

**Winthrop University**

**RELG 450 Special Topics in Religion: Sacred Spaces**

Section 600: Travel Seminar

Spring 2011 – 3 credit hours

Monday, 6:30-9:00 p.m. beginning February 28, 2011, Kinard 312

There are possible field excursions in addition to or in place of some of these sessions, if arrangements can be made.

Our syllabus is subject to change upon consensus of all involved, students and professors.

Travel to France: May 17-25, 2011.

Instructors:

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**Description:** This is a short-term study abroad course. Students will investigate the conceptual, artistic, and architectural constructs of sacred space in religious thought and practice. We examine how humans make space sacred and by so doing sacralize their world and their life within it. This phenomenon indeed influences areas of life that might not be specifically religious but become nonetheless sacred. The course includes a 9-day excursion to France, May 17-25, 2011.

After some theoretical work and preparation for specific places, the trip will give particular attention to sites that have had sacred significance since ancient, even pre-historic, times and those (sometimes the same) that embodied the philosophy, theology, and spirituality of the Medieval period. Both the sites and the buildings at the cathedrals of Notre Dame in Paris, Chartres and Rouen, the Abbey of Mont Saint Michel tell stories of the human search for the sacred. We will also examine the Bayeux tapestry that commemorates the Battle of Hastings (1066) and the city of Caen, home and burial place of William the Conqueror and site of the Peace Memorial centered especially on D-Day, 1944, and dedicated to the continual search for peace. This leads to a discussion of how moderns continue to make spaces sacred as we visit what might be considered more secular locations, e.g., the 1944 Normandy landing beaches and the associated cemeteries, which are nonetheless “sacred” in their meaning for humans. While the contemporary world makes a clearer separation in many ways between the sacred and the secular than did the Medieval world, moderns continue to hold times and spaces as sacred (e.g., “Ground Zero” in NYC).

Part of the preparation in the classes prior to departure will include visits to such sacred spaces in reachable places nearby. Tentative plans are to visit local historical battlefields, cemeteries, or other such reserves, and a stay at a sacred space like Mepkin Abbey in Monck’s Corner, SC, or Belmont Abbey in NC, that allows a sampling of sacred time as well.

Another objective of the course is to help students broaden their international awareness with a practical experience of travel and “crossing cultures” that will enable exchange and expand horizons.

It is anticipated that students in the Medieval Studies minor may use this course for credit in that program and that students in the Philosophy & Religion major or Religion minor may substitute this course for RELG 101.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

While this course is not specifically designated for credit toward an area in Winthrop's Touchstone Program, the course and trip are designed to meet a number of objectives that are consistent with Winthrop's Goals for General Education:

Goal One: To communicate clearly and effectively in Standard English.

Goal Four: To recognize and appreciate human diversity (both past and present) as well as the diversity of ideas, institutions, philosophies, moral codes, and ethical principles.

Goal Six: To understand aesthetic values, the creative process, and the interconnectedness of the literary, visual, and performing arts throughout the history of civilization.

Goal Seven: To examine values, attitudes, beliefs, and habits which define the nature and quality of life.

As a result of their study and travel experience, students should be able to articulate in several writing assignments their achievement of these educational goals.

**Required texts:**

Eliade, Mircea. *The Sacred and the Profane. The Nature of Religion.*

Sheldrake, Philip. *Spaces for the Sacred: Place, Memory, Identity.* Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.

Temko, Allan. *Notre Dame of Paris.* 1962.

Dr. Ardiolo may direct students to selected portions of Craig Storti, *The Art of Crossing Culture, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition.* Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 2001.

Completion of *What's Up With Culture*, a free on-line cultural training resource found at <http://www.pacific.edu/sis/culture/>

**Requirements:**

Part of the credit for the course comes from total immersion in the trip itself with an enthusiastic curiosity for exploring the sites and understanding the history and culture behind them and by appreciating them within the daily situation of a living culture. As part of the preparation, students will complete a crossing-cultures exercise.

**Journal Entries.** In connection with the trip to France and local excursions to cemeteries, battle grounds, and an Abbey stay, students will be expected to keep a travel journal in which they record their activities and reflect on significant experiences of all types, whether it be of the various sites, architecture, and art-work, or personal cross-cultural encounters. These reflections will be more than descriptions; they are expected to reveal personal reaction and thoughtful reflection on what was learned in these experiences, especially with regard to what students study academically about sacred space (entries might in fact draw on academic or theoretical materials in order to apply them in an experiential way). Each entry should be equivalent to *at least* a normal 1-page typed, double-spaced page. The journal can be submitted either hand-written or typed (if editing and redaction is necessary) after the trip is complete.

**Essays and Research:** Because the intense 9-days of travel are integral to the course, we will not begin our classroom sessions until Monday, February 28, and will meet every week for 3-hours through the end of the semester. Students should, however, *begin the reading program before class sessions begin.*

Students will be expected to have read Eliade, *The Sacred and The Profane*, before the class meetings begin and be prepared to demonstrate their grasp of the material in either writing or discussion in the first meetings. We then go on to read and discuss Sheldrake, *Spaces for the Sacred*, and a more contemporary view of Sacred Space, including some discussion of "secular" spaces like Ground Zero in

NYC or the D-Day beaches and cemeteries of Normandy or monuments on the Mall in D.C. Students will write a **book essay** that demonstrates their grasp of Sheldrake’s thought, particularly in comparison and contrast with the theory of Eliade, with particular attention to the theme of Sacred Space.

From here, students will study some of the intellectual history, the spirit of the Middle Ages, and the art and architecture of sites like Mont-Saint Michel, Notre Dame de Chartres, and Notre Dame de Paris. Students will demonstrate their comprehension by discussion from reading notes. We will read Temko’s *Notre Dame* for a history of the city of Paris and the site of on the Isle de la Cité where the cathedral was built and still stands. Students will write an **essay** based primarily (but not necessarily exclusively) on our readings, films, and class discussions in order to demonstrate their understanding of the thought and spirit behind these monumental buildings and the spaces they occupy physically, philosophically, theologically, and psychologically.

These essays should be a **minimum of 10 full double-spaced pages of text** (not including bibliography). They should be carefully and thoughtfully written, making ample use of the reading material with footnotes/endnotes and appropriate citations of borrowed material. Chicago Manual of Style is the preferred format. Find guidance for this at <http://www2.winthrop.edu/wcenter/handoutsnew.htm> or directly from [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html)

The final requirement for the course will be completion of the “crossing cultures” material in a session with Dr. Ardaiole.

Thus, the final grade will be computed as follows:

Travel Journal	30 points
Eliade/Sheldrake essay	30 points
Adams/Temko essay	30 points
Crossing Cultures	10 points
Total	100 points

### **Grading system**

A = 94-100	B = 84-86	C = 74-76	D = 64-66
A- = 90-93	B- = 80-83	C- = 70-73	D- = 60-63
B+ = 87-89	C+ = 77-79	D+ = 67-69	F = below 60

Assignments not turned in or missed tests will have a grade of 0.

Students who will be continuing at Winthrop will receive and “Incomplete” at the end of the term and will be expected to turn in their written work after the trip.

Students who are graduating in May will need to consult with me to set up a plan for doing assessable work to earn a grade that can be submitted in time for spring graduation.

### **Academic Integrity**

As noted in the Student Conduct Code: “Responsibility for good conduct rests with students as adult individuals.” The policy on student academic misconduct is outlined in the “Student Conduct Code Academic Misconduct Policy” in the online *Student Handbook* (<http://www2.winthrop.edu/studentaffairs/handbook/StudentHandbook.pdf>). Cheating is a serious offense that can result not only in failure of the course but also in expulsion from the University. Make yourself fully aware of this policy and the relevant procedures. If you are not sure what constitutes cheating, ask.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Winthrop University is dedicated to providing access to education. If you have a disability and need accommodations, please contact Gena Smith, Coordinator, Services for Students with Disabilities, at 323-3290, as soon as possible. Once you have your Professor Notification Form, please tell me so that I am aware of your accommodations. Information about services and accommodations is also available on the Services for Students with Disabilities Web site: <http://www.winthrop.edu/hcs/disability.htm>

### **Attendance**

You should be well aware that you must go on the trip to France in order to get credit for the course. In addition, you may be expected to participate in “Sacred Space” activities off-campus. Exceptions to this latter requirement can be made by seeing Dr. Judge, but there is no exception to traveling to France. Students are allowed 1 absence without penalty from class sessions during the semester. Absence beyond this will result in reduction of grade up to complete failure of the course.

### **Schedule of Classes and Assignments**

This is a suggested schedule for our class meetings that contains readings only. Other activities such as films, material for further discussion on the sacredness of space and issues that arise from that, and information (both educational and practical) about the sites we will visit will be included eventually and will be announced. This schedule (except for the opening class) can be adjusted.

1	Feb. 28	Discussion of Eliade, <i>The Sacred and the Profane</i> , Chapter 1-2 (read in advance)
2	Mar. 7	Eliade, continued
	Mar. 14	Spring Break – no class
3	Mar. 21	Sheldrake, 1-3
4	Mar. 28	Sheldrake, 4-6
5	Apr. 4	Mont St. Michel, Chartres, Paris, the Medieval mind and the age of cathedrals
6	Apr. 11	Modern Sacred Spaces: The Normandy Beaches, “Ground Zero,” & remembrance
7	Apr. 18	Temko
8	Apr. 26	Temko (and continue through the trip) Group preparations for travel – all travelers at this session (students and those not taking the course but going on the trip).
	May 17-25	Trip to France
	Summer	Papers and reports due by July 1