receive an A, B, C, D, or F. Each of these letter grades corresponds with a number value: an A carries a numeric value of 4, a B is worth 3, C is worth 2, D is worth 1, and F is worth 0. To calculate your grade, multiply 4, 3, 2, 1, or 0 that corresponds with your letter grade by the percentage value (above) of a given exercise. For example, if you receive a B for the “Final Exam,” you would multiply 3—which corresponds with a B—by 20% and you would get a .60 for that assignment. At the end of the semester, to calculate your final grade, you would add each of the scores and divide by 100. Final grades will be awarded as follows:

Numeric Value of Grades:

A = 4
B = 3
C = 2
D = 1
F = 0

If your grade falls between two numbers (e.g., between a 3 and a 2), you will receive the grade corresponding with the lower number (in this case, a C, corresponding with 2) since technically you will not have achieved a B (a 3.0)

*The category of “Participation” reflects the fact that active engagement in class proceedings is expected not only in graded assignments but in preparations and discussions. It refers to class presentations, such as chapter reports, discussion in class, and attendance. Failure to participate actively in class proceedings could result in failing the class, even if the student’s score were passing on all graded assignments.

Seminar Policies and Procedures

Attendance: Weekly submissions of chapter reports and other assignments will provide the basis for checking attendance.

Course Assignments: (Expectations of particular assignments will be provided at the announcement of each respective assignment).

Regarding Late Work: I DO NOT ACCEPT UNEXCUSED LATE WORK. Since one of the primary objectives expressed in the University’s mission statement is that students “will act with honesty and integrity,” I will enforce rigorous standards of honesty and personal responsibility. Work is considered late if work is not presented on the date assigned. Unexcused work receives a “O.” Any exceptions to this policy—which would be very rare!—would be at my discretion; in this case, the student:

- must submit to me a written petition requesting that his/her absence be excused
- must show official documentation verifying the basis for absence
- must be prepared to present the missed work at the very first opportunity I make available after the student’s return
- must provide appropriate documentation that his/her failure to complete the assignment on the assigned date was unavoidable
- may be penalized for failure to present work as assigned.

If you know in advance that you will not be able to be present on a particular date on which work has been assigned, please let me know well in advance of the due date for the work. Likewise, if you experience COVID-related hardships, please let me know.

Audio/Video Recording of class lectures is prohibited without prior approval. However, on occasion the instructor may arrange recording for instructional purposes.

Oral and Written Work: Assignments may have an oral and/or written components. Especially since this is a communication class, grading of oral and written work will consider quality and thoroughness of analysis, style, adherence to format, and proper mechanics (grammar, spelling, organization, clarity, cohesiveness). All work submitted to me should be typed and double-spaced. All work should be stapled (Please! NO PLASTIC REPORT COVERS WITH SPINES, NO DOG EARS, NO FOLDED CORNERS, AND NO PAPER CLIPS! PLEASE STAPLE PAGES!) The quality of both your written and oral work will figure into your grade for the assignment.

Reading Assignments: Although your assignments are focused on particular aspects of the reading, you are responsible for the entire contents of all chapters and may be tested on any portions of those readings.

“Outside” Participation: Because much of what this course teaches is learned in personal reflection and application, some activities or preparation for in-class activities take place outside of class.

Email Etiquette:

In an effort to restore civility in communication, I ask that you demonstrate courtesy in all of your correspondence with me by opening your email with a courteous salutation such as, “Hi, Dr. Cali,” or “Good morning, Professor Cali” or something similar. Please do not send a message without such a greeting.

University Policies and Resources

UT Tyler Honor Code

Every member of the UT Tyler community joins together to embrace: Honor and integrity that will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do.

Students Rights and Responsibilities

To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link: <http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php>

Campus Carry

We respect the right and privacy of students 21 and over who are duly licensed to carry concealed weapons in this class. License holders are expected to behave responsibly and keep a handgun secure and concealed. More information is available at <http://www.uttyler.edu/about/campus-carry/index.php>

UT Tyler a Tobacco-Free

University All forms of tobacco will not be permitted on the UT Tyler main campus, branch campuses, and any property owned by UT Tyler. This applies to all members of the University community, including students, faculty, staff, University affiliates, contractors, and visitors. Forms of tobacco not permitted include cigarettes, cigars, pipes, water pipes (hookah), bidis, kreteks, electronic cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chewing tobacco, and all other tobacco products. There are several cessation programs available to students looking to quit smoking, including counseling, quit lines, and group support. For more information on cessation programs please visit www.uttyler.edu/tobacco-free.

Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date Policies

Students repeating a course for grade forgiveness (grade replacement) must file a Grade Replacement Contract with the Enrollment Services Center (ADM 230) on or before the Census Date of the semester in which the course will be repeated. Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at <http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar>. Each semester's Census Date can be found on the Contract itself, on the Academic Calendar, or in the information pamphlets published each semester by the Office of the Registrar. Failure to file a Grade Replacement Contract will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates are eligible to exercise grade replacement for only three course repeats during their career at UT Tyler; graduates are eligible for two grade replacements. Full policy details are printed on each Grade Replacement Contract. The Census Date is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions of which students need to be aware. These include:

- Submitting Grade Replacement Contracts, Transient Forms, requests to withhold directory information, approvals for taking courses as Audit, Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit.
- Receiving 100% refunds for partial withdrawals. (There is no refund for these after the Census Date)
- Schedule adjustments (section changes, adding a new class, dropping without a "W" grade)
- Being reinstated or re-enrolled in classes after being dropped for non-payment
- Completing the process for tuition exemptions or waivers through Financial Aid State-Mandated

Course Drop Policy

Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after the census date (See Academic Calendar for the specific date). Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Enrollment Services Center and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Enrollment Services Center if you have any questions.

Disability/Accessibility Services

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) the University of Texas at Tyler offers accommodations to students with learning, physical and/or psychological disabilities. If you have a disability, including a non-visible diagnosis such as a learning disorder, chronic illness, TBI, PTSD, ADHD, or you have a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment, you are encouraged to visit

<https://hood.accessiblelearning.com/UTTyler> and fill out the New Student application. The Student Accessibility and Resources (SAR) office will contact you when your application has been submitted and an appointment with Cynthia Lowery, Assistant Director of Student Services/ADA Coordinator. For more information, including filling out an application for services, please visit the SAR webpage at <http://www.utt Tyler.edu/disabilityservices>, the SAR office located in the University Center, # 3150 or call 903.566.7079.

Student Absence due to Religious Observance

Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor of such absences by the second class meeting of the semester.

Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities Revised 05/19

If you intend to be absent for a university-sponsored event or activity, you (or the event sponsor) must notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the date of the planned absence. At that time the instructor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.

Social Security and FERPA

Statement It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students have an identification number. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g., via e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; grades will not be transmitted electronically.

Emergency Exits and Evacuation

Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your instructor's directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.

Student Standards of Academic

Conduct Disciplinary proceedings may be initiated against any student who engages in scholastic dishonesty, including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. "Cheating" includes, but is not limited to:

- copying from another student's test paper;
- using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test;
- failure to comply with instructions given by the person administering the test;
- possession during a test of materials which are not authorized by the person giving the test, such as class notes or specifically designed "crib notes". The presence of textbooks constitutes a violation if they have been specifically prohibited by the person administering the test;
- using, buying, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or part the contents of an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program;
- collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or other assignment without authority;
- discussing the contents of an examination with another student who will take the examination;
- divulging the contents of an examination, for the purpose of preserving questions for use by another, when the instructors has designated that the examination is not to be removed from the examination room or not to be returned or to be kept by the student;
- substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for oneself to take a course, a test, or any course-related assignment;

- paying or offering money or other valuable thing to, or coercing another person to obtain an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program or information about an unadministered test, test key, home solution or computer program;
- falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other academic work offered for credit;
- taking, keeping, misplacing, or damaging the property of The University of Texas at Tyler, or of another, if the student knows or reasonably should know that an unfair academic advantage would be gained by such conduct; and
- misrepresenting facts, including providing false grades or resumes, for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit or injuring another student academically or financially. ii. “Plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another’s work and the submission of it as one’s own academic work offered for credit. iii. “Collusion” includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any section of the rules on scholastic dishonesty. iv. All written work that is submitted will be subject to review by plagiarism software.

Important Covid-19 Information for Classrooms and Laboratories

Students are required to wear face masks covering their nose and mouth, and follow social distancing guidelines, at all times in public settings (including classrooms and laboratories), as specified by [Procedures for Fall 2020 Return to Normal Operations](#). The UT Tyler community of Patriots views adoption of these practices consistent with its [Honor Code](#) and a sign of good citizenship and respectful care of fellow classmates, faculty, and staff.

Students who are feeling ill or experiencing symptoms such as sneezing, coughing, or a higher than normal temperature will be excused from class and should stay at home and may join the class remotely. Students who have difficulty adhering to the Covid-19 safety policies for health reasons are also encouraged to join the class remotely. Students needing additional accommodations may contact the Office of Student Accessibility and Resources at University Center 3150, or call (903) 566-7079 or email saroffice@uttyler.edu.

Recording of Class Sessions

Class sessions may be recorded by the instructor for use by students enrolled in this course. Recordings that contain personally identifiable information or other information subject to FERPA shall not be shared with individuals not enrolled in this course unless appropriate consent is obtained from all relevant students. Class recordings are reserved only for the use of students enrolled in the course and only for educational purposes. Course recordings should not be shared outside of the course in any form without express permission.

UT Tyler Resources for Students

- UT Tyler Writing Center (903.565.5995), writingcenter@uttyler.edu
- UT Tyler Tutoring Center (903.565.5964), tutoring@uttyler.edu
- The Mathematics Learning Center, RBN 4021, this is the open access computer lab for math students, with tutors on duty to assist students who are enrolled in early-career courses.
- UT Tyler Counseling Center (903.566.7254)

Religious Communication Course Calendar: **TENTATIVE**

Date	Activity	Instructional Material
Jan. 11	Overview (Theoretical Frameworks for Religion, Popular Culture, and Media and Introductions	
Jan. 18 SIGN UP FOR GROUP PRESENTATIONS (8 groups)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religion • Popular Culture • Ritual • Myth • Communitas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DelChant, Sacred Santa (Blackboard) • Lyden, Film as Religion, the Definition of Religion (Ch. 2), ...Ritual (Ch. 4) • “The Power of Myth: The Hero’s Adventure (Joseph Campbell on Myth) (DVD): 56’43” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JYTbiuHtlwM&index=1&list=PLVyg2ol30hZ5bqK2JSxGQ1tHFrrqHzcz&t=957s • Geertz, Religion as a Cultural System (Blackboard) • Schudson, How Culture Works article (Blackboard)
Jan. 25	CON-TEXT (“Communitas”)	
	Overview: (Con-text, Pre-Text, Text, Post-Text);	Oswalt, Chapter 10 Context: The Amish: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=82wRG5tGF7k
Feb. 1	Group Workshop	
Feb. 8	PRE-TEXT/SPACE	
	Pre-Text: Space/Place	Oswalt, Chapters 1 and 2 St. Peter’s Basilica: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BguJhRML108 Love Valley: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uRoDquQd7bc Joel Osteen: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HCQsdHqx3ao (27’16”); Willow Creek: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qpCuATgV_0Y (5’50”)
Feb. 15 RESEARCH TOPIC PROPOSALS DUE	Pre-Text: Religion & Sport, Pre-Text: Religion & Recreation 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lambeau Field (5’34”): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v9zwwFcGzNs • Wrigley Field (2’07”): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wK3sXWWMaQQ • Is Sport a Religion? <i>Psychology Today</i>: https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-human-beast/200911/is-sport-religion <p style="text-align: center;">#####</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pahl, Seeking Sacred Spaces (Blackboard) • Pahl, Walt Disney World as American Civil Religion (Blackboard) • Grand Ole Opry (5’40”): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P0uH8WCRgeI • “Malls R Us” (43’43”): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAIDAzTtoCA&t=34s
Feb. 22	Communitas/ Con-Text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oswalt, Chapter 10

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> L'Arche Community: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vDnfdHQu-rg
Mar. 1	Panel Presentations on Communitas and Space/Place	
Mar. 8-13	SPRING BREAK	
Mar. 15	TEXT	
	Books on media theory Sacred Secularized/ Secular Sacralized: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media Ecology Science <p style="text-align: center;">3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oswalt, Chapters 6 and 7 McLuhan and McLuhan, <i>The Medium & the Light</i> Quentin Schultze, "Communication as Religion: In Memory of James W. Carey" (Blackboard) James Carey, The Ritual Model (3'59"): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6j-XlaAts5E Thomas Lessl, Religion in Science Texts (Blackboard)
Mar. 22	POST-TEXT/Image	
	Religion & Video and Television <p style="text-align: center;">4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oswalt, Chapters 8 and 9 Film as Religion, Book, A Method for Viewing Film as Religion, Lyden (Part I) Milford, Neo Christ: Jesus, the Matrix & Secondary Allegory Skill, Robinson, Lyons, and Larson, "Portrayal of Religion and Spirituality on Fictional Network Television" (Blackboard) Madonna, "Like a Prayer" (5'37"): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=79fzeNUqQbQ
Mar. 29	Film Criticisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lyden, Film as Religion
Apr. 5	Film Criticisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lyden, Film as Religion
Apr. 12	INTER-TEXTS	
	Religion & Music Religion & the Internet <p style="text-align: center;">5</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chadwick, "Dead Elvis as Other Jesus" (Blackboard) Gregory, "When Elvis Died" (Blackboard) Sylvan, "Grateful Dead and Deadheads" (Blackboard) Dyson, "Gangsta Rap & American Culture," (Blackboard)
Apr. 19	Preparations: Research Project	
Apr. 26	Presentations: Research Project	
May 2	(Final Exam?)	
	Possible Topics for Group Projects:	
	American Civic Religion Cowboy Churches Tattoo Communities	Motorcycle Communities Environmentalism as Religion