

Pilgrimage and World Religions

Professor Todd Lewis Office: Smith 425
Office Hours: Tu/Thurs 1-2; Wed. 1:30—2:30
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Course Description:

Human beings have always sought the sacred in unusual or extraordinary places, and gone on pilgrimages to mountain tops, rivers, waterfalls and caves. This course explores traditional and modern examples of pilgrimage in places as different as India, Japan, China, and Tibet and as close as Walden Pond. Readings will include case studies of pilgrimage, pilgrimage literature and literary models of pilgrimage, and journey writing. Students will encounter the phenomenon of pilgrimage in context through texts, films, and lectures, as well as experience pilgrimage through planned course sojourns. These include visits to: a mosque, a Buddhist meditation center, a Hindu temple, and several sacred locations in the American landscape. Students will do weekly writing assignments



and engage the pilgrimage experience as they study about it. The course will culminate in a final project in which students conduct and write the stories of their own pilgrimage.

Seminar Approach:

The course must oscillate between lectures on the background beliefs and practices of the world religions, and then anthropological/historical accounts of representative case studies. The seminar entails members making personal/group pilgrimage journeys to a mosque, Buddhist temple, Hindu temple, and sites “sacred” to those who follow the ideas of the American transcendentalists.

Course Requirements: (Instructions for each assignment will be given)

- Weekly Reading Response Journal – ideas/thoughts, pilgrimage response, evolving thoughts on site of personal pilgrimage and goals – that week’s question – uploaded to Google Drive, due on 3/1 (5 entries) and again on 5/3. Weekly average about 2 pages each
- Pilgrimage Research Presentation: teams of 3 will make 10 minute presentations, including PowerPoint and handouts; Due: In Class, Monday, March 17
- Pilgrimage Prospectus of Capstone Project – 2-3 pages (outlining place of pilgrimage, intent, duration, etc. Due: Monday, March 31 (or before)
- Capstone Project – Illustrated Pilgrimage narrative of your own design Due: Monday, May 12
- Attendance and Participation in extra-class trips/pilgrimages

Course Grading:

Class participation	20 points
Weekly journal	30 points
Class Presentation	15 points
Pilgrimage Prospectus	5 points
Capstone Pilgrimage Project	<u>30 points</u>
	100 points.

Course Books: (All have been ordered from the Holy Cross Bookstore)

Ian Reader, *Pilgrimage: A Short Introduction*. NY: Oxford, 2015

Conrad Rudolph, *Pilgrimage to the End of the World: The Road to Santiago de Compostela*. University of Chicago Press, 2004.

Swami Satchidananda, *Kailash Journal: Pilgrimage in the Sacred Himalayas of Tibet*. Buckingham, VA: Integral Yoga Publications, 1984.

Gary Vikan, *From The Holy Land To Graceland: Sacred People, Places and Things in Our Lives*. Washington, DC: AAM Press, 2012.

Peter Matthieson, *Snow Leopard*. New York: Penguin Classics, 2008.

I-Tsing, *A Record of the Buddhist Religion: As Practiced in India and the Malay Archipelago (671-695CE)*
Reprint Paperback, 2017

Moodle Course Readings [MCR]

Schedule of Seminars and Readings

Session 1. January 24th: Defining the Course, Possibilities and Expectations

Religious Traditions; Sacred/Profane; Belief/Practice; Pilgrimage in 4 Dimensions

Required Reading:

Victor Turner, Encyclopedia of Religion, "Pilgrimage" [MCR]

Gary Vikan, *From The Holy Land To Graceland*, 1-58

Ian Reader, *Pilgrimage: A Short Introduction*, Chapters 1-2

Session 2. January 31: Ritual in Theory and Practice

Required Reading

Ian Reader, *Pilgrimage: A Short Introduction*, Chapters 3-5

Session 3. February 7: Islam and the Hajj [1]

Caner Dagli Lecture

Required Reading

Excerpt "Islam," from *World Religions Today* [MRC]

Hajj reading [MRC]

Hajj Guidelines reading [MRC]



Session 4. February 14: Islam and Hajj [2]

✳ Trip to Worcester Mosque

Excerpt from Malcolm X and Arthur Haley, *Autobiography of Malcolm X*. [MRC]

Session 5. February 21: Hinduism Studies I: Background

Required Reading

"Hinduism," excerpt from *World Religions Today* [MCR]





✧ **Student Pilgrimage: Ashland Sri Lakshmi Temple**

Session 6. February 28: Hinduism Studies I: Ramdevra, Varanasi, Gaya, Mt. Kailash, Khumba Mela

Required Reading

Swami Satchidananda, *Kailash Journal: Pilgrimage in the Sacred Himalayas of Tibet*
Hinduism pilgrimage articles [MCR]

MARCH 3: Spring Break, no class

Session 7. March 14th: Student Research Presentations on Pilgrimages

Team reports, (3-4 in each team)

Possible Student Research Topics: (some can include spring break visits)

North America: Ste. Anne de Beaupre (Quebec);
Graceland, in Memphis, Tennessee;
Disneyworld; Salt Lake City, Utah; Guadalupe,
Mexico City; Chimaya, New Mexico
Europe: Lourdes, France; Rome, Italy;
Middle East: Jerusalem, Karbala, Konya (Turkey)

Nepal: *Baundha, Pashupati, Svayambhu*
India: *Amritsar, Varanasi, Gaya*
Tibet: *Lhasa, Crystal Mountain, Samye*
Sri Lanka: *Kataragama, Adam's Peak/ Sri Pada*
China: *WuTai Shan, Puto Shan, Tai Shan*

Saturday, March 17th:

📖 **Journal entry on visit to Ashland Temple Due**

Session 8. March 21: Christianity: Compestella de Santiago, Lourdes, Antiquity

Required Reading

Conrad Rudolph, *Pilgrimage to the End of the World: The Road to Santiago de Compostela*. Chicago:
University of Chicago Press, 2004.
From The Holy Land To Graceland, 61-82



Session 9. March 28: Buddhism in Tibet

Required Reading

“Buddhism,” excerpt from *World Religions Today* [MCR]
Peter Matthieson, *The Snow Leopard*

📖 **Individual Pilgrimage Capstone Project Prospectus Due**

Session 10. April 4: Japan I, Shinto

Professor D’Angelis lecture on Ise

Required Reading

Ian Reader, *Shinto Introduction* [MRC]





Session 11. April 11st: Japan II: Shikoku

Required Reading

Excerpts from Ian Reader, *Making Pilgrimages: Meaning and Practice in Shikoku* [MRC]

✧ *Student Pilgrimage: Worcester Zen Temple*

Session 12. April 18th: Modern Pilgrimages I: American Civil Religion, Graceland, etc.

Required Readings

From The Holy Land To Graceland, 83-178.

Robert Bellah, “American Civil Religion” [MRC]

Edward Abbey excerpt [MRC]

National Parks as pilgrimage sites [MRC]



April 25th: No class, Holy Cross Academic Conference

Session 13. May 2: Student Presentations of their Individual Journeys

📅 May 3, 5 PM: Capstone Papers Due



Session 14: TBA (May 5?): ✧ Class Pilgrimage to Mt. Wachusett and Walden Pond

9 AM-3 PM

Required Reading

Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Nature”

Henry David Thoreau, “Walking”

📅 May 8th, noon: Course Journals Due