

“More than ever before, the ethical and human task of architecture and all the arts is to defend the authenticity and autonomy of human experience, and to reveal the existence of the transcendental realm, the domain of the sacred. This calls for the identification of the spiritual and holy, not only in the deliberate devotional contexts but in the ordinariness and humility of daily life.”

Juhani Pallasmaa, 2015

Intention

If there is something in which most religions agree on, it is that our ordinary human condition is not strong, pure, or enlightened enough to access the transcendent. For this reason faiths traditions have developed beliefs, teachings, and practices to guide us toward the divine, however different each defines it. Very much like a young tree that needs proper staking and care to grow healthy, so are religious pedagogies to guide our spiritual development. Also similarly, all religions have enlisted the built environment in this task, thus recognizing the capacity of architecture to teach/influence people in a wide range of theological practices and concerns. The amount of resources, effort, and passion religions and people have devoted to such pedagogical goals is recorded across space and time. Moreover, such record not only represents (arguably) the best architecture humanity has ever built but certainly a fundamental entry to understand our history. [This argument does not deny that sacred architectures are embedded in social, cultural, and political issues of their time (history) and place (nature)]. Despite the many commonalities among religions, it is evident that different faiths advance different ways to make us grow closer to the transcendent. For instance and citing Stephen Prothero’s scholarship, we find spiritual guidance based on submission (Islam), salvation (Christianity), propriety (Confucianism), devotion (Hinduism), awakening (Buddhism), connection (Yoruba), exile/return (Judaism), and flourishing (Daoism).

In this seminar, we’ll approach the multifarious expressions of sacred architecture from three perspectives. **One** will be comparative and has the goal to discern the similarities and differences among today’s 8 most popular religions in the world. While keeping special attention to Christianity, Stephen Prothero’s book *“God is Not One”* (reference below) will provide us with a general theological and cultural context for the course. The **second** viewpoint will consider the three pillars of Christian spiritual practice (i.e., fasting, prayer, and charity) to illuminate the central pedagogical tasks that at least Catholic sacred spaces ought to invite and support. The simple, clear, and powerful book *“The Spirituality of Fasting”* by Charles Murphy (along other readings) will guide this inquiry. The **third** perspective will use Lindsay Jones’ *“The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture”* (reference below) to study the three fundamental priorities of sacred architecture is trusted to perform (i.e., orientation, commemoration, and ritual context). Students will need to demonstrate their understanding and ability to engage these three perspectives through a series of assignments.

Operation

The course will work as a seminar and use a variety of pedagogic tools to accomplish its goals, namely (1) lectures, (2) readings, (3) assignments, (4) formal and informal reviews, and (5) personal instruction and follow-up by the instructor.



Almsgiving



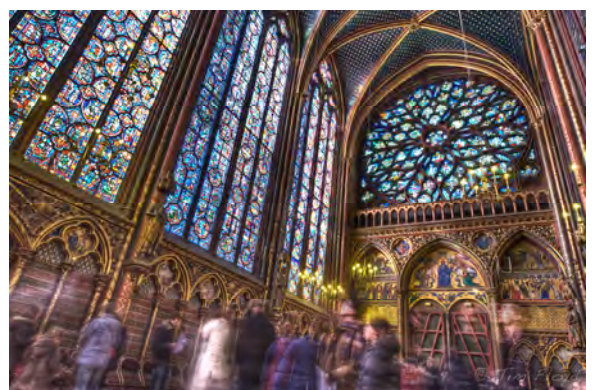
Fasting



Praying



Borodubur Temple, Indonesia



Sainte-Chappelle Chapel, France

Course Main Texts

Diverse readings and sources (film, video, web, etc.) will be used during the semester. However, our inquiry will unfold around these four books:

- + J. Bermudez, *Transcending Architecture* (CUA Press 2015)
- + L. Jones, *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture* (Harvard University Press, 2000)
- + C. M. Murphy, *The Spirituality of Fasting* (Ave Maria Press, 2010)
- + S. Prothero, *God is not One* (Harper One, 2010)

Assessment

The weight of each of the three Learning Units will be broken down as follows:

- Assignment [1] : **Fasting/Prayer/Charity** (20%)
Assignment [2] : **Orientation/Commemoration/Ritual** (40%)
Assignment [3] : **Interpretation/Integration/Application** (30%)

Assignments will be evaluated using criteria defined in each exercise. Consideration of a student's overall growth (i.e., skills, knowledge, attitude, questioning, etc.), active participation, collaborative practice, citizenship, and committed effort throughout the semester will comprise **10%** of the semester grade.

Bibliography of Reference

- Alexander, Christopher (1979) *The Timeless Way of Building*. Oxford University Press, New York.
- Ardalan, Nader et al (2014) "Transcendent Architecture. A Pilot Study of Works, Conditions, and Practices." Unpublished manuscript (ACS 6 Symposium in Toronto, Canada)
- Ardalan, Nader and Laleh Bakhtiar (2000) *The Sense of Unity*., Kazi Publications, Chicago, IL.
- Barrie, Thomas; Bermudez, Julio and Tabb, Phillip (2015) *Architecture, Culture, and Spirituality*. Ashgate Press, Surrey, England.
- Barrie, Thomas (2017) *House and Home*. Routledge, New York.
- Barrie, Thomas (2010) *The Sacred In-Between: The Mediating Roles of Architecture*. Routledge, New York.
- Barrie, Thomas (1996) *Spiritual Path, Sacred Place: Myth, Ritual, and Meaning in Architecture*. Shambhala, Boston.
- Bergmann, Sigurd (2012) *Theology in Built Environments*, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, NJ.
- Britton, Karla (2011) *Constructing the Ineffable: Contemporary Sacred Architecture*, Yale University, New Haven CT
- Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2000) Second Edition, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City..
- Eliade, Mircea (1959) *The Sacred and The Profane- The Nature of Religion*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World
- Heidegger, Martin (1971). *Poetry, Language, Thought*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York
- Kahn, Louis (2003) *Essential Texts* (R.Twonbly editor), Norton, New York.
- Keating, Thomas (1995) *Open Mind, Open Heart*, Continuum Publishing Company, New York
- Krinke, Rebecca (2005) *Contemporary Landscapes of Contemplation*, Routledge, New York.
- Lawlor, Anthony (1994) *The Temple in the House*, Putman, New York.
- Mann, A. T. (1993) *Sacred Architecture*. Element Books.
- Otto, Rudolf (1958) *The Idea of the Holy*, Oxford Univ Press, USA
- Pennington, M.Basil (2001) *Centering Prayer*, Doubleday, New York.
- Pope Francis (2015) *Encyclical Laudato Si': On Care of our Common Home*.
- Stegers, Rudolf (2008) *Sacred Buildings (Design Manuals)*, Birkhäuser, Basel, Switzerland.
- Wilber, Ken (2006) *Integral Spirituality*. Shambala, Boston.



Mt. Huashan Taoist Monastery, China



Ibn Tulun Mosque, Egypt



Yoruba Temple, Nigeria.



Virupaksha Temple, India.



Wailing Wall, Israel.



Confucius Temple, Taiwan.