

Rels A394-001 Religion and Media
Spring 2004 TR 2:00 – 3:15
Communications 304

Dr. Catherine Wessinger
Bobet 406
865-3182 office
wessing@loyno.edu
<http://www.loyno.edu/~wessing>

This seminar aims to encourage students to become aware of the manifestations of religion in media: the uses of media by religious groups, media depictions of religions including religion newswriting, mediated expressions of religion in the public square, and religious themes in movies, so that they become critical and informed consumers and producers of media especially as it relates to religion. A variety of media will be utilized in instruction, including interactive video classes linked with classes at Marquette University and St. Joseph's University, email, web, video. Students at the three universities will conduct discussions with each other through interactive video and email, and work on a group project together.

TEXTS:

Articles posted on ereserves (ERES).

Articles posted on the the Blackboard for all three classes (BLACKBOARD).

John Dart, *Deities and Deadlines: A Primer on Religion News Coverage*, 2d ed. (First Amendment Center, 1998). DART (free booklet)

Religion Newswriters Association, *A Guide to Religion Reporting in the Secular Media: Frequently Asked Questions* (Religion Newswriters Association, 2002). FAQ (free booklet)

Ereserves

To get to Loyola's Ereserves: go to <http://library.loyno.edu>; select reserves; select electronic reserves; select Wessinger. You will see three folders for Religion and Media: 2002, 2003, 2004. Many Ereserves articles will be found in the 2003 folder and are marked on this syllabus as ERES 2003. Some Ereserves articles will be found in the 2004 folder and are marked on this syllabus as ERES 2004.

Classes designated **Conversation** will involve links with classes at Marquette University and St. Joseph's University via interactive video.

Assigned videos will be viewed outside of class as homework. Videos must be viewed as assignments read before each class. They will be the basis of discussion in class. A separate list of “Video Viewings Dates” will be provided giving the scheduled group viewings of video assignments. If you are unable to attend one of the group viewings of an assigned video, the video or DVD will be on reserve in the library and you should view it in the Media Center.

This is a seminar format course. Your discussion will be graded according to whether your comments demonstrate that you have viewed the videos and read the assignments. Discussion and attendance are part of the final grade. Participation on the class discussion board is also part of the class discussion grade (see course requirements below).

- T Jan. 13 First class. Introductions and course requirements.
- R Jan. 15 What Is Religion? Expressions of Civil Religion
ERES 2003: Carolyn Marvin and David W. Ingle, chapter 2, “That Old Flag Magic,” in *Blood Sacrifice and the Nation: Totem Rituals and the American Flag*, 9-40.
- T Jan. 20 Civil Religion, Violence, and the Media
ERES 2003: Carolyn Marvin and David W. Ingle, chapter 4, “The Totem Myth,” in *Blood Sacrifice and the Nation: Totem Rituals and the American Flag*, 63-97.
- R Jan. 22 website construction class – Library Instruction Classroom, 2nd floor
(Instructor out for surgery.)
- T Jan. 27 Ritual and Media
ERES 2003: Ronald L. Grimes, “Ritual and the Media,” 219-34; Jan Fernback, “Internet Ritual: A Case Study of the Construction of Computer-Mediated Neopagan Religious Meaning,” 254-75; Alf Linderman, “Religious Television in Sweden: Toward a More Balanced View of Its Reception,” 295-304
- R Jan. 29 TERM PAPER TOPIC MUST BE APPROVED BY INSTRUCTOR:
10 PTS. WILL BE DEDUCTED FROM THE GRADE OF THE
TERM PAPER IF THE TOPIC IS NOT APPROVED BY THIS
DATE.**
conversation: Getting Acquainted (3 links)
BLACKBOARD: *New York Times* article by David Brooks
- T Feb. 3 Religion Newswriting
Read: DART; FAQ

- R Feb. 5** **conversation:** *Religion Newswriting* (3 links and 2 audiopatches)
 GUESTS: Bruce Nolan, *New Orleans Times-Picayune*; Gail White, *Atlanta Constitution*; Mark O’Keefe, Newhouse News Service, Tom Heinen, *Milwaukee Journal-Centinel*
 BLACKBOARD: Articles by Nolan, White, O’Keefe, and Heinen.
- T Feb. 10** **conversation:** *Religion in the Public Square and First Amendment Issues*
 (3 links)
 BLACKBOARD: News articles to be posted.
- R Feb. 12** **conversation:** *Media and Appalachian Gospel Culture* (4 links)
 GUEST: Dr. Howard Dorgan, Appalachian State University
 ERES 2003: Howard Dorgan, *Airwaves of Zion*, xx-xii, 1-36, 113-27, 155.
- T Feb. 17** **conversation:** *Media Fairness in Coverage of Unconventional Religions*
 (3 links)
 GUEST: Dr. Stuart Wright, Lamar University, at Loyola University
 ERES 2004: Stuart A. Wright, “Media Coverage of Unconventional Religion: Any ‘Good News’ for Minority Faiths?” 101-15.
 ERES 2004: Stuart A. Wright, “Waco Redux: Trial and Error,” 16-18.
- R Feb. 19** **BIBLIOGRAPHY AND OUTLINE OF TERM PAPER IS DUE. 10 PTS. WILL BE DEDUCTED FROM THE GRADE OF THE PAPER IF THESE ARE LATE.**
conversation: *The Media and Waco* (3 links)
 GUEST: Lee Hancock, *Dallas Morning News*, at Loyola
 VIDEO: “Waco: The Rules of Engagement” (136 min.)
 BLACKBOARD: Catherine Wessinger, “The Branch Davidians and the Media: A Ten-Year Retrospective”
 BLACKBOARD: News articles by Lee Hancock, *Dallas Morning News*
- T Feb. 24 Off – Mardi Gras
- R Feb. 26 Off- Mardi Gras break
- GROUP PROJECTS DUE MARCH 1. They should be uploaded to Blackboard by this date.**
- T Mar. 2** **conversation:** *Reports on Group Projects* (3 links)
- R Mar. 4** **conversation:** *Reports on Group Projects* (3 links)
- T Mar. 9** **MID-TERM EXAM**

- R Mar. 11 *Religious Themes in Japanese Anime*
 MOVIE: “Princess Mononoke” (134 min.)
 Before watching the movie,
 READ: Shinto Online Network Association, <http://jinja.or.jp/english/>,
 paying particular attention to the page on “kami”;
 “Shinto Thought and Practice,” <http://ecai.berkeley.edu/shinto/part1.html>,
 on concepts of purity and impurity.
- (F Mar. 12 – MID-TERM GRADES DUE)
- T Mar. 16 **conversation:** *Reimagining the Self in Transformational Culture in American Film* (3 links)
 MOVIE: “Shawshank Redemption” (142 min.)
 BLACKBOARD: Conrad Ostwalt, “Religion and Popular Movies,” also at <http://www.unomaha.edu/~wwwjrf/popular.htm>
- R Mar. 18 *The Media’s Role in the Contemporary Crisis in the Roman Catholic Church* (3 links)
 GUEST: Jason Berry, at Loyola
 VIEW WEBSITE: <http://www.boston.com/globe/spotlight/abuse/>;
 ERES: Jason Berry, “Introduction to the Illinois Paperback Edition,” *Lead Us Not into Temptation: Catholic Priests and the Sexual Abuse of Children*, ix-xvii.
- T Mar. 23 *Media and National Identity: American and Islamic Media*
conversation: (4 links)
 MOVIE: “Edward Said on Orientalism” (40 min.)
 GUEST: Dr. Mohammed el-Nawawy, Stonehill College, Easton, MA
 BLACKBOARD: Articles by Dr. el-Nawawy.
 EXAMINE: <http://english.aljazeera.net/HomePage>
 ERES 2004: Benedict Anderson, Introduction to *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*.
- R Mar. 25 **conversation:** *Depictions of Muslims and Islam in American Media* (3 links)
 MOVIE: “Not Without My Child”
 ERES 2004: Margaret Miles, chapter 4, “Not Without My Other: Representing Islam and Judaism in a Dominantly Christian Society,” 68-93.
- T Mar. 30 **conversation:** *Religious Themes in Movies* (3 links)
 MOVIE: “The Matrix”
 ERES 2004: Michael Brannigan, “There Is No Spoon: A Buddhist Mirror,” 101-10.

BLACKBOARD: Francis Flannery-Dailey and Rachel Wagner, "Wake Up! Gnosticism and Buddhism in the Matrix," also at <<http://www.unomaha.edu/~wwwjrf/gnostic.htm>>

- R Apr. 1 *Another Look at Religion, Media, and Nationalism: Nazism as Millennial Movement*
MOVIE: "Triumph of the Will" by Leni Riefenstahl
ERES 2004: Robert Ellwood, "Nazism as a Millennialist Movement," 241-60. READ THE ARTICLE BEFORE VIEWING THE MOVIE.
- T Apr. 6 NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK
- R Apr. 8 NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK
- T Apr. 13** **conversation:** *Cross-cultural Discussion of Religion and Media (4 links)*
Conversation with class at University of Alberto Hurtado, Santiago, Chile. Readings to be assigned.
- R Apr. 15 **TERM PAPERS ARE DUE. TURN IN TWO HARD COPIES TO INSTRUCTOR. TERM PAPERS MUST BE UPLOADED TO YOUR WEBSITE BY THIS DATE TO BE CONSIDERED ON TIME. 10 PTS. WILL BE DEDUCTED FROM THE GRADE OF THE PAPER IF IT IS LATE.**
Student Presentations
- T Apr. 20 Student Presentations
- R Apr. 22 Student Presentations
- T Apr. 27 Student Presentations
- R Apr. 29** **conversation:** *Final Linked Conversation (3 links)*
- T May 4 *Final Review*

FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, May 11, 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

The final grade of the course is based on the following.

Mid-Term Exam	15% of grade	150 pts.
Group project	20% of grade	200 pts.
Term Paper	20% of grade	200 pts.
Online discussion (with students at the other universities)	10% of grade	100 pts.
Class discussion	20% of grade	200 pts.
Final Exam	15% of grade	150 pts.

You may earn up to a total of 1000 points for the course. The grading scale follows:

	<u>100 pts.</u>	<u>1000 pts.</u>
A - 92%	92-100	920-1000
B - 83%	83-91.5	830-919.5
C - 71%	71-82.5	710-829.5
D - 65%	65-70.5	650-709.5

Exams

The exams will consist of discussion questions and identifications. They will be based on the assigned readings, videos, and guest speakers. The Final Exam may include selected students' term papers. Each of the two exams counts 150 pts. or 15% of the final grade.

Group Project

Working with members of the seminar from the other schools, students will prepare a reference guide to how a particular religious group (other than one's own religion) uses the media and how the media view them. With your partners you will choose a religion (for examples, see the "On Common Ground" CD-ROM installed on computer in the library). Then research how that group makes use of various communication media; where possible, include examples in your report. How do members of this group interact with the media? How do news media cover this religion? The final report will be in PowerPoint or a website. The Group Project counts a total of 200 pts. or 20% of the final grade. **Due March 1.**

Term Paper

Students will write a term paper on a topic approved by the instructor. The term paper should be 10 pages, typed, double-spaced, plus a bibliography. See the term paper checklist for the format of citations. Possible topics include how the news media reports on some aspect of religion or a story relating to religion, how religious groups utilize the media, or may be an investigative news story. **Due April 15**, the first date for student presentations in class.

During the student's class presentation, the student must display the paper on his or her website. Students will be graded on the content of the term paper and not on the design of the website, although students are encouraged to be creative in the design of their websites. The website with the term paper should contain links to other relevant websites. The Final Exam may include material from selected terms papers. The term paper counts a total of 200 pts. or 20% of the final grade.

The topics for term papers must be approved by the instructor by **January 29**. 10 pts. will be deducted from the final grade of the term paper if the topic is not approved by this date.

A bibliography and outline for the term paper are due on **February 19**. 10 pts. will be deducted from the final grade of the term paper if these are turned in late. The bibliography and outline will not be graded. The instructor will comment on them and return them to the student.

The term paper is due on **April 15**, the first date of student class presentations. Two hard copies of the term paper must be turned into the instructor, who will grade one copy and return it to the student at the time of the final exam. She will retain the other hard copy. On April 15, the term paper must be uploaded to the student's website so that other students can access the paper. 10 pts. will be deducted from the final grades of papers that are turned in late and are not uploaded to a website on April 15.

Seminar Online Discussions

Each week the instructors will post a discussion topic on a discussion board for the three classes. Log in to leave your comments and to respond to the comments of your fellow seminar members. You should plan to log in at least two times a week. There will be no record of your logging in to the discussion board unless you post a message. This online discussion with students in the 3 classes will count a total of 100 pts. or 10% of the final grade.

Class Discussion

Class attendance is important and part of the discussion grade. Participation on the class discussion board also counts toward the discussion grade. Since much of our time in class will involve conversations with the members of the seminar at St. Joseph's and Marquette universities, much of our class discussion and clarification of assignments will be on the class discussion board. Therefore it is important to check the class discussion board often. **Your discussion in classroom discussions (interactive video and regular classroom) should give evidence that you have read and viewed the assignments.** Class discussion counts a total of 200 pts. or 20% of the grade; 10% before Mid-Term, 10% after Mid-Term.