

Pilgrimage and Sacred Space

RELS 482/HUMN 400

Butte 325

Wednesdays 7:00—9:50 PM

Instructor:

Sarah Pike

Trinity 231

x-6341

Office hours: **Wed. 1-3 and Thurs. 2-4** and by appointment

• Course Description •

This seminar will explore the various meanings of pilgrimage and sacred space in some of the world's religious traditions. What qualities make a space sacred? What are the various activities, intentions, built structures and natural environments that shape sacred space? Is sacred space something humanly constructed or essentially sacred on its own? What social factors shape the pilgrimage experience and in what ways is that experience transformative, or not, for participants? These are some of the questions we will explore in the course. Course topics will include shrines and altars, memorials, temples and cathedrals, and specific pilgrimages in Christian, Hindu, Native American and Muslim religions. We will pay close attention to similarities in pilgrimage and sacred space across religious traditions and political boundaries as well as unique manifestations of sacred space and pilgrimage within specific religious worlds.

• Course Texts •

Timothy Beal, *Roadside Religion*

Ken Butigan, *Pilgrimage Through a Burning World*

Diana Eck, *Banaras: City of Light*

Michael Wolfe, *The Hadj*

Other readings will be available on electronic reserve

• Course Requirements and Grading •

PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE:

This class will be taught as a seminar, so your participation and attendance are essential. You should read assignments carefully and come to each class with written comments and questions about the readings. Absences will only be excused in the case of medical, family or other emergencies (20%).

READING ASSIGNMENTS:

1) Every week you will turn in a two-page response to the readings or take a short quiz on the readings at the beginning of class, as noted in the syllabus.

Your responses should be typed double-spaced and should not exceed two pages. This should not be a summary, rather you should react to the readings by developing one or two ideas. What issue(s) does the reading raise for you? Do you agree or disagree with

the author's perspective? Why or why not? Your response should focus on one or two central issues, but you should try to make specific references to the texts and incorporate brief quotes with page numbers into your response (20% for response papers and 15% for quizzes).

STUDENT PRESENTATIONS:

One or two students will facilitate class discussion each week. You will start the class off by introducing what you see as the significant issues for the week's readings. You must also bring in information on the topic of the week to supplement assigned readings. This supplementary information could consist of your comments on an article or book about the topic, a guest speaker, a video, or a survey of World Wide Web sites about your topic. You will also be responsible for getting the discussion going with provocative questions about the readings. Feel free to bring in audio-visual aids and customize your class session in any way you like (10%).

RESEARCH PAPER:

Each student will pursue a research topic throughout the course, resulting in a 12-15 page paper. You must use at least **four books or articles including at least one primary source**, at least **one type of "field work,"** if appropriate to your topic, such as a visit to a church or temple, a telephone interview, participation in an event, etc. and at least **one electronic** source such as a website.

--Two page description of your topic with bibliography of primary and secondary sources. For ethnographic research projects your primary sources can be individuals, groups or communities. Due on **September 14**

--Annotated bibliography due **October 19** (5%)

--First draft of research paper due in class on **November 9**. Drafts will be exchanged with another member of the seminar and you will read and write up comments and suggestions on each other's papers which you will also share with me. Comments will be due on (5%).

--20 minute class presentation on your topic, to be scheduled during the semester at an appropriate time or in the last few weeks (10%)

--Final paper due on **December 16** (15%).

Note to students with certified disabilities: Please notify me of any special needs relating to your disability within the first two weeks of the semester. I will make every effort to facilitate your success in this course. Please note that you may be required to show documentation of your disability.

Some recommended topics: street/ethnic festivals, Mt. Shasta, American Indian sites (such as the Black Hills), specific altar traditions (such as the Days of the Dead), specific pilgrimage traditions (such as Japanese pilgrimage to Mt. Fuji), European cathedrals, paradise/heaven, battlefields, shrines in specific religious traditions (such as Shinto), cemeteries, Buddhist stupas, Jerusalem, protest marches/sites, memorials (9/11, Oklahoma City, Vietnam, Civil War), Hindu

temples, Israel as promised land, Marian apparition sites/pilgrimages, Elvis's home Graceland, the Internet as sacred space (online memorial sites, rituals, etc.)

Course Calendar

Topics, Readings and Films

August 24, Introduction to the course

FILM: "In the Light of Reverence"

August 31, American Indian sacred sites

Readings: Belden Lane, "Axioms for the Study of Sacred Space" and "Seeking a Sacred Center: Places and Themes in Native American Spirituality"

In-class quiz

FILM: "Dance to Souls Departed: Wounded Knee"

September 7, Sacred Cities

In-class quiz

Readings: Diana Eck, *Banaras*, Intro and Chap. 3

FILM: "330 Million Gods"

September 14, Temples and shrines

Readings: Diana Eck, *Banaras*, Chaps. 5-9

Reading response due

FILM: "Shinto: Nature, God and Man in Japan"

Paper topic proposal due

September 21, Altars

Readings: David Brown, "Altared Spaces: Afro-Cuban Religions and the Urban Landscapes in Cuba and the United States"

In-class quiz

FILM: "La Ofrenda"

September 28, Memorials and battlefields

Readings: Jill Dubisch, "Heartland of America: Memory, Motion and the Reconstruction of History on a Motorcycle Pilgrimage"

Response paper due

October 5, Hiroshima and other disaster sites

Readings: Ken Butigan, *Pilgrimage Through a Burning World*

In-class quiz

October 12, Protests and street theatre

Readings: finish Butigan

Response paper due

October 19 Theories of pilgrimage

Readings: Victor Turner, "Pilgrimage as a Liminoid Phenomenon" and Simon Coleman and John Eade, "Reframing Pilgrimage"

In-class quiz

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE

FILM: "Flowers for Guadalupe"

October 26, Case study: pilgrimage to Chimayo

Readings: Paula Holmes-Rodman, "They Told What Happened on the Road" and Michael Wolfe: *The Hadj*, 3-105

In-class quiz

FILM: "The Shrine"

November 2, Case study: the Hadj

Readings: Finish Wolfe

Response paper due

FILM: Spike Lee's "X"

November 9, Festivals

Readings: Pike, "Desert Goddesses and Apocalyptic Art; Making Sacred Space at the Burning Man Festival"

In-class quiz

ROUGH DRAFT DUE

FILM: "Burning Man" and "The Burning Times"

November 16, Sacred space and popular culture

Readings: Timothy Beal, *Roadside Religion*

COMMENTS DUE ON COLLEAGUE'S PAPER

THANKSGIVING

November 30, Student presentations

Readings: finish *Roadside Religion*

Response paper due

December 7, Student presentations

FINAL PAPER DUE by December 16 (Friday of finals week)