

Name _____

WORLD RELIGION...PHILOSOPHY...STAR WARS? YES! YES! STAR WARS!!!



Philosophy is the study of general and fundamental problems concerning matters such as existence, knowledge, values, reason, mind, and language...

Religion is the belief in and worship of a superhuman controlling power, especially a personal God or gods.

Mythology is a collection of myths, especially one belonging to a particular religious or cultural tradition.

All three definitions above have been *very* important in our discussions of the Renaissance, Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism. *Now*, we are going to *apply* what you have learned about these social studies themes to one of the ALL-TIME GREATEST MOVIES EVER: STAR WARS!!! "Mr.

*Barry, I don't like Star Wars. Mr. Barry, I don't know anything about Star Wars. Mr. Barry, I hate Star Wars"... That's what **YOU** sound like. Don't fret, you don't *need* to know anything about Star Wars right now. You will *learn* about it NOW!...*

Star Wars is an American film series that tells the story about characters who live "a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away." Star Wars is also the story of many different worlds. There are humans, humanoids, droids or robots, aliens, and other life forms in these galaxies. Star Wars is also a story that tells tales of philosophy, courage, determination, courage, redemption, and religion. There are many inferences made throughout the Star Wars saga with relations to religion. The religion(s) most often associated with Star Wars are Buddhism and Christianity.

We are watching the movie *The Empire Strikes Back*, which has a TON of symbolism of philosophy and world religious beliefs. For the next two class periods, we are going to watch *The Empire Strikes Back* and answer some questions about what we have learned about religion and philosophy and use that information to understand this film.

Q's you need to answer during the film. Please write your answers in complete sentences. The more details the merrier please. Think and reflect on ALLLLLLL the things we have covered in our World Religions Unit: Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam.

Christianity:

1. How does the film portray Luke and/or Darth Vader as a "Jesus-like figure"?
2. The storm troopers (guys in white armor) who follow Darth Vader can be compared to what group of people who are also "followers"?

Buddhism

1. How are some Buddhist teachings/beliefs illustrated in the film?
2. What is "The Force" and how can it relate to Buddhism?
3. **Anatma:** *The self is always changing.* Buddhism assumes there is no permanent "self" and that a person is always changing. How does Luke experience Anatma in the film?
4. Siddhartha Buddha sat day and night for weeks on end in meditation. One night after meditation he felt a force awaken inside of him. From that day forward he was known as **Buddha -- the Awakened One**. Who is a character in the movie that experiences something similar to this and how does he become "awakened" like the Buddha?
5. The Jedi live in a simple world where they "want" nothing like those of Buddhist monks. They wear a simple robe, have a simple weapon - a lightsaber - and their only objective is to protect the galaxy from evil. Who is a character in the film who best represents this kind of figure and how is this the case and what else makes him similar to a follower of Buddhism?
6. **Dukkha:** Life is painful and causes suffering. As we know Siddhartha (the Buddha) wanted to *end* his suffering. He tried to end his suffering through meditation. The heart of the Buddha's way is the teaching of the Four Noble Truths as we've already examined. In order to achieve the fourth noble truth: the end of suffering, one must follow the Eightfold-Path. What in the film is something similar to what was just explained above?
7. Buddhists believe, much like Hindus, that our body is not permanent. Buddhism asserts that everything is impermanent, but that the soul follows a cycle. **Samsara**, meaning wandering or world, refers to a theory of rebirth and the cyclical nature of all life, matter, existence. What scene illustrates this belief?

What other Christian/Buddhist/Hindu symbolism did you find in the film?