



Niomon Gate: Ninnaji temple, Kyoto, Japan 2013



Vietnam War Memorial, Washington, D.C.

Awesome landscapes, holy ground and sacred space define the content of this course. Our intention is to examine the following sacred landscapes in order to understand their structure, form and meaning. This list is only a beginning as our strategy is to eventually elaborate these examples and others as our conceptual understandings evolve through the course.

Acropolis, Athens, Greece
Alhambra, Granada, Spain
Angkor Thom, Cambodia
Central Park, New York City
Delphi, Greece
Ise Shrine, Japan
Isfahan, Iran
Jerusalem and the Temple Mount, Israel
Machu Picchu and the Sacred Valley of the Inca, Peru
Masonic Cemetery, Eugene, Oregon
Lincoln Memorial, Washington, D.C.
Mikaya groves of the Mijikenda, Kenya
Navajo Four Sacred Mountains, Arizona
Sanchi, India
Sant'Ivo alla Sapienza, Rome
Stonehenge, England
Taj Mahal
Temple of Heaven, Beijing
Vietnam War Memorial
Yosemite National Park, California

Engaging these landscapes inspires us to consider those *transcendent core concepts* shared in common by these sacred sites. Each of the landscapes that we examine should engage the following qualities....some more than others. The intent is to thread these concepts together in ways that inextricably tie them to the divine.

Pilgrimage: the unfolding landscape of journeying dramatizes the noble quest for truth, justice, enlightenment and the golden fleece. (Lao Tzu, Ulysses, Jason, Moses, Siddhartha, Kerouac, The Three Princes of Serendip, etc.). Articulating the destination and the sequence of experiences that shape the adventure.

Sacred and profane: gateways, thresholds, geomorphic edges, boundaries hierologically revealing the meaning of sanctuary within the context of an unpredictable chaotic ecological and cultural context. Visions of paradise, ruins and the juxtaposed intensity of secular and sacred space define this illuminated dialectic.

Respite: a place of tranquility, serenity, peace....within the cacophony of time captured as one finds the space to pause in reflective contemplations engaging the moment of transcendence.

Symbolic imagery: allegorically allude to archetypal understandings. Numinous references: river, mountain, grove and cave define divine sense of place. Spiritual experience becomes palpable.

Materiality: Indigenous, in situ patterns of earth, stone, wood, water and sophisticated, often anonymous craftsman skilled in the building of sacred sites. Spiritual construction endeavor of devotion: Tree of Life (Bodhi/Ashoka), Ise Shrine, healing springs,

Structure: elaborated geometries, hierarchically defining an order of intentional relationships. Integrity of system is expressed in the clarity of ordered landscape. Infrastructural ordering of landscape systems: transportation, water, energy patterns, communication, etc.

Landscape Time: Enduring distillation of cultural heritage. Essence of place preserved and enhanced through generations of transcendent/mystical spatial articulation as in Ryoan-ji/Tokai-an/Villa Lante

Ritual: accoutrement of interaction, the dance of celebration, the honoring of personal reflection and the elements of ritual...tea ceremony, candle light, universal dietary ingredients and holiday recipes.

Collective Effervescence: the simultaneity of community values...creation of a collective sensibility (Emile Durkheim)

Intimacy: relationships emanating from ensembles of individuals, communities, nations, global connections, societal endeavors engaging compelling insights into the humanistic web of life which binds us all together.

Wonder: admiration, pure innocence of amazement, or awe; marvelous and intriguing.

The prisms through which we perceive these landscapes are inevitably multi faceted as in the Temple Mount in Jerusalem and Ise Shrine in Japan. Pilgrimage, the definition and understanding of sacred and profane, the symbolic imagery embedded in the iconography of these gardens, their exquisite materiality, eternal sense of being and structural clarity dramatize our focus on the existential nature of these sacred landscapes.

Requirements and grading:

A 20 minute +/- power point presentation of a sacred site of your choosing is a requirement of this class. This presentation will include analytical drawings describing the structure, form and meaning of these landscapes. Individual tutorials will supplement our class time preparations. 40%

Essays regarding the content of readings and presentations 25%

Attendance and participation 10%

Final design project: The project is intended to provide you with an opportunity to design a sacred space. Personal reflections, affinity with a particular material or a story you wish to tell should inform this endeavor. 25%

Sacred sites abound

Kyoto: nestled on the south facing ecotone, structured in landscape time and anthropomorphised through urban geomancy and the tatami mat, shoji, fusuma structural system. The geometry of Katsura detached palace encloses the serpentine gardens of Kobori Enshu and Prince Toshitada through geometries of extraordinary intimacy fabulously juxtaposed through the lense of a numinous mountainous frame.

Recommended References:

Mircea Eliade, The Sacred and Profane

Hunt, J.D. (2012). The World of Gardens

Weightman, B. Sacred Landscapes and the Phenomenon of Light

Emile Durkheim,

Shepard, P. (1967) Man in the Landscape: A Historic View of the Aesthetics of Nature

Randolph T. Hester, Sacred Structures and Everyday Life: A Return to Manteo, North Carolina