

Comparison of World Religions

Ritual Architecture, Ritual Spaces

Religious Studies 102 – 002

Spring 2016

Basic Information

Class Days & Times: MWF – 2:30pm - 3:20pm

Location: BGB 301

Instructor: Dr. Samuel Avery-Quinn

Office Hours: (in person) MWF – 1:00pm - 2:00pm

(virtual – Google Hangouts) MW -- 4:00pm – 5:00pm

for other times, please contact me.

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Course Description

From the Upper Paleolithic (17,000 years ago) caves of Lascaux in southern France, to 4,000 year old Minoan peak sanctuaries on the island of Crete, to the cathedral of Notre Dame, to rural camp meeting revivals in the hills of Tennessee, to cinder block Pentecostal churches on the coast of Ghana, to the design of an Islamic Community Center in Lower Manhattan, humans have sought the "Divine" in a great variety of spaces.

For some, these spaces are theaters of memory, intimately

connected to ancestors and homeland — such as the sacred mountains of the Navajo bounding the mythic landscape onto which the Navajo emerged from the Underworld. For others, sacred spaces are set apart from the world, reflecting in their design the glory of the Creator, if not that Creator's rules for proper conduct of religious ceremonies - Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem, or the Prophet Abraham's Kaaba in Mecca. In each space, architecture mediates human action, restricts how the space is entered, how it is exited, who may pray or worship within it, and what meanings they may see in the design and decoration of that place. Sacred spaces become a conduit, a medium for ritualistic communication between human and Divine, reinforcing deep cultural meanings.

This class explores how humans have, through ritual and the design and deployment of religious objects, transformed profane spaces into sacred places. Together we will explore the connections between rituals, the built environments, and landscapes of four of the world's many religious traditions: Buddhism, Catholicism, and Islam. Through lectures, documentaries, and class discussion we will explore the sacred spaces of these traditions, reflection the sacred spaces in our own lives, our society, and across cultures and time periods.

Required Texts

Textbook: Living Religions, 8th Edition.

Mary Pat Fisher (2011).

ISBN-10: 0205835856.

Amazon List Price: \$11.00 (rental)

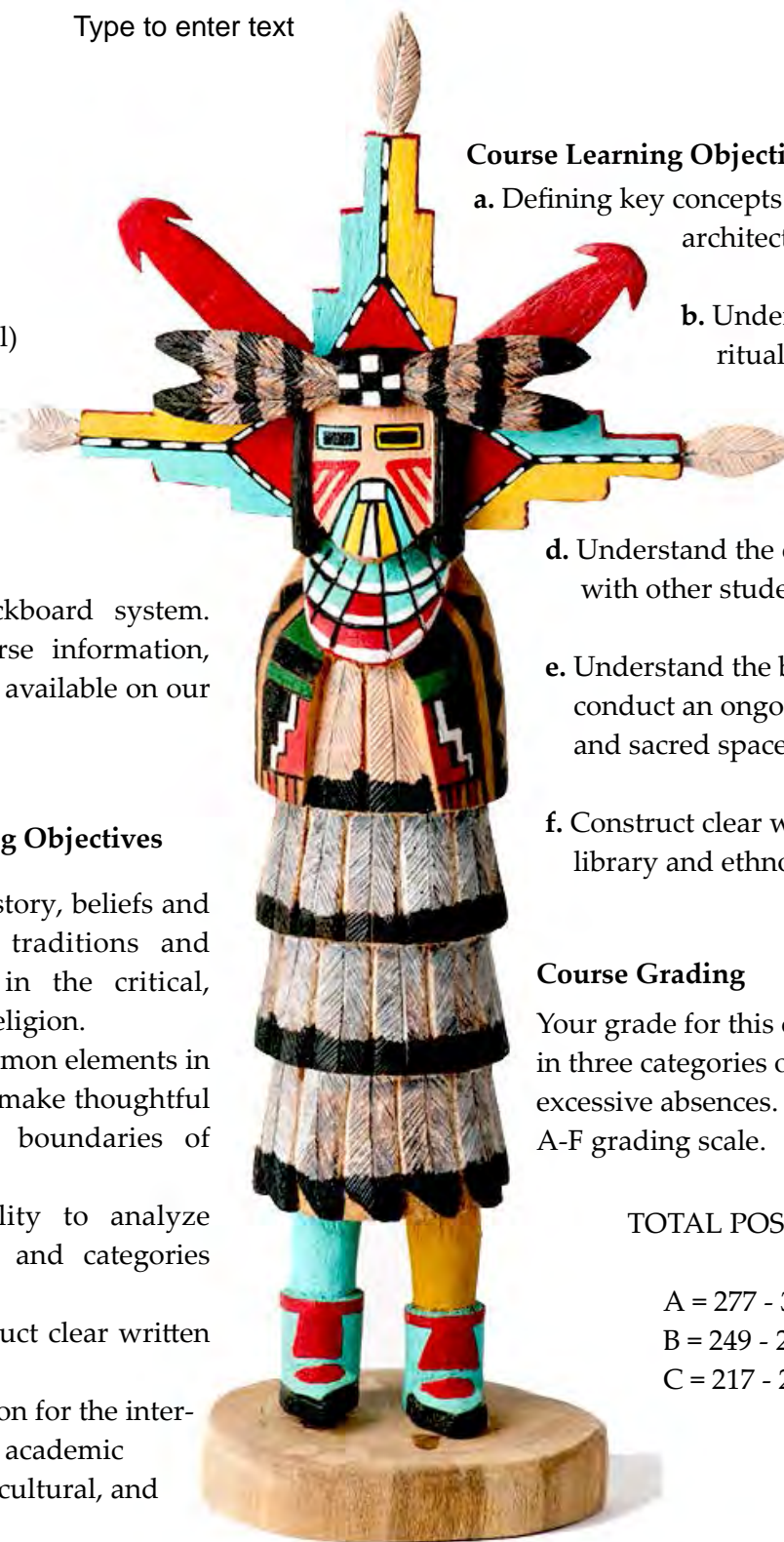
All other course readings are available in PDF format on our Blackboard site.

Required Texts

This course uses the University's Blackboard system. Copies of this syllabus, important course information, forums, calendar, and course readings are available on our course site.

Department of Religious Studies Learning Objectives

- a. Students will have knowledge of the history, beliefs and practices of three or more religious traditions and methodological and theoretical skills in the critical, comparative, and cross-cultural study of religion.
- b. Students will have an awareness of common elements in religious phenomena that enable them to make thoughtful comparisons and contrasts across the boundaries of religious traditions.
- c. Students will demonstrate the ability to analyze religious phenomena and the methods and categories through which they are studied.
- d. Students will have the ability to construct clear written (and oral) arguments.
- e. Students will demonstrate an appreciation for the intersections of the study of religion with other academic disciplines, as well as with broader social, cultural, and political phenomena.



Course Learning Objectives

- a. Defining key concepts in the comparative study of sacred architecture, landscapes, and ritual.
- b. Understand how architecture, landscape, and ritual shape each other.
- c. Compare and contrast architectural and landscape design among several of the world's religious traditions.
- d. Understand the contextual study of ritual and collaborate with other students in researching a ritual practice.
- e. Understand the basic elements of ethnography and conduct an ongoing ethnographic field study of the ritual and sacred space of one house of worship in the local area
- f. Construct clear written and oral arguments based on both library and ethnographic field research.

Course Grading

Your grade for this course will be based on points earned in three categories of assignments, minus points lost for excessive absences. Course grades will be assigned using an A-F grading scale.

TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS: 300

A = 277 - 300; A- = 268 - 276; B+ 262 - 267;
B = 249 - 261; B- = 238 - 248; C+ = 232 - 237;
C = 217 - 231; D = 207 - 216; F < 207

Exams

This course includes three exams scheduled for February 4, April 2, and May 9 (our final exam day). Exams are multiple choice and identification. Exams 1 and 2 are not necessarily cumulative, but will presuppose you have retained some knowledge of material covered in previous exams. Exam 3 is a comprehensive final exam. Exams are designed as the quantitative component of our course, assessing your knowledge gained from course lectures, readings, and conversations. To help you focus on what I think has been important in our time together, I will post an “IDEAS BOARD” forum on Blackboard. Our “IDEAS BOARD” will include key concepts, movements, events, theological notions, and individuals from class lectures, readings, films, and discussions. The board will be updated weekly, and should be a point of comparison with your own class and readings notes.

Exams will be worth 50 points each.

Make-up exams will only be available to students who contact me, via email, within one week of an exam date. Students requesting a make-up exam must provide paperwork substantiating their excused absence (ie. a doctor’s note, a court summons, ticket stubs for air travel, etc.). Make-up exams will be scheduled based on my availability. All make-up exams will be essay exams.

Ritual Analysis Presentation

The first of two course projects this semester is a contextual analysis of a religious ritual. The analysis will rely on internet and library research into the historical, social, and theological context of a ritual practice you select for study. Together with one to two classmates, your research will address a series of questions about your selected ritual. Using online photographic and video sources, your team

will prepare a ten to fifteen minute presentation exploring your selected ritual. Your team will video-tape your presentation and submit a digital copy. A detailed assignment guide will be posted to Blackboard. The presentation will count for 50 points of your course grade.



House of Worship Analysis

The second of two course projects this semester is an ethnographic research project immersing you in a local house of worship. During the semester you will have three occasions to visit your selected house of worship. On these visits you will hone your skills of ethnographic observation, detail the flow of liturgy/ritual, and interpret the connections between architectural and interior design and the liturgical/ritual practices and social interaction that occur within the space. At each step in the process you will take ethnographic field notes. Your field notes will be the subject of three of our classes this semester. At the end of the semester you will write up your notes into an interpretive essay. A detailed assignment guide will be posted to Blackboard. This analysis will be worth 100 points.

Communicating with Instructor

Other than approaching me before or after class, or stopping by my office hours, the most effective means of communicating with me is by email. Under normal circumstances, if you contact me by email between 6am and 10pm on a weeknight, I will usually respond to your email within one (1) hour. If you email me and do not have a response within one day, please resend your message and I will respond promptly.





Attendance

I expect you to attend every class session. You are allowed three (3) unexcused absences, and three (3) excused absences, but cannot exceed a total of four (4) absences combined. Upon the fourth unexcused absence, or the fifth absence (if 3 are excused), and for each subsequent absence, students will have their course grade reduced by the point value of one-half of a letter grade. Excused absences mean either providing medical or legal documentation of your absence, or communicating with your instructor before or within 24 hours of your missed class. Attendance will be taken via sign-in sheets distributed each class session.

Academic Honesty & Plagiarism

I expect you to be familiar with University policies on academic honesty discussed in *Hilltopics*. Academic honesty is part of the work of developing personal integrity, one of the key dimensions of personal growth you should strive for in your college years. While I expect academic honesty in all your work in this course, avoiding plagiarism is particularly important.

Plagiarism is using the intellectual property or product of someone else without giving proper credit. The undocumented use of someone else's words or ideas in any medium of communication (unless such information is recognized as common knowledge, or is the result of your direct and unique reflection on a subject) is a serious offense, subject to disciplinary action that may include failure in this course and /or disciplinary action by the University.

University of Tennessee Student Honor Statement:

"An essential feature of The University of Tennessee is a commitment to maintaining an atmosphere of intellectual integrity and academic honesty. As a student of the University, I pledge that I will neither knowingly give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, thus affirming my own personal commitment to honor and integrity."

University Services and Policies

You should refer to *Hilltopics* for all general policies governing your role as a student taking part in a University of Tennessee course. Information on academic support, civility, counseling services, and assistance for students with disabilities is posted as the “Campus Syllabus” on our Blackboard course website.

Classroom Behavior

I expect you to behave appropriately for an academic environment. Opinions, questions, and concerns should be freely shared. To promote a successful learning environment, discussion of course material should be conducted with mutual respect.

(1) Laptops/tablets: Laptop use is permitted during lectures for note-taking. Unless otherwise indicated, no laptops/tablets should be in use during non-lecture sessions.

(2) Cell phones: You don't need to turn your phone off during class, however, no calls or texts, short of demonstrable emergencies should be made during class time. All cell phones must be put away (not on your desk, not on your lap) during the class session. If I have to make more than one request for your cell phone to be put away during the semester, you will receive an unexcused absence for each subsequent time I have to interrupt class to make such a request.

Religious Observances

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If your observance of a religious holiday or ritual occasion requires missing a class, please make arrangements with me prior to that class day. Days missed for religious observances do not count towards your absences, but should not be frequent.



Schedule

Key:

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- Theme: period covered by subsequent classes
 - Topic: focus for class day
 - [L] = lecture most of class; [D] = discussion most of class; [A] = activity most of class
 - Readings: Should be completed by class time on scheduled date.
 - LR = Mary Pat Fisher Living Religions, 8th Edition (2011)
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SCHEDULE CHANGES: This schedule is subject to change. Changes in the schedule will be announced in class, by email, and posted to Blackboard. Be sure to check the schedule posted on Blackboard for up-to-date information.

Introduction

1/13 - Wed. First Day

Course Introduction

Readings: Syllabus

1/15 - Fri.

LECTURE: Religion, Material Culture, and Spatiality

Readings: LR Chapter 1

1/18 - Mon. MLK DAY — No Class.

Ritual

1/20 - Wed.

LECTURE: Introducing Ritual

Readings:

Catherine Bell "Characteristics of Ritual-Like Activities" from *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*

1/22 - Fri.

WORKSHOP/PRESENTATION: Constructing a Basic Typology of Ritual

Readings:

Catherine Bell "Basic Genres of Ritual Action" from *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*

1/25 - Mon.

WORKSHOP: Library Research & Ritual Presentations

1/27 - Wed.

WORKSHOP: Ritual Bodies - dressed and masked

Readings:

Ronald Grimes "Mapping the Field of Ritual" from *Beginnings in Ritual Studies*

1/29 - Fri.

WORKSHOP: Ritual Objects

Readings:

Ronald Grimes "Mapping the Field of Ritual" from *Beginnings in Ritual Studies*

2/1 - Mon.

WORKSHOP: Ritual Space

Readings:

Ronald Grimes "Mapping the Field of Ritual" from *Beginnings in Ritual Studies*
Caroline Humphrey and Piers Vitebsk "Ritual and Ceremony" from *Sacred Architecture: Symbolic Forms and Ornament*

2/3 - Wed.

House of Worship Analysis Discussion 1: Reflection on initial visits

Architecture

2/5 - Fri.

LECTURE: How to Read Architecture

Readings:

Watch "How to Architect" videos on Blackboard
Andrew Ballantyne "Buildings have meaning" from *Architecture: A Very Short Introduction*.

2/8 - Mon.

LECTURE: Architecture and Religious Experience

Readings:

A. T. Mann "Introduction" from *Sacred Architecture*.
Thomas Barrie "The Middle Ground of Interpretation" from *The Sacred In-Between: The Mediating Roles of Architecture*.

2/10 - Wed.

WORKSHOP/PRESENTATION: Symbolic Architecture I: Architecture and the Cosmos

Readings:

Caroline Humphrey and Piers Vitebsky "Architecture and the Cosmos" from *Sacred Architecture: Symbolic Forms and Ornament*

2/12 - Fri.

WORKSHOP/PRESENTATION: Symbolic Architecture II: Sacred Symbols in Architecture

Readings:

Thomas Barrie "Mediating Elements" from *The Sacred In-Between: The Mediating Roles of Architecture*.

2/15 - Mon.

WORKSHOP/PRESENTATION: Boundaries, Thresholds, and the Centre

Readings:

Caroline Humphrey and Piers Vitebsky "Boundaries, Thresholds, and the Centre" from *Sacred Architecture: Symbolic Forms and Ornament*.

2/17 - Wed.

EXAM 1

Catholic Spaces

2/19 - Fri.

LECTURE: Catholicism, History and Spatiality - I

Readings:

LR Chapter 9

2/22 - Mon.

LECTURE: Catholicism, History and Spatiality - II

Readings:

Lawrence Cunningham "Catholicism in Place and Time"

2/24 - Wed.

LECTURE: Cathedrals, Theology in "Living Stone"

Readings:

selections from Robert Scott *The Gothic Enterprise: A Guide to Understanding the Medieval Cathedral*

2/26 - Fri.

DOCUMENTARY: "Building the Great Cathedrals" (2010)

2/29 - Mon.

PRESENTATION: The Second Vatican Council

Readings:

James O'Toole "The Church of Vatican II" from *The Faithful: A History of Catholics in America*.

3/2 - Wed.

WORKSHOP/PRESENTATION: *Domus Ecclesiae*,

Modernism and Post-Conciliar Church Architecture

Readings:

Steven Schloeder "An Architectural Response to Vatican II" from *Architecture in Communion: Implementing the Second Vatican Council through Liturgy and Architecture*.

3/4 - Fri. NO CLASS. SECSOR Meeting, Atlanta, GA.

3/7 - Mon.

LECTURE: *Domus Dei et Porta Coeli*, Neo-Traditionalist Catholic Architecture

Readings:

Duncan Stroik "The Church as a Sacred Place"

US Conference of Catholic Bishops "Built of Living Stones"

3/9 - Wed.

House of Worship Analysis Discussion 2: Reflection on the flow of liturgy and ritual.

RITUAL PRESENTATIONS DUE.

3/11 - Fri. NO CLASS - Research Trip, United Methodist Archives & History Center, Madison, NJ.

3/14 - 3/18. NO CLASS - SPRING BREAK

Buddhist Spaces

3/21 - Mon.

LECTURE: Buddhism, History and Spatiality

Readings:

LR Chapter 5

3/23 - Wed.

LECTURE: Development of Buddhist Philosophies - Theravada and Mahāyāna.

Readings:

selections from Peter Harvey "Early Developments in Buddhism" and "Mahāyāna Philosophies" from *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and Practices*.

3/25 - Fri. NO CLASS — SPRING RECESS

3/28 - Mon.

LECTURE: Buddhist Monastic Architecture

Readings:

selections from Robert Fisher *Buddhist Art and Architecture*

3/30 - Wed.

WORKSHOP/PRESENTATION: Reading stupas and the Mahābodhi Temple at Bodhgaya

selections from Robert Fisher *Buddhist Art and Architecture*

Joe Cummings and Bill Wassman *Buddhist Stupas in Asia: The Shape of Perfection.*

4/1 - Fri.

WORKSHOP/PRESENTATION: Mandala of the Cosmic Buddha: Reading Borobudur

Readings:

Julie Gifford "Borobudur: monumental manadal and bodhisattva path" from *Buddhist Practice and Visual Culture: The visual Rhetoric of Borobudur.*

4/4 - Mon.

WORKSHOP/PRESENTATION: Zen Buddhism and Architecture in Japan

Readings:

TBA

4/6 - Wed.

Exam 2

Muslim Spaces

4/8 - Fri.

LECTURE: Islam, History and Spatiality I

Readings:

LR Chapter 10

Reza Aslan "The Sanctuary in the Desert" and "The Keeper of the Keys" from *No god but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam* [long reading, but worthwhile]

4/11 - Mon.

LECTURE: Islam, History and Spatiality II

Readings:

Paul Grieve "The Fundamentals of the Faith" from *A Brief Guide to Islam: History, Faith, and Politics.*

Carl Ernst *Sufism: An Introduction to the Mystical Tradition of Islam.*

4/13 - Wed.

LECTURE: Classical Islamic Architecture

4/15 - Fri.

DOCUMENTARY: "Paradise Found: Islamic Architecture and Arts" (2006)

4/20 - Wed.

WORKSHOP/PRESENTATION: Contemporary Islamic Architecture in the West

Readings

Michael Badu "The Mosque"

Elizabeth Dickinson "Contemporary Mosque: Placing Worship"

4/22 - Fri.

PRESENTATION: Women and the American Mosque. Begin watching "The Mosque in Morgantown"

Readings:

selections from Sarah Sayeed, Aisha Al-Adawiya, and Ihsan Bagby "Women and the American Mosque"

4/25 - Mon.

DOCUMENTARY: "The Mosque in Morgantown" (2009)

4/27 - Wed.

LECTURE: Mosques and America after 9/11

4/29 - Fri.

DOCUMENTARY: "Unwelcome: The Muslims Next Door" (2011)

Final Exam: 5/4 - Wed. 2:45-4:45