

# so-glad-you-asked-about-what-we-re-watching

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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## SPEAKERS

Megan Goodwin, Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst

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Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 00:17

This is keeping it one on one a killjoys introduction to religion podcast in 2022 2023 hours in the impossible for UVM Reach grant as well as the Luce AAR advancing public scholarship grant. We're grateful to live teach and record on the current ancestral and unseeded lands of the Abenaki, Wabanaki and Aucocisco peoples and as always looking for material ways to support indigenous communities our website.



Megan Goodwin 00:40

What's up nerds? Hello, I'm Megan Goodwin, a scholar of American religions race and gender and politics.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 00:47

I'm Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst, a historian of religion Islam racialization and South Asia



Megan Goodwin 00:52

All right, so you did a thing and I did a thing. Yes, we are. We are at banter. banter is now now is banter. We're here. I'm queer. And we love TV. Which is why we're so glad you asked us what we're watching. [Why I'm so glad you](#)




Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 01:11


I do really love TV, I know. I've been loving TV my whole damn life. If there is in late 80s ABC soap opera. I probably watched it with my mom. Is there any network TV serial or sitcom from the 90s early 2000s? Great I have lasting opinions and will end you if you share the wrong one


terrible sleep hygiene and have I fallen asleep with the TV since I bought my own VCR TV combo at them nobody needs was in Paramus New Jersey with my own boss mitzvah money. You betcha. And since you asked Yes, indeed, my husband is a saint, because I fall asleep with the TV on every night. And if you shut it off, I will make up. So very fun. But aside from all of that disclosure, why are we talking about my like, second partner or not so secret boyfriend, TV on our religion podcast Megan?


 Megan Goodwin 02:05


Yeah, that's right. **That's right. Three reasons. I know. You know how to love a trilogy.** Okay, so one, it's our podcast and we do what we want, 2) the nerds asked us to talk about it and we love our nerds and then three we both use films and television in our classes so I thought maybe we could each share a few things that we use in our classes about religion on this episode to talk about what we're watching making said episode not just us so glad you asked but also....

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 02:37  
yes

 Megan Goodwin 02:38  
oh yes surely you just did I do not And don't call me Shirley. That's right it's **time for primary sources...** what are we watching?

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 02:57  
you I wanted you to do a full beasties whatchu whatchu watching...

 Megan Goodwin 03:00  
what do you watch you watch what you watch what you watch what you watch. But it was supposed to go first.

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 03:08  
So Megan, whatchu watching?

 Megan Goodwin 03:13  
Whatcha whatcha Terrible trash a lot of trash I watch so much trash. Right now I am watching superstore which I did not expect to like because it seemed wholesome but instead it's secretly about labor politics and also working for a different kinds of Christians, which has been funky.

The episode I just watched, you'll like this Ilyse you're adopted was about the superstore, manager store owner bringing in all of his adopted and foster children to work with him. Yeah, it was both funny and real in some places, which is kind of what I enjoy about the show. So also I just like Garrett, because he's funny and taught the end. I'm a serious scholar, what are you watching?



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 04:01

I'm always watching like at least three or four K dramas, but I won't get into those. Because I feel like it's a niche art audience, but I am and I assume given our audience, the nerds will appreciate that we're in a deep rewatch of The X Files deep.



Megan Goodwin 04:19

I feel like I've really benefited



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 04:20

every day X-files



Megan Goodwin 04:22

I really enjoy and every night X Files update guess what the cult is doing today. Guess who else is in a cult?



04:29

Guess who else died because of a cult ? Is literally the subtitle of X Files. X Files guess who else died because of a cult? Well, Megan and I have to say I had forgotten a I had forgotten how ridiculous the 90s was just like



Megan Goodwin 04:41


a lot very extremely.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 04:43

And number two I had forgotten that every time a religion shows up in this show. It is lethal. It's also confusing because like secularism is also evil in this show and the government is evil so like it's really just evil all the time. Yeah. But the religion being evil is some nonsense. Like there was a Jew episode not that long ago in our watch. I don't know what season we're on everybody, so don't ask, but it's what everyone is a Golem. Like there's like an actual. Yeah, it's like Hasidic Jews from Brooklyn. And they're like, oh my god, someone died. We also like we're


super tied to Prague, which is foreshadowing of the Golem. And then like, they get murdered by Nazis, but then they like, they're the bad guys. They like resurrect the guy and go home. And the whole time is like, um, like everyone's, like, hates the Jews. And you're like, oh, no, he's super anti semitic while also being anti Nazi. It's confusing, because every Jew you see is Hasidic. And it's like, they all speak with an accent like they're from the old country. And I'm like, the dates don't work on this. The dates, they don't work, no work.

 Megan Goodwin 05:51

I mean, it's just, this is the show that also set it's arguably most infamous episode in Pennsylvania, and then it had all of its characters who were inbred.

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 06:04


We really we can't talk about this episode at all. All I'm going

 Megan Goodwin 06:07

to say is that all of the characters in this episode, who are the bad guys who live in Pennsylvania keep talking about the war of Northern aggression and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania fought for the Union. So I just feel like maybe there wasn't a whole lot of fact checking on the X-files so

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 06:22


there's no fact checking. It's ridiculous. There was in one episode, remember when I contacted you late at night about all of the things you hate about cults was in one episode? Like there was literal Kool Aid? There were like, stupid all the white people who are wearing like salwaar kameez, but also turbans, but the women that were bald, but wearing turbans, it was hella confusing. And then like, I mean, who knows? There could have been a magic carpet like who was

 Megan Goodwin 06:54

just some terrible like cult Tumeric smoothie? I don't care for it.

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 06:57

Yeah, yeah. It was like if Orientalism and cults had a baby this episode, yes, no, thank

 Megan Goodwin 07:05

Yes, no thank you



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 07:06

I forgotten that the 90s were filled with religion so what is supposed to be escapist? Is it's somebody's like me yelling at you about more bad 90s religion. But pretty delightful 90s power suits,



Megan Goodwin 07:19

Skully forever the end. But Record scratch.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 07:23

What was that?



Megan Goodwin 07:25

it's the sound of second primary sources primary. Teaching addition, well, I want to know about films or TV. TVs. TVS show that you use in your classroom, we should definitely record at night more often. It's good for me.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 07:43

I've been up for at least 15 hours. Alright. What do I teach in my classroom normally, **I would say without without**, without abandon reckless abandon. I would cop to teaching Sita Sings the Blues whenever I teach a Hinduism class, which isn't super often but regularly enough. But I do want to mention that I literally learned yesterday that the film's creator, Nina Paley, is apparently are raging transphobe. So yep, that's going to asterisk that. But at the same time, Sita Sings the Blues, a really, really great capper to unit I do on multiplicity in the Ramayana, and who's allowed to write new texts about it and things like that. So I do teach that regularly. I just taught this semester, but will now teach it with an asterisk.



Megan Goodwin 08:31


Yeah, sometimes terrible people make good art. And we have to talk about both their terribleness and the art.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 08:37

Yeah. For TV, I do teach Man like Mobine, which is a hilar British comedy by Greg Khan, which is that in Birmingham, which is going there have a full break in a minute. So it's just funny, it's how it's like. I mean, I don't know that I get most of it because I am not from Birmingham. It's delightfully hilarious, and does religion in really interesting ways that are not reductive. And


then I also teach with this really upsetting film called The feeling of being watched by Asiyah Vaughn Dally, who is a Chicago based Muslim, and it really is like, we are surveilled all the time. Here's my experience, trying to get a FOIA federal information, Freedom of Information stuff, trying to get that answered and fulfilled and all the horrifying stuff that happens. It is a tough watch, but my students in Islam and race watch it and write really great essays about it.

 Megan Goodwin 09:47

Okay, I should add that to my class, cuz I'm teaching Islam this semester and also next semester, weird, I will look into that. Thank you.

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 09:57

You're welcome. I teach probably more than that, but I I'm curious magazine, do you do a lot more contemporary things? Famously, there's a lot to talk about when you teach like, say a class on witches about television. Less so when you're talking about like the Mughal empire and I don't wanna make kids watch the like, four hour Bollywood films, which stuff going outward? Who's to stop?

 Megan Goodwin 10:20

It's gonna say you have the tenure use it. I love it. Yeah.

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 10:23

Tell me about what you're teaching. Yeah.

 Megan Goodwin 10:25

So again, through it. Curious and unfortunate series of events, I wound up teaching Islam classes this semester. I had very little time to put them together. So it is fair to say that I have been leaning heavily on media analysis, which is I don't want to make it sound like including media analysis as part of your classwork is not doing real scholarship, because I absolutely believe that it is. But also, there are definitely like more media analysis assignments this semester, because I had to cobble together two classes, from like 12 other classes that I have taught but not put together in these configurations. I'm hedging anyway. So my intro to Islam class, watched Persepolis, early on in the semester, because we had been having an entire conversation about Islam and gender in global contexts. So it actually really set us up nicely for conversations about what's going on in Iran right now, for them to have that history and also to show I think the complexity of Iranian women in a way that we don't often see in movies and film and TV, they get released in the US,

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 11:41

so that I have the tiger scene kills no matter what, yeah, no matter what.

M


Megan Goodwin 11:45

No, it's fantastic. Like it's, it's a genuinely good and funny and enjoyable and heartbreaking movie in a lot of ways. And I would use it even in a non Islam class, but it worked. I thought very well to set up, Hey, Islam, and Islam and gender are way more complicated than you think they are. And also, you are not allowed to talk to me about Iran until you read some more things. Thanks. Thanks, which is I had not anticipated that being quite so necessary this semester. But golly, golly, gosh, gee, it sure was. So I was glad to have done that early on. And then I wanted to close the semester with something kind of fun and funky. So I wanted to talk about Islam and popular culture like you do. And I have spent a lot of time thinking about monsters as listeners of the pod probably already know. So I wanted to do a unit on vampires and Islam because most of the stories that Americans hear about vampires tend to lean pretty heavily Christian. But Sophia Arjana and a number of other scholars have pointed out the ways that these are often also Orientalist stories stories that tell us important things about how we imagined the east and its monsters which just happened to be Jews and Muslims. So that was, important to me to include I am not 100% sure it worked in the way that I would have liked it to. So I had my students read Arjanas monsters Orientalism, they read a piece that I wrote that I will link to in the show notes about a film called Girl Walks home alone at night, which is about an A, it is about a Persian speaking, vampire lady who lives Bad city which might or might not be Tehran, but also Los Angeles. I really love the film because it's dark and moody. And it's brudingl. It feels a little bit like Jim Jarmusch is only lovers left alive. But it also really messes with our our expectations about what Muslim women look like on film. So she's bad. She says she's bad. She does terrible and like morally ambiguous things. She does some good things too, but it's not. She's not a good Muslim and she's not a bad Muslim. She's a monster. And she's way more complicated than most Muslim women get to be on screen again in things that get popularly released in the US. So I liked the film a lot. I'm not sure I would use it in an intro class again because it turns out that first year students are not all super excited about a Jarmushy feeling. Very fine. No, I know. Truly the weirdest I know are not willing to got to decide. You know? So okay, so one place that I feel like I use media really well is my meanings of death class, we start the class after we've done kind of introductions, one of the first things we do is watch this is how I leave you, which is a hilarious movie about sitting Shiva, in upstate New York with a family that is culturally but not particularly religiously Jewish and that dad has died and his final request we're given to understand was that his whole family would come home and sit Shiva and the whole story is just about how much it fucks up your life if you don't sit with your grief, which is not a story we get a lot in non Jewish spaces. And it's just that I mean that the cast is just stacked. So it like starts with Jane Fonda. And like Adam Driver and Connie Britton, like it's just the acting is amazing. It is heartbreaking, but also genuinely funny and silly. And it makes you sit with not just the messiness of grief, but why it's so helpful to have ritual and what it does to have ritualized community support in moments of crisis. And we used it as a reference point throughout the rest of the semester. And I was really glad to include it that so high recommend. The other film that I use in that class that I really love using, although, this was remember how you said that I was the weirdest so my thought was, well, I always teach these like dark, horrible things. What if I include something nice for once? I know it's a meaning of death class, I'll included Coco.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 16:08


You're insane. You watched it for the first time, and you wept. Just like, what do you realize you're taking care of me after surgery? And I was like, I need a new ice pack. And Megan's like, hold up. I have to like ugly cry for the next 25 minutes.

 Megan Goodwin 16:24

That's correct. Yes. Right. So okay, my brain is a little bit like, like, nice, nice with you. You know, it's it's animated and colorful, and it has the songs I know, it's good. When you're not wrong. You're not wrong. You're correct. I know. You're right.

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 16:39


So you teach Coco,

 Megan Goodwin 16:40

and I sure do well, and it's gorgeous. And it also really helps us pull the threads together of like, the dead are not gone. They're still with us how we maintain those relationships through again, ritual practices, and family ties and different kinds of kinship. And it turns out when I was doing some research to be able to help my students think more closely about the film. I wish I had planned this, but I didn't it turns out it's actually a great way to get at a lot of messy political violence under the surface of the film, particularly in the colonial history of Mexico, because how comes the only indigenous presence in that film is a in architecture and be in the land of the dead. Like, even in a movie full of magic. We can't imagine alive native folks in Mexico. And that hurts my soul a lot.

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 16:40

Oh, yeah.

 Megan Goodwin 16:43

But like we had just read we just did all of this Borderlands work we just talked about like it was exactly the thing. It's perfect. It's just, it was not light it was not light it was not like a cute note to go out on. I need supervision

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 17:45

All right, well, so it **sounds like** a big picture here. Pick when when we pick with the right films using classic and really help these big concepts and these heart theorists land and probably if you're in Meghan's class, weep or be haunted for weeks.

 Megan Goodwin 18:05





Megan Goodwin 18:05

That's fine. I didn't even talk about the time I told her the show my students the ring, that fucked em' up good, better than other



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 18:10

episodes, and so I think our our audience is getting a really good picture of you being like, terrifying.



Megan Goodwin 18:18

That's accurate. You should t be afraid. Yeah, yeah. Anyway, I really like using films and TV. In my class. I used to really like having students live tweet films, so that I could see kind of what was landing in real time and they could talk to each other while the film was going on. Ah, but with Twitter being the messages right now that assignment is on hiatus indefinitely. But don't pack up your stuff yet. Nerds. It's time for homework



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 18:45

[Homework?](#) what homework! I don't really have good homework on the crappy TV watch. But if you're looking for pop culture, things, I do have a couple of racks I would say friend of the pod Laurie Silvers seeking mysteries, quartet is one of those things that teaches beautifully is fiction is interesting there's mystery,. That's great. So I would recommend that. And if we're thinking about Muslim representation, Islam and film, global film and religion, Christian Peterson, also a friend of ours is the guy for me. So I'll link to him. And then if you're interested in the other media that I teach in my Islam and race class, I will link some of this. Excellent.



Megan Goodwin 19:29

I mentioned that we talk about the colonial violence and a ratio of native people in Coco in my class. And that is largely driven by a really fantastic post on Latino rebels written by Cervantes Altamirano called Understanding Mexican nationalism and mestizaje. And so we've got a link for that. And I'm going to plug again, the thing that I wrote about girl walks home alone at night for the Mazon project may at rest, because I just think that film is really cool. And there is an article version actually in a volume that Christian edited as well because he is the bee's knees.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 20:05

Shout out to Evie Wolfe, Rachel Zieff and Juliana Finch the KI 101 team for making this pod accessible and therefore awesome and social media-able among many other things for which we are grateful.



Megan Goodwin 20:16

You can find Meghan that's me on Twitter for my @meganhd and I use @meganhd with pod at

you can find Megan that's me on Twitter for now, @mpgpnd, and Ilyse @protirmt with pod at keepingit\_101. Find the website at keepingit101.com. Find us on Insta and now on Tik Tok, drop us a rating or review and your pod catcher of choice. And with that



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 20:37

he's out nerds do your



Megan Goodwin 20:39

homework sounds Elvis?



21:02

I want to tell the story of Jesus from the perspective of a filmmaker exploring the life of Jesus that sounds very appealing to filmmakers. Seeing the filmmakers film Jesus is a filmmaker trying to find God with his camera. But then the filmmaker realizes that he's actually Jesus and he's being filmed by God's camera and it goes like that forever in both directions like a mirror in a mirror because all of the filmmakers are Jesus and all their cameras are God and the movies called all caps