

Land, Spirit, Pilgrimage

An Interdisciplinary Seminar in Creative Writing & Religious Studies

Professor Todd Lewis

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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.



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 – collected on 3/10 (5 entries) and again on 5/5. Entries are 2 pages each:
 - Response to pilgrimage literature (1 page)
 - Response to literary models (1 page)
- 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; 15 pages plus reflection of 3 pp. 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 Project	<u>30 points</u>
	100 points.

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

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.

Edwin Bernbaum, *The Way to Shambhala*. New York: Anchor, 1980.

Annie Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*. New York: Harper Perennial, 1974.

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

Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*.

Moodle Course Readings [MCR]

Schedule of Seminars and Readings

Session 1. January 27th: Defining the Course, Possibilities and Expectations

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

LP: Writing: Journey Narratives/ The Thoreauvian Tradition Overview

Required Reading:

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

Annie Dillard "Total Eclipse" [MCR]

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

Session 2. February 3: Islam and the Hajj [1]

Caner Dagli Lecture; Film; Discussion

Required Reading

Excerpt "Islam," from *World Religions Today*

Hajj reading [MRC]

Pilgrim at Tinker Creek, 1-183.

Session 3. February 10: Ritual in Theory and Practice

LP: Writing Session #`1 Dillard discussion

Required Reading

Pilgrim at Tinker Creek, 184-end.

Hajj Guidelines reading [MRC]



Session 4. February 17: Islam and Hajj [2]

Trip to Worcester Mosque

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

☐ Thursday Feb 20: Peter Trachtenberg Reading: 7:30 PM Rehm Library

Session 5. February 24: Pilgrimage in the Ancient Greek World; Pilgrimage Narratives

Prof. Thomas Martin, Classics Department

LP: Analysis of Elements of Pilgrimage Narrative [cont.]

Required Reading

Martin Readings, tba

MARCH 3: Spring Break, no class



Session 6. March 10: Hinduism Studies: Ramdevra Yatra, Khumba Mela

TL: Lecture on Hindu Doctrines and Pilgrimage Practices & Film

LP: Kailash Journal discussion/ Elements of the Pilgrimage Narrative

Required Reading

“Hinduism,” excerpt from *World Religions Today* [MCR]

Swami Satchidananda, *Kailash Journal: Pilgrimage in the Sacred Himalayas of Tibet*

Session 7. March 17: Student Research Presentations on Pilgrimages

7 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*

Friday, March 21:

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

Session 8. March 24: 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 31: Modern Pilgrimages I: American Civil Religion, Graceland, etc.

Required Readings

Robert Bellah, “American Civil Religion” [MRC]

Edward Abbey excerpt [MRC]

National Parks as pilgrimage sites [MRC]

From The Holy Land To Graceland, 83-178.

📖 **Pilgrimage Prospectus Due**



Session 10. April 7 Japan I: Shinto

Professor D'Angelis lecture on Ise

LP: Sacred lands/ discussion of landscape as pilgrimage site

Required Reading

Ian Reader, *Shinto Introduction* [MRC]

Buddhist Doctrine; Shikoku History

Peter Matthieson, *Snow Leopard* (finish book)



Session 11. April 14 Japan II: Shikoku

6-7:30 PM: Worcester Zen Temple

Required Reading

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



Special Session: TBA Case Study in Tibet:

Shambhala

TL: Buddhism in Tibet lecture & Film

LP: Journey Narratives/ *Snow Leopard* & Trachtenberg discussion

Required Reading

Edwin Bernbaum, *The Way to Shambhala*. Boston: Shambhala, 2001. Chapters 1-4.

Peter Matthieson, *Snow Leopard* (1st 2 chapters) &

Monday April 21: No class, Easter break

Session 12. April 28: Modern Pilgrimages II: Walden, Mt. Wachusett, Thoreau

LP: Transcendentalism / The Thoreauvian Tradition

Required Reading

Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Nature"

Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* and "Walking"



Session 13. Saturday May 3: Class Pilgrimage to Mt. Wachusett and Walden Pond

9 AM-3 PM

Final Session, May 5: Student Presentations of their Individual Journeys

📅 May 12 by Noon: Final Papers Due