Pilgrimage: Sacred and Secular

PHRE-415 / Winter 2017-18

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 (25%) –** 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. Intellectual Journal (15%)** – In an effort to deepen our understanding of the assigned reading, students will be asked to complete a series of journal entries on the readings throughout the term. Each entry should be approximately 300 words, or about one page double-spaced. The journal entries are due at the start of class on the day that the reading is assigned – no exceptions. These entries are graded as either acceptable (check) or unacceptable (minus). Students control how well they do on this assignment, as the number of acceptable entries over the course of the term determines the grade.The final assignment will draw from these entries, so students are accepted to keep track of these throughout the term.

**iIi. Essays (60%) –** 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 (15%)** – Due Monday, January 22
2. **Essay 2 (20%) –** Due Monday, February 12
3. **Final Project (25%) –** Due Tuesday, February 27

**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 by the beginning of class on the day the assignment is due. 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 7:00 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: Rites of Passage and the Hajj**

**Thursday, November 30 – Introduction & Overview**

* No assigned readings

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

**Monday, December 4 – What is Pilgrimage?**

* Read: Richard Niebuhr, “Pilgrims and Pioneers,” *Parabola* 9.3(August 1984)*,* 6-13.

**Thursday, December 7 – 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, December 8 – Introduction to the Hajj**

* Read: Michael Wolfe, “General Introduction,” in *One Thousand Roads to Mecca: Ten Centuries of Travelers Writing About the Muslim Pilgrimage*, ed. Michael Wolfe (New York: Grove Press, 1997), pp. xiii-xxvii.

**Week 2 – The Hajj**

**Monday, December 11 – The Hajj and Race: Malcolm X’s Journey to Mecca**

* Read: Malcolm X, Excerpts from *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, in *One Thousand Roads to Mecca: Ten Centuries of Travelers Writing About the Muslim Pilgrimage*, ed. Michael Wolfe (New York: Grove Press, 1997), pp. 486-503.

**Thursday, December 14 – Film: “Inside Mecca”**

* Due: 1-page reflection

**Friday, December 15– Gender and the Hajj**

* Read: Saida Miller Khalifa, Excerpts from *The Fifth Pillar*, in *One Thousand Roads to Mecca: Ten Centuries of Travelers Writing About the Muslim Pilgrimage*, ed. Michael Wolfe (New York: Grove Press, 1997), pp. 504-522.

**Happy Winter Break!**

**Unit 2: Basho**

**Thursday, January 4 – Pilgrimage and Sacred Space**

* No assigned readings

**Week 3 – The Wanderings of Basho**

**Monday, January 8 – 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.

**Thursday, January 11 – 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.

**Friday, January 12 – 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.

**Week 4 – The Narrow Road to Andover’s Interior**

**Monday, January 15 – Martin Luther King, JR. Day**

* Note: Class does not meet

**Tuesday, January 16 – 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.

**Thursday, January 18 – Writing Workshop**

* No assigned readings; work on essays

**Friday, January 19 – Writing Workshop**

* No assigned readings; work on essays

**Unit 3: Pilgrimage in the 21st Century**

**Week 5 – Introduction to Contemporary Pilgrimage**

**Monday, January 22 – Due: Essay #1**

* Due: Essay #1

**Thursday, January 25 – Introduction to Contemporary Pilgrimage**

* Read: S. Brent Plate, “Introduction: The Varieties of Contemporary Pilgrimage,” *CrossCurrents* 59.3 (2009): 260-267.

**Friday, January 26 – Friday Free (No Class)**

* Class does not meet

**Week 6 – Contemporary Pilgrimage: Case Studies**

**Monday, January 29 – The Happiest Place on Earth**

* Read: Eric Michael Mazur and Tara K. Koda, “The Happiest Place on Earth: Disney’s America and the Commodification of Religion,” *God in the Details: American Religion in Popular Culture*, eds. Eric Michael Mazur and Kate McCarthy (New York; London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 299-315.

**Thursday, February 1 – The Rise of Dark Tourism**

* Read: TBD

**Friday, February 2– Virtual Pilgrimage**

* Read: TBD

**Week 7 – Contemporary Pilgrimage: Case Studies**

**Monday, February 5 – Mid-Winter Break**

* Note: Class does not meet

**Tuesday, February 6 – Burning Man and Pilgrimage**

* Read: Sarah M. Pike, “Desert Goddesses and Apocalyptic Art,” *God in the Details: American Religion in Popular Culture*, eds. Eric Michael Mazur and Kate McCarthy (New York; London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 155-176.

**Thursday, February 8 – Writing Workshop**

* No assigned readings; work on essays

**Friday, February 9 – Release Time**

* Haiku Assignment outside of class

**Unit 4: Independent Projects**

**Week 8 – Independent Projects**

**Monday, February 12 – Final Project Orientation**

* Due: Essay #2

**Thursday, February 15 – OWHL: Library Research Session**

* Note: Class will meet in the library
* Due: Research Topic

**Friday, February 16 – OWHL: Library Research Session**

* Note: Class will meet in the library
* Due: Annotated Bibliography

**Week 9 – Independent Projects**

**Monday, February 19 – Writing Workshop**

* Due: Rough Draft

**Thursday, February 22 – Final Presentations**

* Due: Presentations 1-4

**Friday, February 23 – Final Presentations**

* Due: Presentations 5-7

**Week 11 – Finals Week**

**Monday, February 26 – Conference Period**

* Note: Mr. Prescott available for meetings/conferences during regular class time

**Wednesday, February 28 – Due: Essay #3**

* Due: Final Paper