Religion & Pilgrimage

PHRE-415 / Spring 2017

Phillips Academy

Mr. Prescott



*Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela*

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Course Description

The word pilgrim comes from the Latin *peregrinus*, meaning “foreign,” and can be loosely defined as “one who journeys in foreign lands.” And although the concept of leaving one’s home for days, weeks, and sometimes for even months at a time might initially come across as strange, pilgrimage is a deeply cross-cultural phenomenon, not only appearing in a variety of religious traditions, such as Islam (Hajj), Christianity (Jerusalem, Rome, Santiago de Compostela), Hinduism (Varanasi), and Buddhism (Saikoku, Shikoku), but also in more “secular” venues, such as Disney World, Burning Man, Washington D.C., and Machu Picchu.

As such, this course will use the phenomenon of pilgrimage to complicate the lines we typically draw between the secular and the sacred. What exactly is pilgrimage? Who goes on pilgrimage? What is pilgrimage supposed to do? Richard Niehbur writes that, “Pilgrimage reinterprets the word ‘experience’ for us,” but to what end? To what extent is pilgrimage a physical experience? An internal one? What perspectives can pilgrimage offer on our lives? Are we currently in the midst of pilgrimages of which we are unaware? How are these pilgrimages shaping our identities at this very moment?

Course Requirements, Evaluation, and Policies

**I. Required Texts:**

1. Gideon Lewis-Kraus, *A Sense of Direction: Pilgrimage for the Restless and the Hopeful* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2013)
2. Matsuo Basho, *Narrow Road to the Interior: and Other Writings*, trans. Sam Hamill (Shambhala Classics, 2000)
3. Additional texts will be made available in class and posted on Canvas

**II. Evaluation**

**i. Classroom Participation (20%) –** Much of this class will proceed as a seminar, which means careful reading of assigned work, regular attendance, and participation in class are all essential in order to succeed in the course. A separate handout/rubric will be distributed regarding expectations for classroom participation/discussion.

**ii. Reflection Papers (5%)** – In an effort to deepen our understanding of the assigned reading, students will be asked to complete weekly 1-page reflection papers (due on a night of the student’s choosing). A separate handout on reflection papers will be provided.

**iIi. Essays (75%) –** Several different analytical/argumentative essays will be assigned over the course of the term. More specific information about the nature of these essays will be provided closer to their corresponding due dates.

1. **Essay 1 (20%)** – Due Tuesday, April 18
2. **Essay 2 (25%) –** Due Thursday, May 11
3. **Essay 3 (30%) –** Due Wednesday, May 31

**III. Extensions –** Generally speaking, I do not grant extensions. In addition to allocating class time for papers, prompts are also handed out at least one week prior to the due date, so the expectation is that students will plan ahead and manage their time appropriately. The only exception to this policy is when a student has three or more major assignments due on the same day, in which case students are expected to follow the protocols outlined on p. 51 of the Blue Book under “Workload & Assignments” (which includes 24-hours advance notice).

**IV. Late Work Policy –** All written assignments are to be uploaded to Canvas as word documents (.doc) by the beginning of class. Any work uploaded after this point will be counted as late. Please note that technological difficulties are **not** an excuse for lateness. Anticipate that the printer will break, that files will be lost, or that your computer will die! **Any work handed in after the due date will receive a grade no higher than a 3+.** Work that is handed in more than one week past the due late will not receive credit.

**V. Rewrite Policy** – All students may choose to rewrite any essay during the term (except for the final). Revisions must be substantial; it is not sufficient simply to plug in the instructor’s feedback. I strongly encourage students to meet with me if they are electing to complete a revision. The grade for the rewrite will be averaged with the initial grade to determine the new grade for the assignment. All rewrites are due one week after the initial essay is returned. Please note that I do not accept rewrites for unauthorized late essays.

**VI. Absences** - As noted above under Classroom Preparation/Participation, regular attendance is essential if one is to succeed in this course. However, I realize that this course is not your only commitment this term, just as I realize that circumstances inevitably arise that our outside of your control. First and foremost, I ask that you communicate with me (the earlier the better). Regarding **Personal Time**, I ask that students follow the procedures outlined on pp. 54-55 of the Blue Book (specifically, the request must be made at least 24 hours prior said class meeting). Please note that students are responsible for all announcements or changes made in class. Finally, in the event that an assignment is due on the day a student is sick (with an excused absence from the Health Center), said assignment will be due at the beginning of the next class meeting.

**VII. E-mail** – I will respond to all e-mail within 24 hours. However, please note that any e-mail sent after 8:00 PM will not receive a response until the following morning, so please plan ahead!

**VIII. Religious Observances –** Some students may wish to take part in religious observances that fall during the term. Should you have a religious observance that conflicts with participation in the course, please contact me as soon as possible to discuss appropriate accommodations.

**IX. Disabilities –** Students with learning, physical, or psychiatric disabilities who may require disability-related classroom accommodations are encouraged to see me as soon as possible to discuss your particular needs. All discussions will remain confidential, though I may consult Student Health Services to discuss appropriate implementation of any accommodation requested.

**X. Technology** – Although we live in an increasingly digitized world, please note that I do not allow the use of computers/tablet/phones during class unless otherwise specified.

**Schedule of Assignments**

(Subject to Change)

**Unit 1: Introduction to the Inquiry**

**Week 1 – The Limitations of Social Structures**

**Tuesday, March 21 – Introduction & Overview**

* No assigned readings

**Thursday, March 23 – Liminality and Rites of Passage**

* Read: Victor Turner, “Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in *Rites de Passage*,” *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1954), selections.

**Friday, March 24 – The Structures of Home**

* Read: Gideon Lewis-Kraus, *A Sense of Direction: Pilgrimage for the Restless and the Hopeful* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2012), pp. 3-15.
* Note: Class will meet at the Addison Gallery

**Week 2 – The Desire for Liminality**

**Monday, March 27 – The Restlessness of Routine**

* Read: Gideon Lewis-Kraus, *A Sense of Direction: Pilgrimage for the Restless and the Hopeful* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2012), pp. 16-52.
* Note: Reflection paper due this week

**Thursday, March 30 – Class Will Not Meet**

* Mr. Prescott away at Eight Schools Conference

**Friday, March 31– The Disposition of the Pilgrim**

* Read: Richard Niebuhr, “Pilgrims and Pioneers,” *Parabola* 9.3(August 1984)*,* 6-13.
* Note: Reflection paper due this week

**Unit 2: The Camino de Santiago**

**Week 3 – The Camino de Santiago**

**Monday, April 3 – Introduction to the Camino de Santiago**

* Read: Gideon Lewis-Kraus, *A Sense of Direction: Pilgrimage for the Restless and the Hopeful* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2012), pp. 56-80.
* Note: Reflection paper due this week

**Thursday, April 6 – Panel Discussion: Perspectives on the Camino**

* Read: Gideon Lewis-Kraus, *A Sense of Direction: Pilgrimage for the Restless and the Hopeful* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2012), pp. 80-106.
* Note: Reflection paper due this week

**Friday, April 7 – Communitas on the Camino**

* Read: Gideon Lewis-Kraus, *A Sense of Direction: Pilgrimage for the Restless and the Hopeful* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2012), pp. 107-126.
* Note: Reflection paper due this week

**Week 4 – The Camino de Santiago**

**Monday, April 10 – The Turn Toward Home**

* Read: Gideon Lewis-Kraus, *A Sense of Direction: Pilgrimage for the Restless and the Hopeful* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2012), pp. 126-152

**Thursday, April 13 – Writing Workshop: Individual Conferences**

* Due: Rough Draft of Essay #1

**Friday, April 14 – Writing Workshop**

* Due: Revised Rough Draft of Essay #1

**Unit 3: Basho and the Wandering Mind**

**Week 5 – The Mind at Three Miles Per Hour**

**Tuesday, April 18 – Due: Essay #1**

* Due: Essay #1
* Note: No reflection paper due this week

**Thursday, April 20 – The Mind at Three Miles Per Hour**

* Read: Rebecca Solnit, “Tracing a Headland: An Introduction,” *Wanderlust: A History of Walking* (New York: Penguin Books, 2000), 3-14.
* Note: No reflection paper due this week

**Friday, April 21 – Non Sibi Days (No Class)**

* Class will not meet

**Week 6 – The Narrow Road to the Deep North**

**Tuesday, April 25 – Introduction to Basho**

* Read: Jane Hirshfield, “Seeing Through Words: An Introduction to Bashō, Haiku, and the Suppleness of Image,” *Ten Windows* (Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2015), 49-79.
* Note: Reflection paper due this week

**Thursday, April 27 – The Narrow Road to the Interior**

* Read: Matsuo Bashō, “The Narrow Road to the Interior,” in *The Narrow Road to the Interior and Other Writings*, trans. Sam Hamill (Boulder, CO: Shambhala Classics, 2000), pp. 3-36.
* Note: Reflection paper due this week

**Friday, April 28 – The Intersubjectivity of Pilgrimage**

* Read: David Abram, “Philosophy on the Way to Ecology: A Technical Introduction to the Inquiry,” *The Spell of Sensuous*, pp. 31-44.
* Note: Reflection paper due this week

**Week 7 – The Narrow Road to Andover’s Interior**

**Monday, May 1 – Ecological Phenomenology**

* Read: David Abram, “Philosophy on the Way to Ecology: A Technical Introduction to the Inquiry,” *The Spell of Sensuous*, pp. 44-72.
* Note: Reflection paper due this week

**Thursday, May 4 – History and the Land: The Knapsack Notebook**

* Read: Matsuo Bashō, “The Knapsack Notebaook,” in *The Narrow Road to the Interior and Other Writings*, trans. Sam Hamill (Boulder, CO: Shambhala Classics, 2000), pp. 39-52.
* Due: Haiku Assignment

**Friday, May 5 – Release Time**

* Haiku Assignment outside of class

**Unit 4: Independent Projects**

**Week 8 – Independent Projects**

**Monday, May 8 – Faculty Development Day (Class Will Not Meet)**

* Work on essays

**Thursday, May 11 – Final Project Orientation**

* Due: Essay #2

**Week 9 – Independent Projects**

**Monday, May 15 – OWHL: Library Research Session**

* Note: Class will meet in the library
* Due: Final Project Proposal and Research Questions

**Thursday, May 18 – OWHL: Library Research Session**

* Note: Class will meet in the library

**Friday, May 19 – Release Time**

* Due: Annotated Bibliography (min. 5 sources)

**Week 10 – Independent Projects**

**Monday, May 22 and Tuesday, May 23 – Individual Conferences**

* Note: Individual conferences with Mr. Prescott, by appointment

**Thursday, May 25 – Final Presentations**

* Due: Presentation

**Friday, May 26 – Final Presentations**

* Due: Presentation

**Week 11 – Finals Week**

**Tuesday, May 30 – Conference Period**

* Note: Mr. Prescott available during regular class time

**Wednesday, May 31 – Due: Essay #3**

* Due: Essay #3