

# Gardens and Religious Traditions

The Cultivation of Spiritual Experience

Professor Todd T. Lewis

Religious Studies Department, SMITH 425

Office Hours: Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 1-2 and by appointment

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## Course Description:

A survey of the historical and cultural backgrounds of the major garden traditions of world associated with religions. This seminar moves from considerations of human aesthetic and spiritual experience in the natural world, to a survey of the major garden traditions associated with the western Mediterranean and Europe: in classical Greece and Rome, Christianity, and Islam. The course then moves to East Asia and the classical traditions of China and Japan. Special focus will be given to elements of the campus Japanese Garden Initiative: teahouse gardens and monastic viewing gardens.

<http://sterling.holycross.edu/departments/religiousstudies/tlewis/garden-teahouse/tea-garden.htm>).

Fieldtrips to regional gardens will be made. For the final project, students will design small contemplative gardens for possible construction at specific sites on the Holy cross campus.

## Course Textbooks:

Tom Turner, *Garden History Philosophy and Design*. NY: Spon Press, 2005

Marc P. Keane, *Japanese Garden Design*. Boston: Tuttle, 2000

Joseph Cho Wang, *The Chinese Garden*, NY: Oxford Univ. Press, 1998. [ERE-S]

Martin Mosko, et al. *Landscape as Spirit: Creating a Contemplative Garden*. Trumbull, CT.: Weatherhill, 2001.

Sylvia Landsberg, *The Medieval Garden*, University of Toronto Press 2003

Christopher McIntosh, *Gardens of the Gods: Myth, Magic, Meaning*. NY: Tauris, 2004

*Course Reader* [ERE-S]

## Course Design and Grading:

Term Paper.....	25
Final Project.....	30
Participation.....	15
Oral Final.....	30
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	100 pts.



# Schedule of Seminars and Readings

"There are few real boundaries in nature." -- Rebecca Solnit

"My own experience is that the more we study art, the less we care about nature. What art really reveals to us is nature's lack of design, her curious crudities, her extraordinary monotony, her absolutely unfinished condition. Nature has good intentions, of course, but as Aristotle once said, she cannot carry them out." -- Oscar Wilde

## Foundations

**Friday 1/25**

**Seminars 1-2. Organizational Matters and Course Overview**

**Topics: Defining Culture and Cultured Spaces**

**What is a Garden ? Categories of Garden Design**

Readings:

Tom Turner, *Garden History Philosophy and Design*, Chapter 1

Christopher McIntosh, *Gardens of the Gods: Myth, Magic, and Meaning*, 1-17; 136-164

Anthony Flew, "Theology and Falsification"; Tim Richardson, "Psychotopia";

Marc Keane, "Boundaries"; Anna-Theresa Tymieniecka, "Gardens and the Passion for the Infinite"; Gaston Bachelard, excerpts from *The Poetics of Space* [ERE-s]

## Gardens and the Abrahamic Faiths

**Friday 2/1**

**Seminar 3. Gardens in Mediterranean Antiquity: Egypt, Greece, Rome**

**Guest Scholar: Prof. David Karmon**

Readings:

*Garden History Philosophy and Design*, Chapters 2

**Friday 2/8:**

**Seminar 4. Medieval Christian Gardens**

**Guest Scholar: Prof. Joanne Pierce**

Readings:

Sylvia Landsberg, *The Medieval Garden*

*Garden History Philosophy and Design*, 109-185

**Friday 2/15**

**Seminar 5. Islamic Gardens: Cultural Foundations**

Readings:

Emma Clark, “History, Symbolism, and the Quran” [ERE-s]

**Friday 2/22**

**Seminar 6 Islamic Gardens [II]**

**GUEST SCHOLAR: Dr. Amanda Luyster**

Readings:

Emma Clark, “Introduction”; “Design and Layout”; “Geometry, Hard-Landscaping and Architectural Ornament” [ERE-s]

## Gardens in the Modern World

**Friday 2/29**

**Seminar 7. Modern Gardens I: Enlightenment Traditions**

Reading:

*Garden History Philosophy and Design*, 186-224

*Gardens of the Gods: Myth, Magic, and Meaning*, 84-112

3/7 春 SPRING BREAK, no class

**Friday 3/14**

**Seminar 8. Modern Gardens II. “Defiant” and “Extreme” Gardens**

Reading:

*Garden History Philosophy and Design*, 225-284

*Gardens of the Gods: Myth, Magic, and Meaning*, 113-135

Diana Balmori and Margaret Morton, excerpts from “Transitory Gardens, Uprooted Lives” and Kenneth I. Helphand, “Defiant Gardens: Making Gardens in Wartime,” [ERE-s]

3/21 EASTER BREAK, no class

**Friday 3/28**

**Seminar 9 Modern Gardens III: Romantic Traditions... From English Estates and Fletcher Steele, to Andy Goldsworthy**

Reading:

Andy Goldsworthy, "Introduction" in *Andy Goldsworthy: Collaboration with Nature* [ERE-S]

## **EAST Asian Garden TRADITIONS**

**Sunday 3/30: TRIP TO STATEN ISLAND BOTANICAL GARDEN  
and STORM KING PARK**

**Seminar 10 Chinese Gardens**

*TRIP TO STATEN ISLAND BOTANICAL GARDEN; STORM KING PARK*

Readings:

Joseph Cho Wang, *The Chinese Garden*, NY: Oxford Univ. Press, 1998. [ERES]  
*Gardens of the Gods: Myth, Magic, and Meaning*, 18-34

**Friday 4/4: No CLASS**

**Friday 4/11**

**Seminar 11 Japanese Garden Design**

Guest Scholar: Marc Keane, Instructor, Kyoto University of Art and Design

Readings:

Marc P. Keane, *Japanese Garden Design*, Boston: Tuttle, 2000

Marc Keane, *Sakuteiki* [ERES]

**Friday 4/18**

**Seminar 12 Tea Gardens and Tea Ceremony**

Jennifer Anderson, Urasenke School of Tea,, San Francisco and Kyoto

Readings:

Kakuzo Okakura *The Book of Tea*. NY: Dover, 1964.

**Friday 4/25**

**Seminar 13 Japanese Gardens: Principles of Design**

*TRIP TO JAPANESE GARDEN, WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY*

**EXAM PERIOD/TBA**

**Final Seminar Meeting: Presentation of Garden Designs by Seminar Groups**

**Exam Period: Oral Final Exam**