

**CS694**  
**Religion and Media**  
**Winter 2005**

Professor Tanya Erzen  
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MW 1:30-3:30pm, Derby 48  
Office Hours: Wed. 11:30-  
1pm

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This course will introduce you to the longstanding and complex connection between religious practices and various media. We will first analyze how human hearing, vision and the performing body have been used historically to express and maintain religious life through music, voice, images, words and rituals. Then we will spend time on more recent electronic media such as cassette, film, television, video, and the internet. Students should note that I will pursue an anthropological/ historical perspective on studying religion in the course. We will read, listen, view, log on, discuss and write. I also strongly recommend that students sign up for the daily digest of [The Revealer: A Daily Review of Religion and the Press](http://www.therevealer.org/) at <http://www.therevealer.org/>.

**Readings:**

- \*Eck, Diana. *Darsan, Seeing the divine image in India.*
- \*Brenda Brasher, *Give me that Online Religion* (not available at SBX- try Amazon.com)
- \*McAlister, Elizabeth, *Rara! Vodou power and performance in Haiti and its diaspora*
- \*Heather Hendershot, *Shaking the World for Jesus: Evangelicals and Popular Culture*
- \*Amy Johnson Frykholm, *Rapture Culture: Left Behind in Evangelical America*

The articles are available on electronic reserve.

The address is: <http://library.ohio-state.edu/search/p>

Type in my name (Erzen, Tanya) and then the course number to access the readings.

**Assignments:**

-Response Papers:

You must complete 5 response papers out of the 10 weeks of class (you pick the week). Each should be 2-3 pages and based on the week's readings. They are due at the beginning of the class session on Monday. I will not accept papers on Wednesday.

-Discussion questions for one class session:

One person will be responsible for initiating the discussion each week. That person will compose a list of 6-8 questions that address the major themes and issues raised in the readings. He or she must email me the questions the night before the class session so I can provide each member of the class with a copy.

- Group presentations on online religion due Feb. 9th

- Project on mediated religion 12-15 pages

Your choice: music, film, TV, print, performance (this may include the construction of a website, film, music, etc. in addition to the written component of the paper). This is the main writing assignment for the course. You are required to turn in a project proposal on Feb. 2nd and a rough draft of the project on Friday February 25th. The other writing assignments in this course are light so that you can start work on this project early in the quarter.

All papers should be written in 12-point, double-spaced type, with standard margins, and pages numbered and stapled. *All written work should be thoroughly proofread.*

**There are no extensions, and all assignments are marked down one-third of a letter grade (5 points) for every late day.**

**Grading:**

Attentive presence, participation in discussion and discussion questions: 30%  
Response Papers: 25%  
Group presentations on online religion: 15%  
Final Project and Presentations: 30%

**Student Conferences:** You should plan to meet with me at least once during the semester to discuss one of your papers, and you must get my approval for your final paper topic. However, feel free to stop by office hours or schedule an appointment if necessary. Email is always the fastest way to reach me.

**Attendance and Participation:**

I expect students to be active participants in their educations. This means that each student should come to class having carefully read the assigned readings and be prepared to discuss them. Because knowing how to articulate your ideas is a crucial part of the learning process, you will be expected, as a member of the seminar, to contribute your own unique perspective to our discussions.

The real action of our seminar takes place in the classroom. Therefore, it is important and expected that you will be at every class session. Inevitably, an occasion may arise when you are unable to attend. Out of fairness to your classmates who do attend every class, chronic lateness and/or more than one unexcused absence will detract from your participation grade. To make up for a missed class, you may turn in a 2-page, single-spaced précis summarizing the reading for the class you missed. Finally, if you have any special needs or concerns with this course, please feel free to come and talk with me.

**STUDENT RIGHTS AND CONDUCT**

Any student with a documented disability who may require special accommodations should identify him or herself to the instructor as early in the quarter as possible to receive effective and timely accommodations. You may also wish to contact the Office for Disability Services (150 Pomerene Hall, 292-3307).

Students are expected to know and understand the rules regarding academic misconduct, particularly the rules regarding plagiarism, as stated in the University's Code of Student Conduct. Plagiarism is the representation of another's works or ideas as one's own: it includes the unacknowledged word for word use and/or paraphrasing of another's work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person's ideas. All cases of plagiarism will be treated very seriously according to the University's guidelines.

**Week 1 Introductions/ Themes and Issues**

**Mon Jan 3.**

*Introduction: Mediated Religion in the World*

**Wednesday Jan. 5**

David Morgan, "The practice of visual piety" pp. 21-58.

Sara Dickey, "Anthropology and its contributions to the study of mass media" pp. 413-427

**Week 2 Persons in the social fields of mediated religion: Building Worlds**

**Monday Jan. 10:**

Faye Ginsburg, "Shooting back: From ethnographic film to Indigenous production" pp 295-322.

Purnima Mankekar, "Epic Contests: Television and Religious Identity in India" pp. 134-147

**VIEW** video excerpts from TV Ramayan

**January 11: Scott Appleby, Fundamentalism and Media series**

**Wednesday Jan. 12:**

Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy* 3-51

Gregor Goethals, "Escape from time: ritual dimensions of popular culture" pp. 117-132

**Week 3 Religion mediated through the sense(s) of ritual**

**Monday Jan. 17 no class Martin Luther King Day**

**Wednesday Jan. 19:**

Diana Eck, *Darsan* (entire)

**VIEW** documentary in class *Hinduism: the Elephant god*

**Week 4 The scripture spoken: Hearing /writing religion**

**Monday Jan. 24**

William Graham, *Beyond the written word* 43 pp.

"Of Written and Spoken Scripture" "Holy Writ and Holy Word", "Scripture as Spoken Word: The Indian Paradigm" "Muslim Scripture as Spoken Word", "Voicing the Qur'an: Questions of Meaning"

**LISTEN** to Qur'anic recitation from Michael Sells, *Approaching the Qur'an*

**January 25 Linda Kintz, Fundamentalism and Media series**

**Wednesday Jan. 26: Listening**

Charles Hirschkind, "The ethics of listening: cassette sermon audition in contemporary Egypt" pp. 623-649

Scott Marcus, "On cassette rather than live: Religious music in India today" 167-185.

Ben McGrath, "Propaganda cross-cultural rap" (go to [www.nativedeen.com](http://www.nativedeen.com)) pp. 58-60

**LISTEN** to "Native Deen" and Indian Bhajans/ in class.

**Week 5 Performing religion/performing music**

**Monday Jan. 31:**

Ter Ellingdon, "Religion and Music" pp. 163-172

Elizabeth McAlister, *Rara! Vodou power and performance* pp.1-112

**LISTEN** to Vodou and Rara music in class

**Wednesday Feb. 2:**

Finish *Rara! Vodou power and performance*

**LISTEN** to Vodou and Rara music in class

**HAND IN FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL**

**Week 6 Online Religion**

**Mon. Feb. 7:**

Brenda Brasher *Give me that online religion* excerpts

<http://raider.muc.edu/~brashebe/online%20religion.htm>

Christopher Helland. "Online-religion/Religion-online and virtual communitas" pp. 205-221

**Wednesday Feb. 9**

**READ ONE CASE STUDY FOR A GROUP REPORT WITH WEBSITE PRESENTATIONS:**

- Bruce Lawrence, "Allah On-Line: The Practice of Global Islam in the Information Age" pp 237-250

-Jan Fernback, "Internet Ritual: A Case Study of the Construction of Computer-Mediated Neopagan Religious Meaning" pp. 254-270

-Jean-Francois Mayer, "Religious movements and the internet: the new frontier of cult controversies" pp. 249-276

**VIEW** ABC News Nightline coverage of "Heaven's Gate"

**Week 7 Televangelism**

**Monday Feb. 14:**

Susan Harding, "The Born-Again Tele-Scandals" pp. 247-269

Razelle Frankel, "Transformation of Televangelism: Repackaging Christian Family Values" pp. 163-188

**Wed. Feb. 16:**

Berit Bretthauer, "Televangelism: Local and global dimensions" pp. 203-225.

Knut Lundby, "Between American televangelism and African Anglicanism pp.328-344

**VIEW** Film: *The Eyes of Tammy Faye* and/or *the Televangelists*

**Week 8 Marketing Religion/ Religion as Popular Culture**

**Monday Feb. 21**

Heather Hendershot, *Shaking the World for Jesus* Introduction, Chapters 1-2 pp. 1-84

*Optional:* Loy, David, "The Religion of the market" pp. 275-290

**VIEW/LISTEN** Cornerstone Christian youth music festival

<http://www.cornerstonefestival.com/index.cfm>

**Wed. Feb. 23**

Heather Hendershot, *Shaking the World for Jesus* Chapter 3 pp.87-113

**VIEW** *Revolve*

[http://www.thomasnelson.com/consumer/product\\_detail.asp?sku=0718003586&dept\\_id=190000&TopLevel\\_id190000#topofheader](http://www.thomasnelson.com/consumer/product_detail.asp?sku=0718003586&dept_id=190000&TopLevel_id190000#topofheader)

**VIEW** Film: *Saved*

**ROUGH DRAFT OF FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL DUE FRIDAY FEB. 25TH**

**Week 9 Apocalyptic Media: Left Behind**

**Mon. Feb. 28**

Heather Hendershot, *Shaking the World for Jesus*. chapter 6 pp.176-214

Amy Johnson Frykholm, *Rapture Culture* pp. 1-66

**VIEW** Proselytizing Media Website <http://www.nyu.edu/fas/projects/vcb/ChristianMedia/index.html>

**Wed. March 2<sup>nd</sup>**

Amy Johnson Frykholm, *Rapture Culture* pp. 66-end

**VIEW** Film: *Left Behind*, *Omega Code*, *Apocalypse*

**Week 10 Mediated Religion and Politics and Presentation of Projects**

**Monday March 7**

**Finish discussion of Rapture Culture and Left Behind**

Melani McAlister, "Prophecy, Politics, and Popular Culture: The *Left Behind* Series and Christian Evangelicalism's New World Order" in *South Atlantic Quarterly*

**Wed. March 9**

**FINAL PROJECT MEDIA PRESENTATIONS**

**FINAL PROJECT DUE FRIDAY MARCH 11**