

RELIGIOUS STUDIES 190

Sacred Space in Western Religions

DESCRIPTION: A significant problem facing all three of the great western religious traditions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam – is how to establish a sacred space on earth for the worship of a deity which cannot be contained. In many ways, architectural and artistic decisions about the location, internal layout, orientation and other features of such sacred spaces reflect deep presuppositions in each religion about the divine and how worship is to be effected in a human context. This course will be based around visits to a number of religious buildings to examine how one might understand and interpret such spaces.

TEXTBOOKS

Graham Howes, The Art of the Sacred: An Introduction to the Aesthetics of Art and Belief (I.B. Tauris)

Mary Pat Fisher, Living Religions – Western Traditions (Prentice-Hall)

GRADING SCHEME

1. Each student will prepare five 2-page reaction and analysis papers, one after each site visit [10% each]
2. Each student will prepare a 10-15 minute May presentation on a religious space other than the one visited. These will be presented either on May [30%]
3. Full class attendance and participation is expected [20%]

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

May 12 – Introduction to the study of Western Religion

Reading: Howes

May 13 – Introduction of sacred space and how to interpret it

Reading: Howes

May 14 – Introduction to Roman Catholicism

Reading: Fisher on Christianity (to "The Protestant Reformation")

May 15 – visit to the Church of the Holy Rosary

May 16 – Introduction to Protestant Christianity

Reading: Fisher on Christianity (from "The Protestant Reformation")

May 19 – visit to the Church of the Covenant, Amasa Stone Chapel

May 20 – Introduction to Judaism

Reading: Fisher on Judaism

May 21 – Visit Silver Temple, University Circle, Hillel

May 22 – student presentations

May 23 – introduction to Islam

Reading: Fisher on Islam

May 26 – Visit to Uqba Mosque, Fairhill Dr.

May 27 – introduction to Mormonism

Reading: Article on Mormonism

May 28 – Visit to Mormon Temple, Kirtland, OH

May 29 – Summation, final presentations