



TYNDALE
• SEMINARY •

Course Syllabus

SPRING SUMMER 2018
FILM AND FAITH: THE CANADIAN VOICE
THEO 0670

JUNE 18 – JULY 23
MONDAYS & THURSDAYS, 6:30 – 9:20PM

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Office Hours: By appointment

To access your course material, please go to <http://classes.tyndale.ca>. Course emails will be sent to your @MyTyndale.ca e-mail account. For information how to access and forward emails to your personal account, see <http://www.tyndale.ca/it/live-at-edu>.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a film survey course, designed to educate students regarding the evolution and relevance of faith perspectives specific to Canadian film and filmmakers. Culturally significant films will be presented and discussed. These films represent both theological exploration and artistic achievement derived in a Canadian context.

The goals are to illuminate film narrative as an international art form, to educate an understanding of the methodology requisite to cinematic storytelling and film aesthetics, and to provide opportunity for students to engage in the task of personally exploring the use of film expression by telling their own faith-related story ideas.

The experience of such tasks will take the form of two small group film projects; each and will be a group experience, exploring the production of short film. Such films are designed to activate collaborative skills and participatory knowledge relevant to creative discussion and course content. These group projects will furthermore be presented and discussed in class for the purpose of developing a hands-on understanding of the filmmaking process. (Please note: no prior production experience is required).

Relevant industry-related guests will also be scheduled, via Skype or phone conferencing, to elucidate their respective roles in presented films and the methodology of the filmmaking business.

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Examine and articulate the role of film storytelling as an engaging cultural activity, capable of illuminating theological precepts.
- Analyze and evaluate the interaction of culture and theology evoked through the language of film imagery.
- Identify and understand the significant role of Canadian film history in respect to spiritual cognition.
- Identify, understand and assess Canadian film artists who have contributed to indigenous cultural expression.
- Distinguish the structural elements comprising film narrative, and contrast the stylistic approach to documentary storytelling.
- Analyze the approach to film narrative based on literary and stage play sources.
- Appraise the value of theological application integrating the expression of film narrative.
- Demonstrate competence and the development and extension of practical skills in the area of electronic content communication.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED READING:

Deacy, Christopher and Gaye Williams Ortiz. *Theology and Film: Challenging the Sacred/Secular Divide*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008.

Johnston, Robert K. *Reframing Theology and Film: New Focus For An Emerging Discipline*. 2nd edition; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011.

B. SUPPLEMENTARY / RECOMMENDED READING:

Leach, Jim. *Film In Canada*. Oxford: New York, 2006.

C. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1. **Class Participation** 10% of final grade

Student participation will be graded on a scale of 1 to 4: 1: present, not disruptive; responds when called on but does not offer much; infrequent involvement; 2: adequate preparation, but no evidence of interpretation of analysis; offers straightforward information; contributes moderately when called upon; 3: good preparation, offers interpretation and analysis, contributes well to discussion in on-

going fashion; 4: excellent preparation, offers analysis, synthesis and evaluation of material; contributes significantly to ongoing discussion.

2. First essay (2-3 pages) 15% of Final Grade

Due class #3 (June 25)

Designed to elicit comparisons of learnings relevant to film storytelling technique in a Canadian cultural context and a theological perspective.

Assignment details will be given in class.

3. Small Group Film project 1 (1-2 minutes) 20% of Final Grade

Due class #5 (July 5)

The film project will be a group experience exploring the production of a short film.

Each group will produce a 1-2 minute film designed to activate collaborative skills and participatory knowledge relevant to creative discussion and course content. Further details will be given in class.

4. Small Group Film project 2 (2-3 minutes) 25% of Final Grade

Due class #9 (July 19)

The film project will again be a group experience, further developing understanding and participation in the production of a short film. This second project will be designed to express learned narrative style and articulate a relationship with an identified social issue impacting culture. Further details will be given in class.

5. Second essay (7-8 pages) 30% of Final Grade

Due class #10 (July 23)

Designed to elicit comparisons of learnings relevant to the integration of theological precepts and film narrative linked to Canadian culture and art.

Details will be given in class.

D. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

Students are expected to appear punctually and to attend all classes.

Students are responsible to keep a backup print copy of written assignments.

For proper citation style, consult the [Chicago-Style Quick Guide](#) (Tyndale e-resource) or the full edition of the [Chicago Manual of Style Online](#), especially [ch. 14](#). For citing scripture texts, refer to sections [10.46 to 10.51](#) and [14.253 to 14.254](#).

Academic Integrity

Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity, and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism. Tyndale University College & Seminary takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty.

Students should consult the current Academic Calendar for academic policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System. The Academic Calendar is posted at <http://tyndale.ca/registrar/calendar>.

E. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

Class Participation	10 %
First Essay	15 %
Small Group Film Project #1	20 %
Small Group Film Project #2	25 %
Second Essay	30 %
Total Grade	100%

F. COURSE EVALUATION

Tyndale Seminary values quality in the courses it offers its students. End-of-course evaluations provide valuable student feedback and are one of the ways that Tyndale Seminary works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. Student involvement in this process is critical to enhance the general quality of teaching and learning.

Before the end of the course, students will receive a MyTyndale email with a link to the online course evaluation. The evaluation period is 2 weeks; after the evaluation period has ended, it cannot be reopened.

Course Evaluation results will not be disclosed to the instructor before final grades in the course have been submitted and processed. Student names will be kept confidential and the instructor will only see the aggregated results of the class.

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

Class 1 (June 18) *Introduction to the course: goals, expectations, course overview.*

- Discuss the Greco-Roman culture and its relationship to early Christianity.
- The language of film literature and the substance of film narrative.
- Approaching film from a faith perspective.
- The evolution of film form and film as an artistic process in North America.
- The Canadian film pioneers, and the landscape of their visions.
- Marketing culture: the advent and influence of TIFF (Toronto International Film Festival).

- Case study and screening: **Black Robe**.
- The transformation of Brian Moore's novel into a panoramic study of Jesuit missionaries in 17th century Quebec.
- World premiere at TIFF in 1991; the first official Australia-Canada co-production.
- Assign Essay #1

Class 2 (June 21) *From stage play to screenplay: adapting theatre to film.*

- Discuss the fundamentals of dramatic structure in film storytelling.
- The role of theatre in Canadian culture.
- Distinguish between the similarities and differences of theatre and film.
- The process of adaptation between mediums; changing the landscapes.
- The career and work of Canadian filmmaker Norman Jewison.
- **Agnes Of God**. Adaptation by John Pielmeier from his own play, premiere at TIFF (1985), nominated for 3 Academy Awards: Best Actress (Anne Bancroft), Supporting Actress (Meg Tilly), and original score.
- Assign Group Film Project #1.

Class 3 (June 25) *The artist as conduit for spiritual cognition.*

- The historical power of Catholicism as a force in world cinema.
- Quebec's distinct perspective as a cultural repository.
- The autonomous francophone film industry which is provincially interdependent.
- The career and work of Canadian filmmaker Denys Arcand.
- **Jesus Of Montreal**: inventive story of actors performing the passion play in Montreal.
- Awards at Cannes and TIFF (1989). Nominated for Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film. Genie Award for Best Film.
- Due: Essay #1

Class 4 (June 28) *Film culture and theological narrative.*

- The ethos of Biblical expression in film narrative.
- The role of culture in reflecting contemporary theological interpretation.
- Considering the psychological tension of intersecting faith and ideological convictions.
- The career and work of Canadian filmmaker Roger Christian, Academy Award winner for Art Direction on "Star Wars"; 2nd Unit Director of "Return Of The Jedi" and "Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace".
- **Joseph And Mary**, award-winning film Directed by Roger, set in New Testament times and filmed on location in North Bay, Ontario.
- Classroom guest: Director Roger Christian.

Class 5 (July 5) *Independent filmmaking: an innovative voice.*

- Culture and theology interpreted in a contemporary setting.
- Imagining the gospel through the prism of conflicted ideology.
- Emerging Canadian filmmakers expressing moral imperatives.
- Case study and screening: **Adam's Testament** (2017).

- Classroom guest: Writer/Director Rafael Kalamat.
- The Canadian International Faith & Family Film Festival.
- Assign Essay #2.
- Due: Group Film Project #1.

Class #6 (July 9) *The documentary film and the eloquence of emotional honesty.*

- Comparing dramatic narrative to documented reality.
- The historic importance of the documentary relative to Canadian film history.
- The role of the National Film Board of Canada in asserting a cultural imprint.
- Understanding factual film and its value for evincing our spiritual state.
- Screening Group Film Project(s) #1.
- Exploring the value of historical biography in respect to theological revelation.
- Case study and screening: **Luther: The Life and Legacy of the German Reformer**, Award-winning documentary profiling the life and times of 16th century German monk Martin Luther (2017).
- Skype/phone guest: Canadian filmmaker Stephen Mc Caskell.
- Assign Group Film Project #2.

Class #7 (July 12) *The methodology of manufacturing faith-based cinema.*

- Understanding the international market place, the world of *cinema*.
- The challenge of gospel messaging worldwide.
- The influence of Canadian artists of international stature.
- The career and work of Canadian filmmaker Eric Till.
- Comparing and distinguishing the structural elements of documentary film in respect to dramatized narrative based on factualized history.
- **Luther**: Award-winning dramatization of the life of same 16th century German monk Martin Luther, whose published work revolutionized church history (2003).

Class #8 (July 16) *Impacting the world stage: an iconic cultural imprint.*

- Understanding the role of the Producer in the film industry and film history.
- The Producer/Director relationship: collaborators designing to make art and money.
- Independent production as a commercial enterprise.
- The career and work of Canadian Producer Jake Eberts.
- **Chariots Of Fire**: The Olympic Games of 1924 is the centrepiece for this true life story of two British athletes competing in track. One runs to outdistance the prejudice against his Jewish lineage, the other to embolden his Christian faith.
- Galvanized by winning the People's Choice Award at TIFF (1981), the film went on to garner 7 Academy Award nominations, winning 4, including Best Picture of the Year.

Class #9 (July 19) *The movie musical: The Gospel According To Matthew.*

- The cultural responsibility for creating accessibility to the gospel outside the church.
- The unique form of the stage musical as a theatrical experience.

- The most challenging adaptation process: stage musical to screen musical.
- The career and work of Canadian filmmaker David Greene.
- **Godspell**: stylish musical presentation of Matthew's gospel with hit parade music and imaginative choreography, featuring Jesus and disciples as street-wise troubadours. Premiered at Cannes (1973), features Canadian Victor Garber as Jesus, and the acclaimed score of Messianic Jew Stephen Schwartz (3 time Oscar winner).
- Due: Group Film Project #2.
- Due: Online course evaluation.

Class #10 (July 23) Canadian socially relevant films and course content.

- Review and discuss the course content.
- Consideration of Canadian cultural milestones.
- Screening of Group Film Project(s) #2
- Screening of **Colour Me**, award-winning documentary by Toronto filmmaker Sherien Barsoum, illuminating racial prejudice in Canada.
- Classroom guest: Producer/Director Sherien Barsoum.
- Discuss the current examples of faith-based films and the future prospects for advancement of spiritual integration in the cultural context of film.
- Due: Essay #2.

V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Austin-Smith, Brenda and George Melnyk. *The Gendered Screen*. Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier Press, 2010.
- Batey, Richard. *Jesus & The Forgotten City: New Light on Sepphoris and the Urban World of Jesus*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 1992.
- Batey, Richard. *Jesus and the Theatre* (Cambridge Core, 2009).
- Berton, Pierre. *Hollywood's Canada*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1995.
- Brownlow, Kevin. *The Parade's Gone By*. New York: Ballantine, 1968.
- Dickinson, Peter. *Screening Gender, Framing Gender*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007.
- Drabinsky, Garth. *Closer To The Sun*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1995.
- Goldman, William. *Adventures In The Screen Trade*. New York: Time Warner Book Group, 1984.
- Jewison, Norman. *This Terrible Business Has Been Good To Me*. Toronto: Key Porter, 2004.
- Johnson, Brian D. *Brave Films, Wild Nights: 25 Years of Festival Fever*. Toronto: Random House, 2000.
- Johnston, Robert K. *Reel Spirituality: Theology and Film in Dialogue*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2000.
- Laporte, Nicole. *The Men Who Would Be King*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010.
- Loiselle, Andre. *Stage-Bound: Feature Film Adaptations of Canadian and Quebecois Drama*. Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003.
- Lumet, Sidney. *Making Movies*. New York: Vintage, 1995.

Marshall, Bill. *Film Festive Confidential*. Toronto: McArthur & Company, 2005.

Martz, Fraidie and Andrew Wilson. *A Fiery Soul: The Life and Theatrical Times of John Hirsch*. Montreal: Vehicule Press, 2011.

McNicholl, Susan. *The Opening Act: Canadian Theatre History 1945-1953*. Vancouver: Ronsdale, 2012.

Medavoy, Mike. *You're Only As Good As Your Next One*. New York: Atria, 2002.

Melnyk, George. *Great Canadian Film Directors*. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2007.

Murch, Walter. *In The Blink Of An Eye*. 2nd ed., Los Angeles, CA: Silmon James Press, 2001.

Posner, Michael. *Canadian Dreams: The Making And Marketing Of Independent Films*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1993.

Pratley, Gerald. *A Century of Canadian Cinema: Gerald Pratley's Feature Film Guide*. St. John's: Lynx Images, 2003.

Turman, Lawrence. *So You Want To Be A Producer*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 2005.

Wise, Wyndam. *Take One's Essential Guide to Canadian Film*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001.

White, Jerry. *The Cinema of Canada*. London: Wallflower, 2006.