

# Religion & Webinar Teaching Resources/ Study Guides

## Religion & Horror – released October 2022

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8eBu30nxgvA&t=1s>

### Overview:

It is October, the time of year when Americans celebrate Halloween and indulge their fascination with all things haunted, hideous, and horrifying. And what is a common theme in the monster movies and spirit possession thrillers that are so popular this time of year? Religion! Whether we are reading novels by Stephen King, revisiting classic films like *The Exorcist*, or watching new television shows like *Midnight Mass*, religion is everywhere in the horror genre. It is the source of inspiration for many of the characters, plots, and imagery that make horror so compelling. At the same time, many Americans learn about religious people, ideas, and practices through horror. Join us for a thought-provoking discussion with an interdisciplinary panel of experts who will help us understand the enduring power of religion and horror in American popular culture.

### Sources:

#### Books

- [\*The Forbidden Body: Sex, Horror, and the Religious Imagination\* by Douglas Cowan](#)
- [\*Sacred Terror: Religion and Horror on the Silver Screen\* by Douglas Cowan](#)
- [\*Television, Religion and Supernatural: Hunting Monsters and Finding Gods\* by Erika Engstrom](#)
- [\*Religion Across Television Genres\* by Erika Engstrom](#)
- [\*Monsters in America: Our Historical Obsession with the Hideous and Haunting\* by W. Scott Poole](#)
- [\*Dark Carnivals: Modern Horror and The Origins of the American Empire\* by W. Scott Poole](#)

#### Movies and Television Shows

- *The Exorcist*, 1973
- *King Kong*, 1931
- *Supernatural*, 2005-2020
- *Passion of the Christ*, 2004
- *It*, 2017

Other Published Teaching Resources (found on RAAC website):

- Sociology of Religion: Movie Watching and Written Responses
  - o [https://raac.iupui.edu/teaching\\_resources/sociology-of-religion-movie-watching-and-written-responses/](https://raac.iupui.edu/teaching_resources/sociology-of-religion-movie-watching-and-written-responses/)
- Religion, Literature, and Film: Global Pursuits of Meaning
  - o [https://raac.iupui.edu/teaching\\_resources/religion-literature-and-film-global-pursuits-of-meaning/](https://raac.iupui.edu/teaching_resources/religion-literature-and-film-global-pursuits-of-meaning/)

## Teaching Resource 1 – Assignment (Whole Video)

After watching the Religion & Horror video answer the following questions based on the information provided in the video.

1. In what ways do the panelists see the intersection of religion and the horror genre?
2. What are some of the major themes that the panelists mention when talking about how horror and
3. How do religion and horror mix in American culture?
4. After watching the video, what are other examples of religion and horror you can think of?

## Teaching Resource 2 – Assignment (video clip and episode of Supernatural - Netflix)

For this assignment, watch the short clip from the Religion & Horror video, then watch this episode of Supernatural. After watching both and taking notes, answer the following questions.

Clip: 10:00-20:00

Text: *Television, Religion and Supernatural: Hunting Monsters and Finding Gods* by Erika Engstrom

1. What examples of religion do you notice in the episode?
2. Who is the hero? Who/what is the villain? How is the hero able to defeat the villain?
3. After answering the earlier question, how does this example shape our beliefs, understanding or perception of both the heroes and the villain?
4. How does popular culture, like television, shape our understanding of religions?

