

"We shall not cease from exploration/And the end of all our exploring/Will be to arrive where we started/And know the place for the first time."
— T.S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*

FROM JERUSALEM TO GROUND ZERO: MUSLIM, JEWISH, CHRISTIAN, SIOUX, AND HINDU NOTIONS OF "SACREDNESS"

• RELI 291 •

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spring 2019
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Office hours:
Tues 10-11 am
Weds 3-4 pm
& by appointment

This course endeavors:

- (1) To investigate religion as a phenomenon;
- (2) To explore the meaning of "sacredness" & "the sacred"
and question their comparative use in non-English, non-Christian cultures;
- (3) To understand more about specific religious communities & their worldviews.

Please read each day's material in the order indicated, prepare a response to the focus question, and (once a week) provide a journal entry

A beginning

- Jan 24 Welcome
 Order reader
- Jan 29 Moodle: Jerusalem intro
 Moodle: Associated Press, "Clashes at Jerusalem holy site for third straight day"
 Moodle: Zahriyeh, "Who Owns Jerusalem?"
 Moodle: glossary for Inbari reading
 Moodle: Inbari, "Religious Zionism and the Temple Mount Dilemma-Key Trends"

• • • PLACE • • •

Jewish Jerusalem

- Jan 31 Reader: Kunin, ch "Biblical Sacred Space"
 Online: Exodus 3.1-12; Exodus 40.1-15; Deuteronomy 12.1-19
 • <http://nocr.net/bexpo/english/engtnk/index.php>
 In class: The (missing) Temple
- Feb 5 Reader: Kunin, chs "Rabbinic Sacred Space" & "Modern Jewish Sacred Space"
- Feb 7 Reader: Kunin, ch "Pilgrimage" ®

• • • EXPERIENCE • • •

"Sacred" and the Non-Rational

- Feb 12 Otto, chs I-II, IV-VI
- Weds, Feb 13 @ 4.30 pm • Required talk – Jeff Kripal, "Biological Gods: UFOs, Science (Fiction), and Some Emergent Mythologies" • PAC 002

Feb 14 Otto, chs VII-IX, XXI ®

Feb 19 Reader: Orsi, "The Problem of the Holy" ®
Reader: Ann Taves, "Special Things as Building Blocks of Religions" ®

• • • PLACE, AGAIN • • •

Christian Jerusalem

Feb 21 >>> **Meet outside Wesleyan chapel** <<<
Reader: Robb & Garrison, "Architecture of the Early Middle Ages"
Reader: Francis Ching, from *Architecture: Form, Space, & Order*
Moodle: Church of the Holy Sepulchre

Feb 26 *No class due to conference*

Feb 28 *No class due to conference*
Analytic paper no. 1 due

Mar 5 Reader: Peters, pp 132-139, 143-145, 173-175, 204-209, 251-260, 268-269, 281-290, 340-343 ®

Modes of Making ("Sacred") Place

Mar 7 Smith, ch 1 (yeah, that's right, only one chapter) ®

Mar 9-24 Spring Break: yeeeeeeeeee-haaaaaaa!

Mar 26 Smith, chs 2-3 ®
Online: Ezekiel 40-46 • <http://nocr.net/bexpo/english/engtnk/index.php>

Mar 28 Smith, chs 4-5 ®
Analytic paper no. 2 due

Examining Secular Assumptions

Apr 2 Reader: Asad's "What Might an Anthropology of Secularism Look Like?" ®

Al-Haram al-Sharif: The Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa

Apr 4 Reader: Peters, pp 186-199, 248-249, 348-353
Reader: Rabbat, "The Meaning of the Umayyad Dome of the Rock" ®
Moodle: al-Aqsa Mosque & Dome of the Rock

Apr 9 Reader: Reinhart, "Impurity/No Danger" ®
Analytic paper no. 3 due

• • • DIVINE PRESENCE • • •

Hindu temples

Apr 11 Eck, chs 1-2b ®

Apr 16 Eck, chs 2c-Afterword ®

RAW paper thesis, outline, & bibliography due

Apr 18 Moodle: Srirangapatnam temple, Karnataka • Temple visit?
Reader: Srinivasan, "Padyatra" ®
Reader: Michell from *The Hindu Temple* ®

• • • HUMAN BODIES & BODIES OF LAND • • •

Lakota: Recognizing "sacred lands" and shamans

Apr 23 Reader: from John Neihardt with Black Elk, *The Sixth Grandfather* ®

Apr 25 Reader: Deloria, "Sacred Lands and Religious Freedom" ®
Reader: Crow Dog, "Cankpe Opi Wakpala," "The Siege," & "The Ghosts Return"

Apr 30 Reader: Holy, "The Heart of Everything That Is: Paha Sapa, Treaties, and Lakota Identity" ®
Reader: Sundstrom, "*Fools Crow versus Gullett: A Critical Analysis of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act*" ®

• • • THE NATION & CIVIL RELIGION • • •

Ground Zero

May 2 Reader: Bellah, "Civil Religion in America" ®
Reader: Glass, "'Alexanders All': Symbols of Conquest and Resistance at Mount Rushmore" ®
Online: Pamela Geller – <http://pamelageller.com/category/ground-zero-mega-mosque-takbir/page/28/> – NOTE: Read earliest blogs first
Online: Andrea Peyser, "Mosque Madness at Ground Zero" -
http://www.nypost.com/p/news/national/mosque_madness_at_ground_zero_OQ34EB0MWS0IXuAnQau5uL

May 7 Moodle: Memorial tour
Online: Museum tour
<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/05/14/arts/design/September-11-Memorial-Museum.html>
Moodle: Museum details

• • • IS NOTHING "SACRED"? • • •

Thursday, May 16 • 9 am: RAW papers due

• **2-5 pm:** Discussion of this, other scintillating questions, and, oh yeah, student presentations.

Required texts

Diana L. Eck, *Darshan: Seeing the Divine Image in India* (3rd Edition) (978-0231112659)

Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (0-19-500210-5)

Jonathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (978-0226763613)

Reader: available for order through your portfolio

Our Learning Community

We endeavor to create a **learning community** in which you discuss the issues that are of concern to you and hear those of others, even as we all share our questions. **Class attendance is mandatory and students are expected to be punctual and participate** in discussions. In addition, each student will participate in one small group discussion with the professor. Students who plan to miss class due to a religious holiday must notify the professor two weeks in advance.

*Your participation grade relies heavily on your **familiarity with the readings & your insightful, critical engagement with them & the other content shared in the seminar.***

Classroom etiquette

Our time together is an opportunity to forge an environment and community of learning. The more focused and respectful we are of that time and place, the more intense our experience and the greater the possibilities for discovery. To that end, please observe the following courtesies during class.

- **Disagree** with your classmates and professor, but **do not disrespect** anyone.
- Have **no communication with anyone outside** of class during class.
- Go to the **bathroom before class**: folks coming and going disrupt others.
- If you're loquacious, **be mindful** of allowing others the chance to speak; if you're the strong silent type, **rise to the occasion** of helping carry the conversation.

Reflective journal

Each student once a week will submit **by 10 pm the evening before class** three to six sentences (only!) regarding that day's reading **that references specific parts of the reading (include page numbers)**. The first two sentences will offer an analytic observation about the reading. The third will be **one analytic question regarding the reading**. These will be submitted on Moodle and assessed according to the seriousness and intention given to them.

Grades are as follows: 0 – not completed; 1- insufficient effort or unclear meaning; 2- sufficient; 3 – demonstrative of refined critical and/or integrative thinking.

Note: Critical analysis is not just the act of criticizing (although it can lead to this). Rather, it is the methodical application of theoretical tools in order to see more in a text than the text explicitly states.

Reading Analysis Presentation

Each student will help begin conversation on a reading of his choice with one prepared, 5-minute presentation that offers **critical** insights into the reading relative to at least one other

reading we have completed. **Not a boring summary** of what we've all read, this **uses our previous readings and discussion as well as your own insights** to say something about the reading that it doesn't explicitly say itself. See this as an opportunity to prepare for the final research presentation, the grade for which counts for 10% of the final grade.

*Your presentation grade relies heavily on your **familiarity with the readings & your insightful, critical engagement** with them & the other content shared in the seminar. It also relies on your **thoughtful effort to communicate** your argument clearly and convincingly to your seminar mates.*

All written work must:

- be **double-spaced** and in **12-point** font
- have the page numbers noted for all **references** to class readings
- be submitted in either **PDF or Word format**
- be submitted to **TurnItIn.com** (accessed through WesPortal)
- **not feature your name anywhere** on the paper or in the document's name at all. Please just list your student number at the top of the first page.
- include **no more than one quote** of full sentence length per page (quoting words or phrases is fine within reason).

Note: Our **Research Librarian is Kendall Hobbs**. He's an incredible resource to help you research papers. Contact him at x3962 or khobbs@wesleyan.edu

Analytic Papers

Two papers (3 pages each) give students the opportunity to critically engage readings and draw their own arguments about them. Students choose from two of the three analytic paper assignments offered. Papers will be submitted on Turnitin.com.

These papers will be evaluated according to (a) the strength of their argumentation, (b) how well they reflect understanding of pertinent class readings and lectures, (c) their ability to show your insights into the sources and class materials, and (d) the cogency of the writing.

Rewrites are allowed for any of these papers so long as they are turned in within a week after the graded original was returned. The rewrite grade will be averaged with the original grade for a final grade.

RAW Paper

Each student will write one research, analysis, and writing (RAW) paper (11 pages, **not including bibliography**) on any topic that examines a **specific** issue regarding the perception of sacrality or its parallel in a **particular community or culture** not discussed in detail in class. The **terminology of sacrality or its parallel must be substantially explained and justified**. Papers allow you an opportunity to explore personal interests, judge the impact on a community, and develop writing skills.

- Consult the **RAW paper guidelines** for essential details.

Your grade will be determined by (a) the depth of the research, (b) the range of your resources, (c) the sharpness of the analysis, (d) the successful application of the class themes, and (e) the quality of the writing.

Research Presentation

Each student will provide an **six-minute presentation** to the seminar regarding their RAW paper project. This will occur on the day for which the seminar is scheduled to have its final exam: **Thursday, May 16, 2-5 p.m. Non-attendance is not an option.**

Grade

The following components determine the final grade: participation (including attendance, reflective journal, & in-class presentation 10%), analysis papers (20% each), RAW paper (40%), and final research presentation (10%).

Accessibility resources

Wesleyan University is committed to ensuring that all qualified students with disabilities are afforded an equal opportunity to participate in, and benefit from, its programs and services. To receive accommodations, a student must have a disability as defined by the ADA. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact [Accessibility Services](#), located in North College, rooms 021/022, or call 860-685-5581 to arrange an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations.

PLEASE! Once you have obtained documentation, don't hesitate to discuss with me your needs for accommodation.

Curmudgeonly notice

The use of computers, tablets, and cell phones is not allowed in the class. While I appreciate that some students find it easier to type, the unfortunately inevitable web surfing, social networking, and texting by a few students distracts the rest, and the prof. Plus, if you have seen *Westworld*, *Battlestar Galactica*, *Ex Machina*, or any number of *Star Trek* episodes, I think you'll agree with me that we don't want to bring computers into our classrooms and make them any smarter than they already are. Students with documented need are exempt from this anti-modern diktat.

Honor System

Students are expected to abide by the Honor System in regard to all work and participation in this class. For details, see pages 4-7 of <http://www.wesleyan.edu/studentaffairs/studenthandbook/StudentHandbook.pdf>