

JESUS: REAL TO REEL

Course Syllabus

[Institute of Pastoral Studies, Loyola University Chicago.](#)

June 28 – July 2, 1999, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Instructors

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Course Description

The story of Jesus is told and retold in every age and culture. From the earliest oral traditions, to the written Gospels, both canonical and apocryphal, from medieval mystery/morality plays, to the contemporary cinematic presentations of Jesus' life, the world continues to be fascinated with the Jesus story.

This course will undertake an investigation of celluloid stories of Jesus. Four films about Jesus and numerous film clips will be viewed together and discussed in class. Both socio-rhetorical reading of the Gospels arising from current biblical scholarship and readings of the films arising from narrative theology will be emphasized. The various dimensions of each film's presentation, what it tells us about Jesus, what it tells us about those who made the film, and about those who watch the film will be explored. Participants will consider their own stories of Jesus and various stories from other cultures in light of these cinematic presentations.

Course participants will become familiar with emerging Christologies from contemporary cinema, will learn how contemporary biblical scholarship enhances or diminished these current stories of Jesus, and will appreciate narrative as a unique language of truth. Additionally, course participants will be introduced both to cinematic resources and to approaches helpful in a variety of ministerial settings, from parish adult education groups to formal school settings.

Required Readings (before the week of classes)

Marcus Borg, *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time: The Historical Jesus and the Heart of Contemporary Faith* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1994).

Kevin Brandt, *Story as a Way of Knowing* (Kansas City, MO: Sheed and Ward, 1997)

Jaroslav Pelikan, *Jesus Through the Centuries: His Place in the History of Culture* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985). A different version is available as *The Illustrated Jesus Through the Centuries* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997).

Recommended Readings (before the week of classes)

J. M. Boggs, *The Art of Watching Films* (4th edition; Mountain View: Mayfield, 1996).

Robert Phillip Kolker, *Film, Form, and Culture* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1998).

Films Recommended for Pre-viewing (before the week of classes)

- *King of Kings* Nicholas Ray, 1961; 170 min.
- *Greatest Story Ever Told* George Stevens, 1965; 199 min.
- *Godspell* David Greene, 1973; 103 min.
- *Jesus of Nazareth* Franco Zeffirelli, 1977; 382 min.
- *Last Temptation of Christ* Martin Scorsese, 1988; 163 min.

Films To Be Viewed Together in Class

- *Gospel According to St. Matthew* Pier Pasolini, 1966; 136 min.
- *Jesus Christ, Superstar* Norman Jewison, 1973; 108 min.
- *Monty Python's Life of Brian* Terry Jones, 1979; 94 min.
- *Jesus of Montreal* Denys Arcand, 1989; 119 min.

Requirements and Evaluation

Write a paper of 10 – 12 pages, double-spaced, on one of the following topics:

Using the theme established in the class, "on reversing the hermeneutical flow," select one of the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew; Mark; Luke) and read it in its entirety, preferably in one sitting. Using the various films from the course as a lens through which to view this Gospel, how has your reading of the text changed, expanded, altered, deepened, etc.

Select a specific ministerial situation and create a learning program built around Jesus in film. Describe the program, identify your audience, state your learning objectives for the participants, select the films to be used, the rationale for your choices and how you will specifically proceed with each film, i.e., input from teacher (yourself), follow up activities, other appropriate strategies.

The paper is due no later than July 28, 1999.

Supplementary Bibliography

For a comprehensive bibliography and some interesting internet links see our [Jesus: Real to Reel](#)

Jesus in Film

Baugh, Lloyd. 1998. *Imaging the Divine: Jesus and Christ Figures in Film*. Communication, Culture, and Theology. Kansas City, MO: Sheed and Ward.

Chattaway, Peter T. 1998. "Jesus in the Movies." *Bible Review* 14/1 (Feb., 1998) 28-35, 45-46.

Fauteux, Kevin. 1989. "The Final Portrait of Christ." *Journal of Religion and Health* 28: 195-206.

Graham, D. 1997. "Images of Christ in Recent Film." In *Images of Christ: Ancient and Modern*, ed. S. Porter, M. Hayes, and D. Tombs. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

Kinnard, Roy, and Tim Davis. 1992. *Divine Images: A History of Jesus on the Screen*. New York City: Citadel Press.

Malone, Peter. 1988. *Movie Christs and Antichrists*. New York: Crossroad.

-----, 1996. "Christ Figures and Jesus Figures of the 90s." In *New Image of Religious Film*, ed. John R. May. Communication, Culture, and Theology Series. Kansas City, MO: Sheed and Ward.

Stern, Richard C., Clayton Jefford, and Gueric DeBona. 1999. *Savior on the Silver Screen*. New York and Mahwah: Paulist.

Tatum, W. Barnes. 1997. *Jesus at the Movies: A Guide to the First Hundred Years*. Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge.

Telford, William R. 1997. "Jesus Christ Movie Star: The Depiction of Jesus in the Cinema." In Clive Marsh and Gaye Ortiz, eds., *Explorations in Theology and Film*, 115-139. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Film Analysis

Boggs, J. M. 1996. *The Art of Watching Films*. 4th edition. Mountain View: Mayfield.

Bordwell, David and Kristin Thompson (contributor). 1996. *Film Art: An Introduction*. New York: McGraw Hill.

Corrigan, Timothy. 1994. *A Short Guide to Writing about Film*. 2nd edition. New York: HarperCollins.

Kolker, Robert Phillip. 1998. *Film, Form, and Culture*. New York: McGraw Hill.

Narrative Theology

Bausch, William J. 1984. *Storytelling: Imagination and Faith*. Mystic, CN: Twenty-third Publications.

Cook, Michael L. 1997. *Christology as Narrative Quest*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press.

Navone, John. 1990. *Seeking God in Story*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press.

Shea, John. 1980. *Stories of Faith*. Chicago: Thomas More.

Stroup, George W. 1981. *The Promise of Narrative Theology: Recovering the Gospel in the Church*. Atlanta: John Knox.

Tilley, Terrence W. 1985. *Story Theology*. Theology and Life Series 12. Collegeville: Liturgical Press.

Wetherell, Carol and Nel Noddings, eds. 1991. *Stories Lives Tell: Narrative and Dialogue in Education*. New York and London: Teachers College Press.

Wood, David, ed. 1991. *On Paul Ricoeur: Narrative and Interpretation*. Warwick Studies in Philosophy and Literature. London and New York: Routledge.

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