**Course Description**

Not since the production of the film *The Last Temptation of Christ* in 1988 has a work of fiction caused as much uproar in the Christian community as did Dan Brown’s *The DaVinci Code*. It may indeed be the case that a work of fiction has never been given as much hype as this one has received. People seem to be enthralled by this 2003 novel that dominated the best seller list for over two years. The film, directed by Ron Howard, was released in 2006. More than a dozen books have been written that either discredit or support the information Brown presents to his readers. ABC first produced a special program on *The DaVinci Code* focusing on the alleged marriage of Jesus and Mary Magdalene. Since that time, numerous T.V. programs and DVDs have followed. All of this is of interest from a religious studies’ perspective.

After a thorough reading and discussion of the novel, students will evaluate the cause of the uproar and critically investigate allegations made both by and about Brown and his book. We will go from the halls of the Louvre to the halls of the Vatican as we study such topics as Mary Magdalene and the role of women in the early Church, Opus Dei, the Priory of Sion, the Knight Templars, the Holy Grail, the Humanity versus the Divinity of Jesus, Gnostic writings, the Council of Nicea, and Leonardo DaVinci. Because of the diversity of information that will be presented in this course, guest lecturers will assist in our quest via videotape. Lecturers are: Dr. Arne Flaten, art historian and Professor at Coastal Carolina University, who will speak on Leonardo DaVinci and the *Last Supper* painting, and Dr. Eliza Glaze, History Professor at Coastal Carolina University, who will lecture on Women in the Early Church.

Brown said during an interview, “My hope in writing this novel was that the story would serve as a catalyst and a springboard for people to discuss the important topics of faith, religion, and history.” Indeed it has.

**Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of the course, you should be able to:

1. understand the significance of the religious organizations depicted in the novel;
2. discuss the explanations of the Holy Grail given throughout history;
3. understand the Biblical, extra canonical information, tradition, and conjecture about Mary Magdalene;
4. have a better understanding of Leonardo DaVinci and his painting of the last supper;
5. grasp the importance of Constantine and the Council of Nicea and the struggle to explain the humanity and divinity of Jesus;
6. comprehend the nature of goddess worship and women in the early Church;
7. and, evaluate the allegations of and about the novel.

**Secondary Learning Outcomes**

Although our main objective is to analyze religious information presented in *The DaVinci Code*, there are several other outcomes which naturally flow from this:
1. To analyze data, and to reach and form opinions, about religious matters based upon reliable sources;
2. To develop an awareness of the problems involved in obtaining reliable sources when doing religious studies research; and,
3. To form an educated opinion about the use of religion in fiction.

Course Oddities and Requirements
1. Class attendance is mandatory. If you must miss a class, you are responsible for the material that was covered.
2. Blackboard is an integral part of this course. You will find bibliographies, a copy of the syllabus, and other documents and forums related to class there. You are required to participate in the Discussion Board at least once a week. You are required to research items and present your research results to the class. The number of items required will depend upon the class size. Some items are more complicated than others; we will divide the items up in an equitable manner. Please note: your research item should contain how it is used in The DaVinci Code. You will compile what you have discovered in written form to be submitted to the Instructor no later than the evening before the class in which you are to present your results. You will be expected to present what you have researched to the class and the Instructor will post your information on Blackboard. If you have a problem with public speaking, please notify the Instructor in advance.
3. It is assumed that because you have registered for this course you are an inquisitive student who has a thirst for knowledge, a desire for truth, and are motivated to study and learn. You are expected to do all of the assignments, to think theologically, and to contribute to class discussions.
4. There may be an occasional pop quiz to be sure that you are motivated to learn the material and have completed the assignments.
5. Your final exam will assess your ability to reach a conclusion about what you have learned. You will be allowed to use the novel and your class notes.

Grading
Your grade will consist of your research items (45%), exam 20%, class attendance 15%, Blackboard discussion 15%, and pop quizzes 5%. The grading scale is: A= 95-100; B+ = 88-89; B = 80-87; C+ = 78-79; C = 70-77; D+ = 68-69; D = 60-67; F = 59-0.

Textbooks
Dan Brown’s The DaVinci Code
Recommended: Dan Burstein’s Breaking the Code
Various books to be provided by the Professor (these books must be returned before you will be given a grade for the course)

The DaVinci Code
Class Outline and Assignments

Introduction

I. Course Introduction
   Syllabus, Class Schedule, and Assignments
      1. Internet searches
      2. Student research – importance of scholarly research
II. Who is Dan Brown?
   A. Information from Brown's web site www.danbrown.com and www.davincicode.com
   B. Other Novels
      1. Digital Fortress, 1998
      2. Angels & Demons, 2001
      3. Deception Point, 2002
      4. The Lost Symbol, 2009

III. The DaVinci Code
   Acknowledgments
   FACT

IV. The novel
   A. frequently asked facts http://www.danbrown.com/novels/davinci_code/faqs.html
   B. Interviews
   C. The Film - Trailer
   D. An Alternative Universe (Steven Kellermeyer Fact and Fiction in The DaVinci Code)

V. Bibliography and Cooper Library

Assignment for next class
Intensive Reading of The DaVinci Code, chapters 1-5 (even if you have read the novel, you are required to read the assignments!)
Post discussion on Blackboard
Research assigned item, email to professor
Visit all web sites listed for the next class session

Main Topic: Opus Dei

Chapters 1-5
   1 Jacques Saunière
      Berengner Saunière
   12 Cilice with corporal mortification (p. 14)
      http://www.odan.org/corporal_mortification.htm
   14 The Way
   16 Interpol
      http://www.interpol.int/Public/Icpo/default.asp
   17 Obelisk of Ramses
      http://members.aol.com/Sokamoto31/paris.htm
   19 astrological symbols – Taurus
   21 666 # of Satan
   23 Louvre's collection of goddess art
   25 crux gemmata
      http://www.symbols.com/encyclopedia/24/2456.html
   29 Manuel Aringorosa
   29 Opus Dei – Josemaria Escriva, 1928; 1934 published The Way
      www.opusdei.org/art.php?w=32&p=7017
   30 www.odan.org (site has everything related to Opus Dei that is negative)
   30 prelature
   31 Psalm 51 “…wash me, that I may become whiter than snow….”
Opus Dei
The Film (from Ch. 1-5 of the novel)

Assignment for next class
Intensive Reading of *The DaVinci Code*, chapters 5-15 (even if you have read the novel, you are required to read the assignments!)
Visit all web sites listed for the next class session
Post discussion on Blackboard
Research assigned item, email to professor

**Main Topic: Leonardo DaVinci and Religion**

**Chapters 6-17**
35 The pentacle (research item)
36 Pagans
41 original sin; (research item)
   Eve and APPLE of knowledge
43 Draconian devil (research item)
45 (& p. 95) The Vitruvian Man (research item)
   homosexuality/sin
   Leonardo DaVinci

Guest Lecturer, Dr. Arne Flaten, Art Historian at Coastal Carolina University

54 The Lord’s Prayer
57 Resurrection
57 crucifix vs. cross
58 Acts 16:26
61 Fibonacci sequence (research item)
73 vow of celibacy and relinquishment of personal assets

Assignment for next class
Intensive Reading of *Chapters 18-27*
Visit all web sites listed for the next class session
Post discussion on Blackboard
Research assigned item, email to professor

**Main Topic: The Priory of Sion**

**Chapters 18-27**
88 The Church of Saint-Sulpice (research item)
89 Peace of the Lord be with you
92 Tarot cards (in detail later)
92ff PHI The Divine Proportion (research item)
96 art an attempt to imitate beauty of Creator’s hand
98 Kabbala (research item)
99-100 Mona Lisa & 119 ff (research item)
105 the Rose Line (research item)
   Egyptian Obelisk (research item)
106 fleur-de-lis (research item)
107 Divine Intervention
108 Priory of Sion (begins)
Connection with Rennes la Chateau
Pierre Plantard
120 androgyny
http://virgil.azwestern.edu/~dag/lol/Androgny.htm
Amon & Isis (research item)

Assignment for Next Class
Intensive reading of chapters 28-37
Visit all web sites listed for the next class session
Post discussion on Blackboard
Research assigned item, email to professor

Main Topic: Knights Templar

Chapters 28-37
124 goddess worship (research item)
125 Malleus Maleficarum – The Witches’ Hammer (research item)
http://www.malleusmaleficarum.org/
125 Hieros Gamos (save for 308)
127 Moses
128 Job 38:11 (“Thus far shall you come and no farther….“)
134 Madonna of the Rocks (research item)
http://www.danbrown.com/secrets/davinci_code/davinci2.html
138 Uriel (research item)
145 cruciare
146 Arc DeTriumphé
http://www.kerstentraveler.com/arcdetriumph.html
http://members.fortunecity.com/syberboy/arcdetriumph.html
153 Sacre-Coeur
157 Priory
158 Knights Templar Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade
159 Holy of Holies (research item)
160 Sangreal (research item)
161 Holy Grail

Assignment for Next Class
Intensive reading of chapters 38-47
Research information emailed to professor
Visit all web sites listed for the next class session.

Main Topic: The Holy Grail

Chapters 38-47
161 Holy Grail The Fisher King
165 Noah an albino (research item)
175 Papal Seal
http://medievalwriting.50megs.com/decoration/seal7.htm
195 Lamb of God
197 Rosicrucians (research item)
Assignment for next class
Intensive Reading of *The DaVinci Code*, chapters 48-55
Visit all web sites listed for the next class session
Post discussion on Blackboard
Research assigned item, email to professor

Main Topic: Constantine and the Council of Nicea

Chapters 48-55
- 203 Keystone (research item)
  Knights of the Rosy Cross
- 205 Masons (research item)
- 206 *Les Dossiers Secrets*
- 226 Byzantine Temple
  Gargoyles (research item)
- 232ff Constantine and early Christianity; the Bible
  transmogrification
- 232 Council of Nicaea (325 A.D.)
  Mithras & Osiris (research item)
  Adonis & Dionysus (research item)
  Krishna
- 234 *Dead Sea Scrolls* (research item)
  *Coptic Scrolls* (research item)
- 235 The Last Supper painting (# of cups)
  Dr. Arne Flaten – 2nd half of lecture

Assignment for next class
Intensive Reading of *The DaVinci Code*, chapters 56-59
Visit all web sites listed for the next class session
Post discussion on Blackboard
Research assigned item, email to professor

Main Topic: Mary Magdalene

Chapters 56-59
- 237 male/female symbols (research item)
- 243 Mary Magdalene and Holy Grail
- 246 Gnostic Gospels (*Gospel of Phillip* – research item)
  http://www.gnosis.org/naghamm/gop.html
- 246 *The Last Temptation of Christ*
Mary Magdalene in the Bible
Mary Magdalene in Film (various film clips)
View: NBC special documentary – *Jesus, Mary, and DaVinci*

Assignment for next class
Intensive reading of *The DaVinci Code*, chapters 60-62
Visit all web sites listed for the next class session
Post discussion on Blackboard
Research assigned item, email to professor
Main Topic: Goddess Worship and Women in the Early Church

Guest Lecturer (video presentation), Dr. Elize Glase, History Professor at Coastal Carolina

Chapters 60-62
254ff Rose
255 Georgia O'Keefe paintings
http://ellensplace.net/okeeffe1.html
http://georgiaokeeffe.artgazebo.com/perl/frSearch?artist=Georgia+O%27Keeffe
257 Merovingians (King Dagobert; 258 Pepin d'Heristed; Sigisbert Dagobert; Godefroi de Bowltons) (research item – all 5 count as 1 research item)

The Little Mermaid
Walt Disney's The Little Mermaid
262 The Penitent Magdalene by Georges de la Tour
Isis, Eve, Pisces fish goddess (research item)
Ariel in Isaiah 29 (research item)

Mary Magdalene in Art
Google image search (www.google.com)

Assignment for next class
Intensive Reading of The DaVinci Code, chapters 63-73
Visit all websites listed for the next class session
Post discussion on Blackboard
Research assigned item, email to professor

Main Topic: The Humanity vs. the Divinity of Christ

NBC Special Documentary – Jesus, Mary, and DaVinci

Chapters 63-73
266 priest cover-up
End of Days & Apocalypse (research item)
274 Spanish monastery
277 God alone judges the worthy
304 Atbash Cipher (research item)

Assignment for next class
Intensive reading of The DaVinci Code, chapters 74-85
Visit all websites listed for the next class session
Post discussion on Blackboard
Research assigned item, email to professor

Main Topic: God in The DaVinci Code

Chapters 74-85
308 Hieros Gamos
309 Shekinah (research item)
YHWH
316 Baphonnet (research item)
319 Mystery of Sheshach and Jeremiah (research item)
321 Sofia (research item)  
338 The Temple Church in London  
341 definition of faith  
342 Koran  
The Torah  
Palí Canon  
355 tombs, effigies, crypts

God in The DaVinci Code

Assignment for next class
Intensive reading of The DaVinci Code, chapters 83-102  
Research information emailed to professor  
Visit all web sites listed for the next class session  
Post discussion on Blackboard  
Email Instructor a topic you would like to discuss for the first half of our next class session.  
This can be a topic we have not yet discussed, or a topic you would like to discuss further.

Main Topic: Tarot Cards and Religion

DVD, DaVinci Code Decoded – Margaret Starbird  
Chapters 83-96  
368 & 377 Kings College and renowned electronic theological database  
378 Don Quixote (research item)  
379 Boolean search  
380 Vatican Secret Archives (research item)  
389 Freemasons (Mozart, Bethove, Shakespeare, Gershwin, Houdini, Disney)  
390 Wagner’s opera Parsifal (research item)  
Troubadours  
Tarot Cards (research item)  
The History of the Holy Grail Through Tarot  
393 The Gravity of Genius: Biography of a Modern Knight (Sir Isaac Newton)

Assignment for next class
Intensive reading of The DaVinci Code, chapters 83-102  
Research information emailed to professor  
Visit all web sites listed for the next class session.

Traveling with The DaVinci Code

Chapters 97-Epilogue  
395 Westminster Abbey  
398 Goddess of Astronomy (research item)  
401 End of Days, Pisces, Aquarius, millennium (research item)  
403 cloisters  
412 Knight of the Realm (research item)  
425 The orb from which Eve partook  
427 The Lord would not take him before his time  
Our Lord is a good and merciful God  
429 St. Mary’s Hospital  
429/430 confession and restitution
432 Rosslyn Chapel, the Cathedral of Codes, Scotland

- Mithraic temple
- Symbols from Jewish, Christian, Egyptian, Masonic, and pagan traditions

434 West Wall of Solomon’s Temple (research item)
- “Line of the Rose”
- Roses as the womb of the goddess (research item)

435 & 446 Star of David (research item)
- Boaz, the Mason’s Pillar; Jachin, the Apprentice Pillar
- Apprentice Freemason, Fellowcraft Freemason, Master Mason
- Rosslyn Trust

445 Blade and Chalice (research item)

446 The Star of David

453 La Pyramide Inversée

Paris and The DaVinci Code
London and The DaVinci Code
Edinburgh and The DaVinci Code

Harsh Criticism: http://answers.org/issues/davincicode.html

Assignment for next class
Post discussion on Blackboard

View The DaVinci Code

Assignment for Exam Class
- Review all materials and THINK about what you have learned from this class.

Final Exam

You may use all of your materials to complete the exam, however, you will need to look over everything in advance so that you do not spend your time searching for answers. The exam is designed to have you think about what you have learned. Your exam is worth 25% of your grade.

Just for fun! (not required)
Uncover the codes on The DaVinci Code jacket cover!
http://www.randomhouse.com/doubleday/davinci/index-ctc.html – “Make the Quest”
If you get really stumped and can’t figure it out, go to http://www.matt-thornton.net/topics.php?topic=14&subcat=99