

**CS394**  
**Religion and Media**  
**Winter 2005**

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MW  
Office Hours:

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 an anthropological/historical perspective on studying religion will be pursued in the course. We will read, listen, view, log on, discuss and write.

**Evaluation:**

Attentive presence, participation in discussion, and weekly response papers

Mid-term essay on choice of assigned topics 7-8 pages

Project on mediated religion 12-15 pages

Your choice: music, film, TV, print, performance (we'll discuss this)

**Readings:**

\*Berger, Peter. *The sacred canopy: Elements of a sociological theory of religion*

\*Brasher, Brenda. *Give me that online religion*

\*Eck, Diana. *Darsan, Seeing the divine image in India.*

\*Graham, William A. *Beyond the written word: oral aspects of scripture in the history of religion*

\*McAlister, Elizabeth, *Rara! Vodou power and performance in Haiti and its diaspora*

\*Heather Hendershot, *Shaking the World for Jesus: Evangelicals and Popular Culture*

Stuart Hoover, *Practicing Religion in the Age of the Media*

Amy Johnson Frykholm, *Rapture Culture: Left Behind in Evangelical America*

**Week 1**

**Mon Jan 3.**

Introduction: Religious Media in the World

**Wednesday Jan. 5 *Themes and Issues***

Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a cultural system" pp. 87-125.

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

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

FILM:

**Week 2 Jan. 10 and 12 *Persons in the social fields of mediated religion: Building worlds***

\*Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy* first 50 pages

Talal Asad, "Remarks on the anthropology of the body". pp. 42-52.  
Victor Turner, "Betwixt and between: the liminal period in Rites de passage" pp. 93-111.  
Gregor Goethals, "Escape from time: ritual dimensions of popular culture" pp. 117-132

### **January 11: Scott Appleby**

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

Purnima Mankekar, "Culture wars" and "Mediating modernities: The Ramayan and the creation of community and nation" pp. 1-38, 165-223

**VIEW** video excerpts from TV Ramayan/in class

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

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

**Jan. 19**

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

\*Diana Eck, *Darsan* (entire)

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

### **Week 4 Jan. 24 and 26 The scripture spoken: Hearing /writing religion**

\*William Graham, *Beyond the written word*

Martin Jaffee, "A Rabbinic Ontology of the Written and Spoken Word: On Discipleship, Transformative Knowledge, and the Living Texts of Oral Torah," 525-550.

**Madonna- Performing the Kabbalah?**

**January 25 Linda Kintz speaker**

### **Week 5 Jan. 31 and Feb. 2 Performing religion/performing music**

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

\*Elizabeth McAlister, *Rara! Vodou power and performance...*

Heather Hendershot, "Why Should the Devil Have all the Good Music? Christian Music and the Secular Marketplace"

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

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

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

**LISTEN** to Vodou and Rara music at home/ in class

### **Week 6 Feb. 7 and 9 Online Religion**

Brenda Brasher *Give me that online religion*

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

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

“Allah On-Line: The Practice of Global Islam in the Information Age” in *Practicing Religion in the Age of the Media*

“Internet Ritual: A Case Study of the Construction of Computer-Mediated Neopagan Religious Meaning” in *Practicing Religion in the Age of the Media*

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 Feb. 14 and 16 *Televangelism***

Susan Harding, “The pro-life gospel” in *The Book of Jerry Falwell*

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

*Religion and Globalizations* article- problems with televangelism

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

Film: *The Eyes of Tammy Faye* and *The Televangelists*

### **Week 8 Feb. 21 and 23 *Popular Culture and Marketing Religion***

Jesus Martin-Barbero, “Mass media as site of resacralization” pp. 102-116.

Loy, David, “The Religion of the market” pp. 275-290.

Eric Haley et al “Branding religion: Christian consumers’ understanding of Christian products” pp.269-288.

### **January 23: symposium on Iranian Revolution**

Heather Hendershot, “Virgins for Jesus: The Gender Politics of Therapeutic Christian Media”

Bearman, Peter and Hannah Brückner. "Promising the Future: Virginity Pledges and First Intercourse." *American Journal of Sociology* 2001. 106: 859-912.

Lynn Schofield Clark, “Ethnographic Stories: Teens and their Approaches to Media, Religion, and Supernatural Beliefs” in *From Angels to Aliens: Teenagers, the Media and the Supernatural*

Case study of Evangelical Teen magazine for Girls, *Revolve*

Film: *Hell House*

### **Week 9 Feb. 28 and March 2 *Apocalyptic Media***

Hendershot “Praying for the End of the World: The Past, Present, and Future of Christian Apocalyptic Media”

Amy Johnson Frykholm, *Rapture Culture: Left Behind in Evangelical America*

Melani McAlister, “Prophecy, Politics, and Popular Culture: The *Left Behind* Series and Christian Evangelicalism's New World Order” in *Palestine and Popular Culture*

Proselytizing Media Website

Film: *Left Behind*, *Apocalypse*

### **Week 10 March 9 and March 11 *Mediated Religion and Presentation of Projects***

**Seeing and being seen: Engagements with media**

Faye Ginsburg, "Re-thinking the voice of God: Constituting the religious in indigenous media"

Lynn Schofield Clark, "The Cultural Construction of Religion in the Media Age"