Proposal to create **RELI 227, Religion and Film**, for Tier Two – Arts
Approved by COH Assoc. Dean Kim Jones, 1/26/15

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<th>Course Offerings</th>
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<td><strong>Subject Area:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Catalog Nbr:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Academic Organization:</strong></td>
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<th>Enrollment Requirements</th>
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<th>Course Requisite Information</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Instructor</strong></td>
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<td>Gen Ed Diversity Emphasis</td>
<td>Tier 2 Arts</td>
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<td>Honors Contract</td>
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**Funding Analysis**

Is proposal of this course associated with a new hire?  
 N

Intended Course Fees: n/a

*What programmatic need does this course satisfy:* required or optional in what undergraduate or graduate majors, minors, or certificates?
Option in the curriculum for Religious Studies majors and minors.

*Field Trips:* n/a

*Provide a minimum of three learning outcomes for the course.*
1. Develop critical reading and writing skills in the field of religion and film; introduce students to a variety of texts, be they read, listened to, or seen.
2. Introduce students to the ways in which film interacts with ideas of the sacred, ritual, myth and symbols, as an avenue to think critically, creatively and personally about religious, ethical, and cultural issues.
3. Analyze the category of religion as it presents itself within popular culture, both in the US and within a global setting. Students will grapple with works that address complex moral controversies; and works that comment upon, whether dramatically or comedically, the human predicament and how both religious and secular cultures address that predicament in various ways.

**Requester Details**

Name: Leonora - Escobar  
Email: lescobar@email.arizona.edu
Date: 01/15/2015  
Phone: -
Department: School of International Languages, Literatures and Cultures

**General Education**

Please explain how the course satisfies the criteria below:

*Writing:*
The students will be writing movie reviews of the films viewed in class (6-8 pages). There will be a Midterm Critical Essay
of 750-1000 (3-4 pages) words and a Final Critical Essay of 1250-1750 words (5-7 pages).

**Total number of pages the student must write:** 12

**Will at least one writing assignment involve revision** after the instructor has provided feedback on a first draft or revision after an assignment in which peers have provided feedback on a first draft? Y

**Does the proposed course focus on non-western area studies and/or have a diversity emphasis?** Y

Non-western films and films that address diverse religious traditions. Gender, race and class will be examined as part of the course's focus on cultural diversity.

**Honors:**
This course will be eligible for an honors contract

**Assessment:**
After taking this course in Religion and Film, students will be able to:
1. demonstrate critical reading and writing skills in the field of religion and film.
2. acquire knowledge and skills for recognizing and analyzing the intersections of the study of religion and the medium of film.
3. develop familiarity with a variety of theoretical frameworks for understanding both religion and film
4. acquire tools to produce meaningful analysis of religion and culture through the practice of film criticism and interreligious dialogue
5. identify and analyze basic formal elements, principles and compositional structures in the fine arts of cinema and the visual arts
6. identify and analyze the impact of cultural and historical factors on the creation and reception of artistic works

**Critical Thinking Skills:**
The following goals of this course emphasize and result in critical thinking:
- Demonstrate critical reading and writing skills in the field of religion and film; introduce students to a variety of texts, written and visualized.
- acquire knowledge and skills for recognizing and analyzing the intersections of the study of religion and the medium of film
- develop familiarity with a variety of theoretical frameworks for understanding both religion and film
- acquire tools to produce meaningful analysis of religion and culture through the practice of film criticism and interreligious dialogue
- identify and analyze basic formal elements, principles and compositional structures in the fine arts of cinema and the visual arts
- identify and analyze the impact of cultural and historical factors on the creation and reception of artistic works

**Interactive Modes of Instruction:**
Students will engage in large and small group discussions on the course materials and films during each class period.
Students will give an oral presentation as part of their final project.

**Information Literacy:**
Standard Two: the ability to access information effectively and efficiently. (via readings and papers - see syllabus)

Standard Three: The ability to critically evaluate information and information sources. (via films and papers and class discussion)

Standard Four: The ability to use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose or complete a specific project. (via Papers and Class Presentations ? taking a stance and making a persuasive argument to support that stance)
*Explain how required readings and materials will be available to students:*
Several required textbooks to be purchased. Library reserve, and in class film viewing.
Materials available on D2L

*Course Format* - Indicate the overall percentage of time spent in the following activities (total should add to 100%):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion Section</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Lab</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Practicum/Service Learning</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
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*Will 40% of grade points be completed by the 8th week of classes?  Y*

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**SYLLABUS: RELI 227, Religion and Film**

**Instructors: Dr. Andrea McComb Sanchez, Assistant Professor, and Dr. Konden R. Smith, Visiting Assistant Professor**

Office Hours: TBA  
Office: TBA  
E-mail: krsmith2@email.arizona.edu  
Phone: TBA  
Course Web Address: http://d2l.arizona.edu

Prerequisites: None  
Honors component: Yes

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course explores religion and its relationship with visual storytelling culture. We will discuss and interrogate the ways in which film interacts with ideas of the sacred, ritual, myth and symbols in order to think critically, creatively, and personally about religious, ethical, and cultural issues. Our agenda is to analyze, explore, and challenge various religious, pop-cultural, ideological, and moral messages as presented in various types of film, from art house cinema to blockbuster movies, and genres ranging from horror to comedy. The course will highlight works that teach about and comment upon "world religions;" works that address complex moral controversies; and works that comment upon, whether dramatically or comedically, the human predicament and how both religious and secular cultures addresses that predicament in various ways.

As this is a Tier Two course in the Arts, we will emphasize oral, visual, musical, spatial and kinesthetic forms of expression. As part of this focus, this course will also include components which require students to identify and analyze the impact of cultural and historical factors on the creation and reception of artistic works, specifically in film. This class will also help develop student critical thinking and interpretive abilities.
Learning Outcomes/Expectations
After taking Religion and Film, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate critical reading and writing skills in the field of religion and film; introduce students to a variety of texts, written and visual.
- acquire knowledge and skills for recognizing and analyzing the intersections of the study of religion and the medium of film
- develop familiarity with a variety of theoretical frameworks for understanding both religion and film
- acquire tools to produce meaningful analysis of religion and culture through the practice of film criticism and interreligious dialogue
- identify and analyze basic formal elements, principles and compositional structures in the fine arts of cinema and the visual arts
- identify and analyze the impact of cultural and historical factors on the creation and reception of artistic works

Required Reading:

John C. Lyden, *Film as Religion: Myths, Morals, and Rituals* (FAR)

Recommended
Jolyon Mitchell and S. Brent Plate, eds., *The Religion and Film Reader*
Ed Sikov, *Film Studies: An Introduction* (FS)
Gregory J. Watkins, ed., *Teaching Religion and Film* (TRF)
John Lyden, ed., *The Routledge Companion to Religion and Film*
Melanie J. Wright, *Religion and Film: An Introduction*
Judith Weisenfeld, *African American Religion in American Film, 1929-1949*

ATTENTION!
Some of the films for this Class are either R-rated or unrated. Consequently, they may contain profanity, nudity, sexuality, and violence. Their content is religious or capable of being interpreted as religious. This will include, in some cases, material that is critical of religion in general or of a particular religion. These films are the basic texts examined in this course and if such subject matter and imagery is offensive to you, you are advised not to take the course.

A Variety of tools will be used to help you achieve the objectives of the course:

1) Attendance (30 points)

Because of the nature of this course, attendance is essential. Assignments and films will be given in class and class discussion makes up an important part of this courses pedagogy. You are expected to both be present and actively participating. This implies preparation. An important component of this course is experiential and communal (watching films as a class and discussing them). To miss more than 2 classes will be strongly discouraged and will lead to a loss of significant points for this course. Exceptions to this policy are as follows:

- Absences necessitated by religious observance will be honored, according to University policy. See: [http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/religiousobservanceandpractice](http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/religiousobservanceandpractice)
- Absences pre-approved by the UA Dean of Students (or Dean’s designee) will be honored. The Dean of Students Office provides excused absences for university-sponsored events. See: [http://uhap.web.arizona.edu/chap7.html#7.04.02](http://uhap.web.arizona.edu/chap7.html#7.04.02)
• For the UA’s policy concerning Class Attendance and Administrative Drops, see: 
  http://catalog.arizona.edu/2010-11/policies/classatten.htm

2) 10 Film Screening Reports (10 reports x 10 points = 100 points)

For 10 of the films, students will write a screening report that is to be turned in via UA’s online learning platform. 100-200 words in length. Instructions will be given in class and will follow specific prompts. The expectation with these reports is that it will aid in class discussions. It is expected also that you will read other students reports online in the Discussion section. Participation in class discussion is mandatory (assesses critical thinking and effective oral communication). Participation in class discussion is expected for every film/unit.

3) 2 Movie Reviews (50 points x 2 Review = 100 points)

2 movie reviews of films viewed in class. Students should discuss the film they chose to study and how their readings differ from other scholars’ reading of the film. A description of how to write a movie review will be posted on D2L.

4) Midterm Critical Essay (50 points x 1 Essay = 50 points)

A Midterm Paper that will be a critical essay of the type described in the “Midterm Critical Essay” instruction online and in class. This paper will be 750-1000 words (3-4 pages) in length (assesses effective writing). This assignment will be used to assess the development of effective writing skills, as an essential skill within the Liberal Studies program.

5) Final Critical Essay (1 project X 100 points = 100 points)

A Final Paper, which will be a critical essay of one or more films, and will be used to assess the development of effective writing skills, as an essential skill within the Liberal Studies Program. And important aspect of this project will be to give a 5 minute synopsis to the entire class. This paper will be 1250-1750 words (5-7 pages) in length (assesses effective writing).

Course Requirements and Grading

The course grade will be computed on the basis of total points, divided as follows:

1. 10 Screening Reports..............................................................100 points
2. 2 Movie Reviews.................................................................100 points
3. 1 Midterm Essay.................................................................50 points
4. Final Paper.................................................................100 points
5. Attendance.................................................................30 points

Total Points = 380

40% of Grade by Week 8. Out of 380 points, student will be able to earn 165 points, equaling just over 40% of the students total grade. This work includes the midterm, 1 review, 5 film reports, and 15 points of attendance points.

Grading will be:
A = 90-100 (342-380)
B = 80-89 (304-341)
C = 70-79 (266-303)
D = 60-69 (228-265)
E = 00-59 (0-227)
CLASS CALENDAR

NOTE: All film viewing and reports are to be completed as homework, in advance of class meetings (whenever the course is taught in person rather than online).

CLASS SCHEDULE

Act 1: Introduction to Religion and Film and Film as Religion

Week One
Introductions and Syllabus Overview
Viewing: Pan’s Labyrinth (2006)

Week Two
Readings: Film as Religion (FAR), Intro-Chapter 2, Methods, Approaches, and Definitions (pp. 1-55)
Viewing: Seeing and Hearing Film: A Class Exercise in Sensory Criticism, Various selections

Week Three
Readings: FAR Chapters 3-4, Myths, Rituals, Morals (pp. 56-107)

Week Four
Readings: Online selections
Viewing: Various Selections

Act 2: Filming Religious Traditions

Week Five: Judaism
Readings: FAR: Chapter 5, “The Religion-Film Dialogue as Interreligious Dialogue” (pp. 108-136)
Viewing: Sarah’s Key (2010), Dir. Gilles Paquet-Brenner

Week Six: Hinduism
Readings: Selections online
Viewing: Fire (1996), Dir. Deepa Mehta 5 OF 6

Week Seven: Buddhism
Readings: Selections, Michael L. Gillespie, “Picturing the Way in Bae Yong-kyun’s Why Has Bodhidharma Left for the East” http://www.unomaha.edu/jrf/gillespie.htm

Week Eight: Christianity
Readings: Christopher Deacy Anton Karl Kozloivic, “Superman as Christ-Figure: The American Pop Culture Movie Messiah,” Journal of Religion and Film, Volume 6, No. 1, April 2002: http://www.unomaha.edu/jrf/superman.htm
Viewing: Superman (1978), Dir. Richard Donner
**Week Nine:** Islam

**Week Ten:** Nature Religion
Readings: Selections online
Viewing: *Avatar* (2009)

**Week Eleven:** Lived Religion
Review FAR 79-107
Viewing: *A River Runs Through It* (1992)

**Act 3: Filming Religious Studies, Values, and Genres**

**Week Twelve:** The Hero’s Journey
Readings: FAR: pp. 137-139 and Chapters 6, 7, 8, and 11 *Special attention to ch. 11.

**Week Thirteen:** Animal Values and the Value of Animals
Readings: FAR: Chapters 10, 12, and Conclusion (pp.191-201 and 226-250) Viewing: *Either Planet of the Apes* (1968) or *Whale Rider* (2002)

**Week Fourteen:**
Viewing: *Lagaan: Once Upon a Time in India* (2001)

**Week Fifteen:** Religion is Funny!
Course review, including *Lagaan*, and a sampling of religion through comedy.
Reading: Online selections
Viewing: Various Selections

**Course Policies:**

**Electronics and Late Work**

In order to avoid competition for your interest, I do not allow for electronics to be used in class, this includes, but not limited to laptops, iPads, cell phones, smart phones, etc. For those who need translation devices or have other
special needs, it is expected that you inform me and I will happily oblige. There are those who find they take better notes if they have access to a laptop, but studies have shown that even though you record more information, you retain less using electronics. But another reason I don’t allow electronics in class, is because it proves to be more of a distraction than not. For a scientific study in support of banning laptops in classrooms, see: https://www.mcla.edu/Academics/uploads/textWidget/3424.00018/documents/laptop_use_in_the_classroom.pdf

Concerning late work, I do not accept it. If you know you will be gone on a certain date, it is expected that you arrange with me a time to turn it in. This should be extremely rare. In the case of some unanticipated emergency, it is expected that you have some sort of documentation.

**Academic Integrity**

You are expected to know and strictly follow the University of Arizona Code of Academic Integrity. Any violation of academic integrity — any instance of cheating — is grounds for the unconditional failure of the course and possible expulsion from the University. Read the Code thoroughly, if you have not already done so. You can find it at: http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/codeofacademicintegrity.

**Code of Student Conduct**

The aim of education is the intellectual, personal, social, and ethical development of the individual. The educational process is ideally conducted in an environment that encourages reasoned discourse, intellectual honesty, openness to constructive change, and respect for the rights of all individuals. Self-discipline and a respect for the rights of others in the university community are necessary for the fulfillment of such goals. The Arizona Board of Regents’ Student Code of Conduct, is designed to promote this environment at each of the state universities. To read the Student Code of Conduct, see: http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/studentcodeofconduct.

**University Policy Regarding Threatening Behavior by Students**

**Threatening Behavior is Prohibited.** “Threatening behavior” means any statement, communication, conduct or gesture, including those in written form, directed toward any member of the University community that causes a reasonable apprehension of physical harm to a person or property. For more information, see: http://policy.web.arizona.edu/threatening-behavior-students

**Accessibility and Accommodations**

It is the University’s goal that learning experiences be as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability, please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options. You are also welcome to contact Disability Resources (520-621-3268) to establish reasonable accommodations. For more information, see: http://drc.arizona.edu/

Please be aware that the accessible table and chairs in this room should remain available for students who find that standard classroom seating is not usable.

**Confidentiality of Student Records**

http://www.registrar.arizona.edu/ferpa/default.htm