**Women and Religion: Film Project List**

Brianne Donaldson 2016

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| **Films** | **Director/Date** | **Tradition** | **Description** |
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| *Fire* | Deepa Mehta/1996  104 min | Hindu and Sufism | A film about two frustrated women whose desire are unfilled in their traditional roles and expectations. The filmed was banned in parts of South Asia for lesbian themes. |
| *Water* | Deepa Mehta/2006  117 min | Hinduism | The film examines the plight of a group of widows forced into poverty at a temple in the holy city of Varanasi. It focuses on a relationship between one of the widows, who wants to escape the social restrictions imposed on widows, and a man who is from the highest caste and a follower of Mahatma Gandhi. |
| *Made In India: SEWA in Action* | 1998. Dist. by Women Make Movies, 55 min. | Hinduism | A portrait of the women’s organization in India, called SEWA, that holds to the simple yet radical belief that poor women need organizing, not welfare. Inspired by the political, economic and moral model advocated by Gandhi, SEWA has grown since it founding to a membership of 217,000 and its bank now has assets of over $4 million. |
| *Jodha Akbar* | Ashutosh Gowariker/2008 | Hinduism | A sixteenth century love story about a marriage of alliance that gave birth to true love between a great Mughal emperor, Akbar, and a Rajput princess, Jodha. |
| *Devi* | Satyajit Ray/1960  93 min | Hinduism | This film is based on a short story by [Provatkumar Mukhopadhyay](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Provatkumar_Mukhopadhyay). The title means "Goddess". A young woman is deemed a goddess when her father-in-law, a rich feudal land-lord, has a dream envisioning her as an avatar of Kali. |
| *Jai Santoshi Maa* | Vijay Sharma/1975  145 min | Hinduism | Satyavati lives a poor lifestyle along with her widower dad in Sonarpur, and is a devotee of Devi Maa Santoshi. Her beloved Birajram is mistreated by his family and disappears, leaving Satyavati at the mercy of her uncaring in-laws. Although she tried to appease Devi Maa Santoshi, she still must face the wrath of the three jealous devis. |
| *Gulabi Gang* | Nishtha Jain/2012 | Hinduism | In Bundelkhand, India, a revolution is in the making among the poorest of the poor, as the fiery women of the Gulabi Gang empower themselves and take up the fight against gender violence, caste oppression and widespread corruption. |
| *Sita Sings the Blues* | Nina Paley/2008 | Hinduism | An animated version of the epic Indian tale of Ramayana set to the 1920s jazz vocals of Annette Hanshaw |
| *Gulabi Gang* | Nishtha Jain/2012 | Hinduism | In Bundelkhand, India, a revolution is in the making among the poorest of the poor, as the fiery women of the Gulabi Gang empower themselves and take up the fight against gender violence, caste oppression and widespread corruption. |
| *In Her Own Time* | Dir. Lynne Littman, 1985. Dist. by Direct Cinema Limited, 60 min. | Judaism | This film is the last collaboration of Littman and anthropologist Barbara Myerhoff, whose fieldwork researches the Orthodox Jewish community of Fairfax in Los Angeles. The film integrates Myerhoff’s fight with cancer and reevaluation of religion with the lives of the people she works with. |
| *Tell Me a Riddle* | Dir. Lee Grant, 1980. Dist. by Media Home Entertainment, 94 min. | Judaism | In this feature film, the culmination of a woman’s lifelong assertion of independence and individuality occurs simultaneously with the diagnosis of cancer. Flashbacks explore the development of her identity and relationships with husband and children. Based on novella by Tille Olsen. |
| *Fiddler on the Roof* | Norman Jewison/1971  181 min | Judaism | In prerevolutionary Russia, a Jewish peasant contends with marrying off three of his daughters while growing antisemitic sentiment threatens his village. |
| *Arranged* | Diane Crespo, Stefan Schaefer/2007  90 min | Judaism/Islam | ARRANGED centers on the friendship between an Orthodox Jewish woman and a Muslim woman who meet as first-year teachers at a public school in Brooklyn. Over the course of the year they learn they share much in common - not least of which is that they are both going through the process of arranged marriages. |
| *[A Jihad for Love](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0780046/" \t "_blank)* | Parvez Sharma/2007  81 min | Islam | A documentary on gay, lesbian, and transgender Muslims across the Muslim and Western worlds. |
| *[Wadjda](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt2258858/?ref_=tt_rec_tti" \t "_blank)* | Haifaa Al-Mansour/2012  98 min | Islam | An enterprising Saudi girl signs on for her school's Koran recitation competition as a way to raise the remaining funds she needs in order to buy the green bicycle that has captured her interest. |
| *A Separation* | Asghar Farhadi | Islam | A married couple are faced with a difficult decision - to improve the life of their child by moving to another country or to stay in Iran and look after a deteriorating parent who has Alzheimer's disease. |
| *Sabah* | Ruba Nadda/2005  86 min | Islam | One day, when Sabah least expects it, she falls in love with the wrong man. She's Muslim, he's not. Unbeknownst to her family, she goes on a whirlwind affair before both culture and love collide. |
| *[Mooz-Lum](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1450328/" \t "_blank)* | Qasim Basir/2010  99 min. | Islam | Amid a strict Muslim rearing and a social life he's never had, Tariq enters college confused. New peers, family and mentors help him find his place, but the 9-11 attacks force him to face his past and make the biggest decisions of his life. |
| *Persepolis* | Vincent Paronnaud, Marjane Satrapi/2007  96 min | Islam | Poignant coming-of-age story of a precocious and outspoken young Iranian girl that begins during the Islamic Revolution. |
| *Door on the Sky* | Dir. Farida Ben Lyazid, 1989. Dist. by Arab Film Distribution, 107 min. French and Arabic with English subtitles. | Islam | The death of her father makes a woman rethink her relationships with her French lover, Islam, and the sufferings of women around her. The three converge in the founding of a women’s shelter. |
| *[Caramel](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1450328/" \t "_blank)* | Nadine Labaki/2007  95 min. | Islam/Christianity | A romantic comedy centered on the daily lives of five Lebanese women living in Beirut. |
| *[Where Do We Go Now?](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1772424/" \t "_blank)* | Nadine Labaki/2011  110 min | Islam/Christianity | A group of Lebanese women try to ease religious tensions between Christians and Muslims in their village. |
| *Autumn Sonata* | Ingmar Bergman/1978  99 min | Christianity | A married daughter who longs for her mother's love gets visited by the latter, a successful concert pianist. |
| *Breaking the Waves* | Lars Von Trier 1996  159 min | Protestant Christianity (Scottish Presbyterian Calvinism) | Oilman Jan is paralyzed in an accident. His wife, who prayed for his return, feels guilty; even more, when Jan urges her to have sex with another. |
| *Saved* | Brian Dannelly/2004  92 min | Christianity | When a girl attending a Christian high school becomes pregnant, she finds herself ostracized and demonized, as all of her former friends turn on her. |
| *Behind the Veil* | Dir. Margaret Wescott, 1984. Dist. by First Run Features, 130 min. | Catholicism | Addresses the concern of Catholic nuns existing within a paternalistic church hierarchy. Looks to Christianity’s past to review women’s religious status and shows the role played by modern nuns. |
| *Antonia's Line* | Marleen Gorris/1995  102 min | Catholicism | A Dutch matron establishes and, for several generations, oversees a close-knit, matriarchal community where feminism and liberalism thrive. |
| *The Song of Bernadette* | Henry King/1943  156 min | Catholicism | In 1858 France, Bernadette, an adolescent peasant girl, has a vision of "a beautiful lady" in the city dump. She never claims it to be anything other than this, but the townspeople all assume it to be the virgin Mary. The pompous government officials think she is nuts, and do their best to suppress the girl and her followers, and the church wants nothing to do with the whole matter. But as Bernadette attracts wider and wider attention, the phenomenon overtakes everyone in the the town, and transforms their lives. |
| *Joan of Arc* | Victor Fleming/1948  145 min | Catholicism | In the Fifteenth Century, France is a defeated and ruined nation after the One Hundred Years War against England. The fourteen years old farm girl Joan of Arc claims to hear voices from Heaven asking her to lead God's Army against Orleans and crowning the weak Dauphin Charles VII as King of France. Joan gathers the people with her faith, forms an army and conquerors Orleans. When her army is ready to attack Paris, the corrupt Charles sells his country to England and dismiss the army. Joan is arrested, sold to the Burgundians England and submitted to a shameful political trial in Rouen castle. |
| *Black Narcissus* | Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger/1947  100 min | Catholicism | After opening a convent in the Himalayas, five nuns encounter conflict and tension - both with the natives and also within their own group - as they attempt to adapt to their remote, exotic surroundings. |
| *Pussy Riot: A Punk Prayer* | [Mike Lerner](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0503631/?ref_=tt_ov_dr), [Maxim Pozdorovkin](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm3680682/?ref_=tt_ov_dr)/2013 | Catholicism | Three young women face seven years in a Russian prison for a satirical performance in a Moscow cathedral. But who is really on trial in a case that has gripped the nation and the world beyond, three young artists or the society they live in? |
| *Cries and Whispers* | Ingmar Bergman/1972  91 min | Christianity, Sweden | When a woman dying of cancer in early twentieth-century Sweden is visited by her two sisters, long-repressed feelings between the siblings rise to the surface. |
| *The Miracle Woman* | Frank Capra/1931  90 min | Christianity | After Florence Fallon's father dies unappreciated in the church where he preached for many years, she becomes embittered and loses faith. She teams up with Horsby, a con man, and performs fake miracles for profit. But the love and trust of a blind man restores her faith in God and her fellow man. |
| *The House of Bernarda Alba* | Mario Camus/1987  99 min | Christianity | After the death of her husband Bernada Alba puts her daughters under a rigurous mourning which does not even allow them to leave the house for seven years. Adela, the youngest daughter, suffers the most. Pepe el Romano key to all women's despair. |
| *Babette's Feast* | Gabriel Axel/1987  102 min | Chrisitianity | In a remote 19th Danish century village two sisters lead a rigid life centered around their father, the local minister, and their church. Both had opportunities to leave the village: one could have married a young army officer and the other, a French opera singer. Their father objected in each case and they spent their lives caring for him. Many years later - their father is now deceased - they take in French refugee, Babette Hersant, who agrees to work as their servant. After winning the lottery, Babette wants to repay the sisters for their kindness and offers to cook a French meal for them and their friends on the 100th anniversary of their father's birth. It proves to be an eye-opening experience for everyone. |
| *Citizen Ruth* | Alexander Payne/1996  106 min | Christianity | An irresponsible, drug-addicted, recently impregnated woman finds herself in the middle of an abortion debate when both parties attempt to sway her to their respective sides. |
| *Paradise* | Ulrich Seidl/2012  3 parts | Christianity | The three films in this trilogy focus on three women from one family; one of them travels to Kenya as a sex tourist, one has to spend time at a [weight loss camp](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Weight_loss_camp), and one tries to propagate Catholicism.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paradise_trilogy#cite_note-filminstitut-1)[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paradise_trilogy#cite_note-:0-2) |
| *The Passion of Joan of Arc* | Carl Dreyer/1928  114 min | Catholicism | A chronicle of the trial of Jeanne d'Arc on charges of heresy, and the efforts of her ecclesiastical jurists to force Jeanne to recant her claims of holy visions. |
| *Ida* | Pawel Pawlikowski/2013  82 min | Catholicism | Anna, a young novitiate nun in 1960s Poland, is on the verge of taking her vows when she discovers a dark family secret dating back to the years of the Nazi occupation. |
| *Bend it Like Beckham* | Gurinder Chadha/2002  112 min | Sikhism | The daughter of orthodox Sikh rebels against her parents' traditionalism by running off to Germany with a football team (soccer in America). |
| *Whale Rider* | Niki Caro/2002  101 min | Maori | A contemporary story of love, rejection and triumph as a young Maori girl fights to fulfill a destiny her grandfather refuses to recognize. |
| *Charly* | Adam Thomas Anderegg/2002 103 min | Mormonism | Sam Roberts thinks he has all the answers: the purpose of life, the meaning of love, the plan for a perfect future. Until Charly walks into his life. |
| *Windhorse*. | Paul Wagner/1998  97 min | Tibetan Buddhism | Earnest and committed, ''Windhorse'' dramatizes the plight of the Tibetan people under Chinese occupation and repression by means of the story of the disintegration of a single family. |
| *Raw Faith* | Wm. Peter Wiedensmith/2010  94 min | Unitarian | This surprisingly open and revealing documentary follows two years in the private life of a minister. Marilyn Sewell is successful and beloved in the pulpit, but behind the scenes she is lonely and yearning for change. As she considers leaving the ministry, she realizes she will be leaving her only social network. Yet when she falls in love for the first time, she realizes she does not trust intimacy. A study in contrasts, Marilyn must rely on raw faith as she questions her future, her difficult past, her God, and most importantly... her ability to love. |