

## **G90.3397 - Religion as Media**

This course will introduce students to the longstanding and complex connection between religious practices and various media, based upon the premise that, like all social practice, religion is always mediated in some form or other. Yet, religion does not function simply as unchanging content, while media names the ways that content is formed. Instead shifts in media technique, from ritual innovations to the invention of printing, through TV, to the internet, also shape religious practice. We are interested in gathering theoretical tools for understanding the form and politics of this mutual dialectic. We will 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 reitulas. Then we will spend time on more recent electronic media such as cassette, film, television, video, and the internet. We will consider, among other things: religious memory, both embodied and out-sourced in other media; role of TV in the rise of the Hindu Right; the material culture of Buddhism (icons, relics, sutras); religion and commodification; film as religious experience; Christian Evangelical Media.