Course information:
Copy and paste current course information from Class Search/Course Catalog.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Unit</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>REL</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Historical, Philosophical and Religious Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>REL</td>
<td>287</td>
<td></td>
<td>Topics in Film, Media and Religion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Units: 3

Is this a cross-listed course? No
If yes, please identify course(s) ____________________________

Is this a shared course? No
If so, list all academic units offering this course ____________________________

Requested designation: Global Awareness-G
Note: a separate proposal is required for each designation requested

Eligibility:
Permanent numbered courses must have completed the university's review and approval process.
For the rules governing approval of omnibus courses, contact Phyllis.Lucie@asu.edu or Lauren.Leo@asu.edu.

Submission deadlines dates are as follow:
For Fall 2015 Effective Date: October 9, 2014
For Spring 2016 Effective Date: March 19, 2015

Area(s) proposed course will serve:
A single course may be proposed for more than one core or awareness area. A course may satisfy a core area requirement and more than one awareness area requirements concurrently, but may not satisfy requirements in two core areas simultaneously, even if approved for those areas. With departmental consent, an approved General Studies course may be counted toward both the General Studies requirement and the major program of study.

Checklists for general studies designations:
Complete and attach the appropriate checklist
- Literacy and Critical Inquiry core courses (L)
- Mathematics core courses (MA)
- Computer/statistics/quantitative applications core courses (CS)
- Humanities, Arts and Design core courses (HU)
- Social-Behavioral Sciences core courses (SB)
- Natural Sciences core courses (SO/SG)
- Cultural Diversity in the United States courses (C)
- Global Awareness courses (G)
- Historical Awareness courses (H)

A complete proposal should include:
☒ Signed General Studies Program Course Proposal Cover Form
☒ Criteria Checklist for the area
☒ Course Catalog description
☒ Course Syllabus
☒ Copy of Table of Contents from the textbook and list of required readings/books

Respectfully request that proposals are submitted electronically with all files compiled into one PDF. If necessary, a hard copy of the proposal will be accepted.

Contact information:
Name Cindy Baade
Mail code 4302
Phone 5-7183
E-mail: cynthia.baade@asu.edu

Department Chair/Director approval: (Required)
Chair/Director name (Typed): Matthew J. Garcia
Chair/Director (Signature): [Signature]
Date: 4/1/15

Rev. 1/94, 4/95, 7/98, 4/00, 1/02, 10/08, 11/11, 12/11, 7/12, 5/14
REL 287  Topics in Film, Media and Religion

This course explores specialized topics in the study of film, media, and religion. It analyzes how religious values, identities, and practices related to various cultural traditions are constructed, communicated and presented through films and media.
Rationale and Objectives

Human organizations and relationships have evolved from being family and village centered to modern global interdependence. The greatest challenge in the nuclear age is developing and maintaining a global perspective which fosters international cooperation. While the modern world is comprised of politically independent states, people must transcend nationalism and recognize the significant interdependence among peoples of the world. The exposure of students to different cultural systems provides the background of thought necessary to developing a global perspective.

Cultural learning is present in many disciplines. Exposure to perspectives on art, business, engineering, music, and the natural and social sciences that lead to an understanding of the contemporary world supports the view that intercultural interaction has become a daily necessity. The complexity of American society forces people to balance regional and national goals with global concerns. Many of the most serious problems are world issues and require solutions which exhibit mutuality and reciprocity. No longer are hunger, ecology, health care delivery, language planning, information exchanges, economic and social developments, law, technology transfer, philosophy, and the arts solely national concerns; they affect all the people of the world. Survival may be dependent on the ability to generate global solutions to some of the most pressing problems.

The word university, from universitas, implies that knowledge comes from many sources and is not restricted to local, regional, or national perspectives. The Global Awareness Area recognizes the need for an understanding of the values, elements, and social processes of cultures other than the culture of the United States. Learning which recognizes the nature of others cultures and the relationship of America’s cultural system to generic human goals and welfare will help create the multicultural and global perspective necessary for effective interaction in the human community.

Courses which meet the requirement in global awareness are of one or more of the following types: (1) in-depth area studies which are concerned with an examination of culture-specific elements of a region of the world, country, or culture group, (2) the study of contemporary non-English language courses that have a significant cultural component, (3) comparative cultural studies with an emphasis on non-U.S. areas, and (4) in-depth studies of non-U.S. centered cultural interrelationships of global scope such as the global interdependence produced by problems of world ecology, multinational corporations, migration, and the threat of nuclear war.

Reviewed 4/2014
Proposer: Please complete the following section and attach appropriate documentation.

### ASU-[G] CRITERIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>Identify Documentation Submitted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>GLOBAL AWARENESS [G]</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Studies must be composed of subject matter that addresses or leads to an understanding of the contemporary world outside the U.S. See syllabus

2. The course must match at least one of the following descriptions: (check all which may apply):

   a. In-depth area studies which are concerned with an examination of culture-specific elements of a region, country or culture group. The area or culture studied must be non-U.S. and the study must contribute to an understanding of the contemporary world.

   b. The course is a language course for a contemporary non-English language, and has a significant cultural component.

   c. The course is a comparative cultural study in which most, i.e., more than half, of the material is devoted to non-U.S. areas. See syllabus

   d. The course is a study of the cultural significance of a non-U.S.-centered global issue. The course examines the role of its target issue within each culture and the interrelatedness of various global cultures on that issue. It looks at the cultural significance of its issue in various cultures outside the U.S., both examining the issue's place within each culture and the effects of that issue on world cultures.”
Global Awareness [G]
Page 3

Page 3 of 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Prefix</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Designation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>REL</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>Topics in Film, Media, and Religion</td>
<td>Global Awareness (G)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Explain in detail which student activities correspond to the specific designation criteria. Please use the following organizer to explain how the criteria are being met.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria (from checksheet)</th>
<th>How course meets spirit (contextualize specific examples in next column)</th>
<th>Please provide detailed evidence of how course meets criteria (i.e., where in syllabus)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2d: study the cultural significance of a non-U.S. centered global issue</td>
<td><strong>SAMPLE:</strong> The course examines the cultural significance of financial markets Japan, Korea, and the UK.</td>
<td><strong>SAMPLE:</strong> Module 2 shows how Japanese literature has shaped how Japanese people understand world markets. Module 3 shows how Japanese popular culture has been changed by the world financial market system. Modules 4 &amp; 5 do the same for Korea and modules 6 &amp; 7 do the same for the UK.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1: Studies contain subject matter that addresses or leads to understanding of contemporary world outside of the U.S.</td>
<td>This course uses film and media to examine various topics pertaining to the study of religion in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East.</td>
<td>Section 1 includes a Nigerian film that examines Pentecostalism in Nigeria and explores the implications of accusing children of demon possession. Section 2 includes &quot;Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter and Spring&quot;, which focuses upon Korean Buddhism. Section 3 includes &quot;Timbuktu&quot; and media clips that discuss terrorism and its comparative representation in Africa, Europe, and the United States. Section 5 includes two films and media selections that examine religious minorities in various contexts in the Middle East, India, and Western Europe. Section 7 includes readings and assignment materials that help students to contextualize religion and social media usage in a globalized world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2c: The course is a comparative cultural study in which at least half of the material is devoted to non-U.S. areas.</td>
<td>Approximately 2/3 of the content for the course is comprised of international films, films that foster global awareness, or media topics that are international in scope.</td>
<td>Section 1: &quot;End of the Wicked&quot; - Nigeria. Section 2: &quot;Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter, and Spring&quot; - Korea. Section 3: &quot;Timbuktu&quot; - Mali; including various clips of &quot;terrorism&quot; from media in Europe. Section 5: &quot;Waltz with Bashir&quot; - Lebanon and Israel; &quot;Earth&quot; - India and Pakistan; Charlie Hebdo comics - France. Section 6: &quot;Avatar&quot; - colonialism. Section 7: digital media and religious fundamentalism (focus is upon uses of these technologies by persons in Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
"Film, Media, and Religion"
REL 287

Instructor: Jason Bruner
Office: COOR 3326
Phone: 480-965-0454
Email: Jason.Bruner.1@asu.edu

Course Description
This course explores specialized topics in the study of film, media, and religion. It analyzes how religious values, identities, and practices related to various cultural traditions are constructed, communicated, and presented through films and media. It pays particular attention to the dissemination, discussion, and social significance of religious ideologies, ethical debates, and religious fundamentalism in film and media and analyzes the emergence of new forms of ritual and worship on the internet and social media.

Please note that all films will be made available via electronic reserve at ASU.

Course Objectives
This course will:
1. Introduce students to specialized topics in the study of film, media, and religion
2) Familiarize students with transdisciplinary tools exploring the mediated construction and representation of religious values, identities, and practices.
3. Analyze the technological and social intersection of religion, film, and media.
4. Facilitate critical awareness of the dissemination and discussion of religious ideologies, ethical debates, and religious fundamentalism in film and media.
5. Explore the emergence of new forms of ritual and worship on the internet and social media.

Course Learning Outcomes
Having completed this course, the student should:
1) Be able to use and integrate methodological tools from Religious Studies and Film and Media Studies;
2. Have learned to critically analyze films and media productions dealing with the representation and performance of religious values, identities, and practices.
3. Have strengthened their skills in visual analysis, critical writing, and verbal communication.
4. Be able to critique depictions of religions, religious traditions, and subjects in film, media, and popular culture.
Assignments

**Quizzes** (10 points each; 150 points total): Weekly quizzes will be given on individual films and required readings.

**Response Papers** (100 points each; 200 points total): The student will write two papers of 250-300 words each in response to one of the films assigned for the class. The paper is due on the class day for which the film is assigned. One paper should be on a film assigned in sections 1-3 of the course syllabus; the second paper should be on a film assigned in sections 4-7 of the syllabus. The paper should demonstrate a close, careful viewing and analysis of the film, with particular attention to the thematic elements highlighted by the supplemental readings.

**News Analysis** (200 points): This assignment is due in week 8. Each student will take a news story and analyze its description, use, and/or presentation of “religion” or religious people and communities. A list of acceptable news essays will be provided in class, though others will be accepted with instructor permission. The analysis should be between 700 and 750 words. It should address basic questions about the assumptions the author makes about the role of religion, faith, and/or belief in the story or in the subjects in the story.

**Group Project Presentation** (150 points): Students will work in groups of 3-4 to analyze the social media presence of a notable religious figure or community. This could include: a Twitter feed, Facebook page, or community in Second Life, for example. Students will give short presentations of no more than 10 minutes in week 14 that highlight the most significant features and content of this aspect of digital religion and its relationship to the course. Each group will also submit a 2-page write-up of their findings and conclusions.

**Final Paper** (300 points): For the final paper, students should review the list of films in the syllabus, choose one, view it carefully, and write an analysis of 1400-1500 words. Films viewed or assigned in class are not eligible for this paper. The paper should demonstrate the application of critical theories, methods, and ideas from the study of film and religion. It should apply one or more of these themes or theories to understand elements of religion or its depiction in the film, keeping in mind that these elements will be more obvious in some films than others.

**List of films for final paper (others accepted at instructor’s discretion)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Film</th>
<th>Film</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 Years a Slave</td>
<td>Count of Monte Cristo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amistad</td>
<td>The Cup</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Apostle</td>
<td>Devi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Burmese Harp</td>
<td>Divine Secrets of the Ya Ya sisterhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children of Heaven</td>
<td>The Exorcist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children of Men</td>
<td>Holy Father, Holy Son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Chosen</td>
<td>Inherit the Wind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constantine</td>
<td>The Jazz Singer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lagaan
Life is Beautiful
O Brother, Where Art Thou?
On the Waterfront
Malcolm X
The Matrix
P.K.

Spring, Summer, Winter, Fall, and Spring
Stigmata
Taste of Cherry
Their Eyes Were Watching God
Tree of Life
Truman Show

Grading Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>970-1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>930-969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>900-929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>870-899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>830-869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>800-829</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>700-799</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>600-699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-599</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Required Readings
All readings will be made available through Blackboard.


[http://www.economist.com/node/17723124](http://www.economist.com/node/17723124)


Class Schedule

Section I: Religion and Gender
January 13:

Introduction: How to "see religion" in film
Film: "The Color Purple"


January 20:

Film: "End of the Wicked"

Required Reading: "Lights, Camera, Africa," The Economist (Dec. 16, 2010)
http://www.economist.com/node/17723124


Section II: Ritual and Symbolism
January 27:

Film: "Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter, and Spring"


February 3:

Film: "The Passion of the Christ"


Section III: Violence
February 10:

Film: "Timbuktu"


February 17: Terrorism and News Media

Media: Media networks’ coverage of “terrorism”, including Norway mass shooting, Oklahoma City bombing; clips from TV show “24”


Section IV: Representing Religion: Documentary

February 24: Film: “Kumare”


Assignment Due: News Analysis (submit via Blackboard)

March 3: Religion and Television

Media: Excerpts from “19 Kids and Counting” / “Sister Wives”
“All American Muslim” / “The Little Mosque on the Prairie”


March 10: Spring Break (no class)

Section V: Religion and the “Other”

March 17 Film: “Waltz with Bashir”


March 24:
- **Film:** "Earth"

March 31:
- Charlie Hebdo and Danish cartoons of Mohammed
- **Supplemental Reading:** Elizabeth Poole, Reporting Islam: Media Representations of British Muslims (I.B. Tauris, 2009).

Section VI: Religion and Other Worlds

April 7:
- **Film:** Battlestar Galactica, selections
- **Supplemental Reading:** James F. McGrath, ed., Religion and Science Fiction (Lutterworth Press, 2012).

April 14:
- **Film:** "Avatar"
- **Supplemental Reading:** Robert Hyland, "Going Na’vi: Mastery in Avatar," Cinema 82:82-83 (2010), 10-16.

Section VII: Social Media and Digital Religion

April 21:
- Modernity, Religious Fundamentalism, and Social Media
- **Read one of the following articles:**

**Assignment Due:** Group Project Presentations (including the submission of a 2-page summary)

April 28: Conclusion: Thinking about religion in a digital age  
**Film:** *Her*  
**Supplemental Reading:** Robert M. Geraci, "Video Games and the Transhuman Inclination," *Zygon* 47:4 (2012), 735-756.

**Final Exam Date:** Final paper due

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**Class Policies**

**Academic Integrity**  
Academic honesty is expected of all students in all examinations, papers, laboratory work, academic transactions and records. The possible sanctions include, but are not limited to, appropriate grade penalties, course failure (indicated on the transcript as a grade of E), course failure due to academic dishonesty (indicated on the transcript as a grade of XF), loss of registration privileges, disqualification and dismissal. For more information, see [http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity](http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity).

**Computers**  
Computers are amazing tools that allow us to send and view pictures of our cats instantly to virtually anywhere in the world. If I find that you are using a computer for this or any other non-class-related purpose (including, but not limited to, using social media, shopping, watching videos, or email) — or if I find that they are being a hindrance to the class and a distraction to those around you — I reserve the right to limit or prohibit their use in class. This includes laptops, cell phones, iPods, and tablets, among other devices. This class will be most interesting and rewarding for all of us if you and those around you are engaged in discussions and class activities.

**Blackboard Information**  
Blackboard is an integral component of this course. Many required and supplemental readings and materials will be posted to Blackboard throughout the semester and it is the
student's responsibility to check both Blackboard and their university e-mail regularly for information and content pertaining to the course. If you are properly enrolled in the course, a link to this course's Blackboard page should appear in the "MyASU Courses" section of your MyASU page. If a link does not appear or if you do not have an ASURITE ID, please contact the ASU helpdesk at (480) 965-6500.

Attendance
Students are expected to attend all class sessions and attendance will be taken. Absences for non-medical reasons need to contact the professor beforehand, and such absences will be excused at the discretion of the professor. Please give prior notice for absences due to religious holidays and university-sponsored events, which are considered excused absences. Students are permitted 2 unexcused absences. Unexcused absences beyond these two will negatively impact your final grade, and excessive unexcused absences can result in your failing the course. Conversely, consistent engagement in classroom activities and discussions can potentially increase your final grade.

Make-ups
All assignments are due on or before the date and time stipulated above in the syllabus, even if the student is absent for a class meeting on which an assignment is due. Late assignments will be accepted at the discretion of the instructor. In the event that the timely submission of an assignment is not possible, prior notification is required, and it will be accepted at the discretion of the instructor. Unexcused late assignments will be subject to a penalty of a 10% reduction per 24-hour period after the due date and time stated for that assignment.

Withdrawals and Incompletes
http://www.asu.edu/asd/catalog/o/general/up-enrollment.html#grading-system

Classroom Decorum
Students are expected to come to class on time. Class sessions are designed to have consistent student participation. Therefore, student interaction with the material and one another is vital to the success of this course. Diversity is a fundamental and essential part of successful learning. Discussions and student interactions should be conducted in a respectful, civil manner, being mindful of differences of gender, sexuality, abilities, religion, political ideologies, and ethnicity, among others, as well as varying levels of familiarity and expertise in the subject matter among students.

Disability Accommodations
Qualified students with disabilities who will require disability accommodations in this class are encouraged to make their requests to me at the beginning of the semester either during office hours or by appointment. Note: Prior to receiving disability accommodations, verification of eligibility from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) is required. Disability information is confidential.

Establishing Eligibility for Disability Accommodations
Students who feel they will need disability accommodations in this class but have not registered with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) should contact DRC immediately. Their office is located on the first floor of the Matthews Center Building. DRC staff can also be reached at: 480-965-1234 (V), 480-965-9000 (TTY). For additional information, visit: www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc. Their hours are 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday.

Final Disclaimer
The instructor reserves the right to amend or alter this syllabus.
Required Readings

All readings will be made available through Blackboard.


