

**The Ecumenical Institute of Theology
Summer, 2015**

SP/MT 626 America's God in American Films

Dr. Greiser & Dr. Laytham

Monday 6:00 – 9:00 pm, June 1,8,15, 22, 29 & online in July

Prerequisites: None, but a course in American Religious History would be an asset.

Course Description: A multi-disciplinary course examining classic and recent American movies, with a view toward engaging the question, "What do American movies tell us about the unique nature of Americans' views of God, faith, and spirituality?"

Requirements:

1. Students will complete required reading and movie watching assignments on time and come prepared to engage in class discussion. (In addition to the required texts, students will also be exposed to the critical reviews of excellent film critics)
2. A two page assignment (early in the class) on your life experience with movies. How have movies made an impact on you? How do you think they have influenced your view of God?
3. Two critical reviews of films that will not be assigned for class-films which engage uniquely American and religious themes. Reviews can be modeled after reviews read for the course.
4. A longer paper (5-7 pages) that offers a theological analysis of one film.
5. A 2 page paper, due at the end of the class, that responds succinctly to the question in the course description: What do American movies tells about the unique nature of Americans' views of God, faith, and spirituality?

Required Texts:

Froese, Paul, and Christopher Bader. *America's Four Gods: What We Say About God, and What that Says About Us*. Oxford University Press, 2010. ISBN 978-0-19-534147-8.

Johnston, Robert K. *Reel Spirituality: Theology and Film in Dialogue*. Grand Rapids: BakerAcademic, 2006, 2nd ed. ISBN 978-0-8010-3187-8.

Plus handouts.

Recommended Texts:

Anker, Roy K. *Catching Light: Looking for God at the Movies*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004. ISBN 0-8028-2795-0.

Lyden, John C. *Film as Religion: Myths, Morals, and Rituals*. New York: New York University Press, 2003. ISBN 0-8147-5181-4.