

# SACRED SPACES [Summer-C 2024]

UF Graduate School of Architecture, CityLab-Orlando; Instructor: Albertus S. Wang; Credit Hours: 3 Credit Hours

Course Code : ARC6705-088D (15906)

Meeting Venue : ZOOM Meeting Room (re. Canvas)

Meeting Time : Wednesdays (09:00-12:00 EST)

Office Hours : ZOOM Meeting Room (by appointment)

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Sacred and profane typically come in pairs as a dichotomy, but what does sacredness mean in the context of architecture? The term 'sacred space' commonly denotes 'religious space,' yet in fact in architecture, it encompasses more than mere religious significance. Religious spaces in contemporary context have shifted even further towards pragmatism, requiring less emphasis on encompassing sacredness.

What constitutes a place or space to become or continue to be 'sacred'? Does sacredness rely on the types of practices or rituals performed there? Or does it depend on the historical or mythological particularities associated with that specific sacred place or space, as well as the social events that have occurred within it? Are all sacred places/spaces fundamentally the same, or are they different from one another? How do we compare these places/spaces? These are some of the preliminary questions to be addressed in this seminar. However, the crucial aspect of this study lies in the fact that 'sacred space' embodies what architecture should encompass, from its conceptualization to the potential spatial experience and the physicality of its construction. The Greeks positioned sacred space between the celestial and sub-lunar realms, specifically in the supra-lunar world, where humans and gods converge. The concept of love will be employed to illustrate the potential common ground between sacred space and architecture as a whole, drawing from Alberto Perez-Gomez's concept of 'Build Upon Love,' which pertains to architecture itself. Architecture is fundamentally about love and striving towards immortality.

Many cultures have devoted considerable resources to the making of these sacred architecture and places for worship, prayer and meditation. Sacred geometry and proportion, iconography, semiotics (signs, symbols and motifs) are four aspects that often regulate the decision on site selection, orientation of the building or the integration of the arts. Using short narratives, articles, books, cross-references and architecture, paintings, the seminar discusses various sacred architecture from different cultures, belief systems and religions; among them are churches, mosques, stupas, synagogues and temples. The discussions in class compare the "ideal" spatial orientation and configuration of each typology from the "real" settings where the ideals must adjust with the conditions of the real sites and their economical and socio-political realities. The seminar expands understanding of sacred spaces beyond literal physical architecture, and approaches the topic using various entry-points: a pilgrimage as a sacred journey, the mind and heart as the innermost sacred place, ...

## COURSE OBJECTIVE

This seminar expands understanding of sacred spaces beyond literal physical architecture and approaches the topic using various entry-points ... ideally, in a Platonic 'peripatetic'<sup>1</sup> setting or along a pilgrimage - a sacred journey, where the mind and heart, as the innermost sacred places, engage in dialogue while physically moving about, emphasizing the importance of constant engagement with the context.<sup>2</sup> Instead, we will be using Zoom, a visually dominant modality presented in a two-dimensional frame.

Sacred space could be understood as one architecture typology where spiritual meaning, spatial experience, and physical manifestation in the form of space makers are realized. In a sacred space, "celestial" realm exists alongside

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<sup>1</sup> Gr. *peripatetikos*, given to talking about.

<sup>2</sup> \*). Platonic Academy on a grove/garden named after a legendary Athenian hero, *Academos*. The garden was inherited from his uncle, Charmides. \*). Aristotle's Lyceum \*). *mens sana in corpore sano*.

the human "sub-lunar" world, allowing access to the "supra-lunar" world where gods and humans converge. We would explore whether we could equate sacred space as the architecture itself as its totality.

This course is particularly designed for architecture students and the objectives are:

1. First, with greater depth, critical study and research into the notion of sacred place/space in architecture, students will develop their own understanding about sacred space, which will inform their design approach and decision.
2. Second, through theoretical framework, cross-references, close readings and class discussions of articles and books, students will develop skills in comparative study between conceptual understanding on sacred space/place in architecture, literatures and the arts (especially in paintings) versus spatial and ritual experience in architecture.
3. Third, to enrich the discussion on sacred space (or architectural space in general), students will engage in interdisciplinary studies, as an attempt to overcome disciplinary-bound ways of investigating design and spatial experience.

## READING MATERIALS

- Pallasmaa, Juhani. *The Eyes of the Skin*. West Sussex, England: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 2015.
- Zou, Hui. "Dao and Chora." *Vorkurs 3* (2019).
- Plato. *Symposium*. Translated by Robin Waterfield. Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Perez-Gomez, Alberto. *Built upon Love: Architectural Longing after Ethics and Aesthetics*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2006.

## OTHER READINGS (on your own)

- Frascari, Marco. "The Tell-the-Tale Detail." In *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture: An Anthology of Architectural Theory 1965-1995*, edited by Kate Nesbitt. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996.
- Luis Borges, Jorge. *Labyrinths*. A New Directions Book, 1962.
- Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations*. NY, NY: Schocken Books, 1969.
- Arnheim, Rudolf. *Visual Thinking*. Los Angeles, CA: University of California, 1969.  
Rudolf Arnheim's *Visual Thinking* \$1.45  
([https://www.alibris.com/search/books/isbn/9780520018716utm\\_source=Google&utm\\_medium=cpc?utm\\_campaign=NMPi\\_Smart\\_Shopping&utm\\_term=NMPi\\_Smart\\_Shopping&ds\\_rl=1264488&ds\\_rl=1264488&gclid=Cj0KCQjwzN71BRCOARIsAF8pjfhyGpWpsPZq8xbfmTWtUcZamVBkPhRQ0P-5oi9x4DWpW0EKiY0XR20aAqLsEALw\\_wcB&qclsrc=aw.ds](https://www.alibris.com/search/books/isbn/9780520018716utm_source=Google&utm_medium=cpc?utm_campaign=NMPi_Smart_Shopping&utm_term=NMPi_Smart_Shopping&ds_rl=1264488&ds_rl=1264488&gclid=Cj0KCQjwzN71BRCOARIsAF8pjfhyGpWpsPZq8xbfmTWtUcZamVBkPhRQ0P-5oi9x4DWpW0EKiY0XR20aAqLsEALw_wcB&qclsrc=aw.ds))

## DELIVERABLES

- Mid-Term: 1 Synthesis Matrix
- Pre-final submission: a draft (300-word abstract + 2,500-word literature review (in Chicago style).
- Final submission
- Use AI smartly and ethically

## SCHEDULE

The following is a tentative schedule. Adjustment might be made depending on class progress and response, considering that this is our first time that we conduct this class online.

SUMMER SEMESTER 2024										
	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	Week	TOPICS	
May	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	01	May 15 Introduction	
		-- Drop/Add --							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading, Annotated Bibliography (Notetaking)</li> <li>• Citation, Plagiarism</li> <li>• In-Text vs. Pulled Citation</li> <li>• Word-Citation, Zotero</li> <li>• Discussion</li> </ul>	
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18			
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25			
26	Holiday 27	28	29	30	31				02	May 22 Presentation, Discussion
June							1		03	May 29 Presentation, Discussion
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		04	Jun 05 Presentation, Discussion
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15		05	Jun 12 Presentation, Discussion
	16	17	18	Holiday 19	20	21	22		06	Jun 19 Presentation, Discussion
	23	24	25	26	27	28	29		07	Jun 22-30 Summer Break
30	-- Drop/Add --			Holiday					08	Jul 03 Presentation, Discussion
July		1	2	3	4	5	6		09	Jul 10 Presentation, Discussion
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		10	Jul 17 Presentation, Discussion
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	Jul 24 Presentation, Discussion	
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	12	Jul 31 Presentation, Discussion	
28	29	30	31					13	Aug 07 Research Paper / No Class	
Aug.					1	2	3			
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17			

## COURSE DELIVERY

All class meetings will be done via ZOOM (a cloud-based video conferencing platform), and all presentations will utilize both ZOOM and Miro. Please download the two “platforms”, if you have not used them. During class sessions, please try to turn on your camera, unless during break. While attending presentations, please mute your microphone, and turn it on again when speaking.

WEEK	DATES		TOPICS (Time: 09:00-12:00)
01	May 15	01. 02. 03.	09:00-10:00 / Introduction to Course; Lectures on Sacred Spaces in Architecture 10:00-10:30 / Annotated Bibliography (Notetaking) 10:45-11:45 / Citation/Plagiarism/Zotero 11:45-12:00 / Introduction to Reading “The Eye of Skin” by Juhani Pallasma (Who is Juhani Pallasma? Steven Holl? Caravaggio?)
			Note: “The Eyes of Skin” by Juhani Pallasmaa “The Intelligence of Perception” by Rudolf Arnheim (Read also Ch.1-2)
02	May 22	01. 02. 03.	09:00-10:00 / Presentation-1; Pallasmaa’s The Eyes of the Skin 10:15-11:15 / Presentation-2; “The Intelligence of Perception” by Rudolf Arnheim 11:30-12:00 / Q&A; Discussion; Introduction to Platonic Dialogue - Symposium
			Note: “Dao and Chôra” by Hui Zou; Socrates’s terminology - Chôra = Khôra “Symposium” by Plato
03	May 29	01. 02.	09:00-10:00 / Hui Zou’s Dao and Chora 10:15-11:15 / Lecture: Platonic Dialogue – Symposium
			Note: you may get other versions/translations of symposium
04	Jun 05	01. 02. 03.	09:00-10:00 / Presentation-1; APG’s Built Upon Love pp. 03-28 10:15-11:15 / Presentation-2; APG’s Built Upon Love pp. 31-65 11:30-12:00 / Q&A; Discussion
			Note: APG’s writing is dense and difficult, but be patient
05	Jun 12	01. 02. 03.	09:00-10:00 / Presentation-1; APG’s Built Upon Love pp. 03-28 10:15-11:15 / Presentation-2; APG’s Built Upon Love pp. 31-65 11:30-12:00 / Q&A; Discussion
			Note: APG’s writing is dense and difficult, but be patient
06	June 19	01. 02. 03.	09:00-10:00 / Presentation-1; APG’s Built Upon Love pp. 69-107 10:15-11:15 / Presentation-2; APG’s Built Upon Love pp. 111-120 11:30-12:00 / Q&A; Discussion
			Reminder: Submit Synthesis Matrix
07	Jun 22-30		Summer Break; No Class
08	Jul 03 PR	01. 02.	09:00-11:30 / Synthesis Matrix 11:30-12:00 / Lecture on Paintings; Discussion: Eros and Philia, according to Socrates vs. APG. Why matters to architecture?
			Reminder: keep your notetaking
09	Jul 10 PR	01. 02.	09:00-10:00 / Presentation-1; APG’s Built Upon Love pp. 123-133 11:30-12:00 / Presentation-2; APG’s Built Upon Love pp. 137-143 11:30-12:00 / Q&A; Discussion
			Reminder: keep your notetaking
10	Jul 17 PR	01. 02.	09:00-10:00 / Presentation-1; APG’s Built Upon Love pp. 123-133 11:30-12:00 / Presentation-2; APG’s Built Upon Love pp. 137-143 11:30-12:00 / Q&A; Discussion

			Reminder: keep your notetaking
10	Jul 17	01. 02. 03.	09:00-10:00 / Presentation-1; APG's Built Upon Love pp. 147-153 10:15-10:45 / Presentation-1; APG's Built Upon Love pp. 167-184 11:00-12:00 / Q&A; Discussion
			Submit Revised Synthesis Matrix
11	Jul 24	01. 02. 03.	09:00-10:00 / Presentation-1; APG's Built Upon Love pp. 187-196 10:15-11:15 / Presentation-2; APG's Built Upon Love pp. 203-211 11:30-12:00 / Q&A; Discussion
12	Jul 31	01.	Q&A
			Submit Draft
13	Aug 07		NO CLASS
		*	Homework: Work on Research Paper; Due Date Aug 07 @ 23:59 (11:59pm)

Note: Short presentations will be added during the semesters between students' presentations.

## ATTENDANCE:

All students are expected to attend every scheduled seminar meeting. It is not possible to make up a missed meeting session. Each reading assignment must be done prior to class meeting, and each session will comprise of presentation and discussion about the readings and other cross-references. As a result, our policy on attendance is extremely strict: ANY absence must be explained. Call the office and have a note left for your professor or contact your professor via email. It is your responsibility to get the assignments from your fellow students. Note that two or more absences may adversely affect your grade, and THREE absences can constitute an automatic drop from the course or a failing grade. Chronic lateness can also affect your grade. It is never permissible to miss a seminar meeting. Nor is it permissible to be late or to leave early. It will be considered a direct insult to your fellow classmates. If something is seriously wrong, please talk to us about it. Arrangements can be made to cope with serious illness, family issues, or personal crises.

## PERFORMANCE & GRADING

Class Participation/Discussion 25%; Readings Summary 15%; Presentation 20%; Final paper 40%

Grading Scale:

Letter Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
Numeric Grade	93-100	90-92	87-89	83-86	80-82	77-79	73-76	70-72	67-69	63-66	60-62	0-59
Quality Points	4.0	3.67	3.33	3.0	2.67	2.33	2.0	1.67	1.33	1.0	0.67	0.0

To clarify the system of grading for studio classes:

- A Outstanding work only
- A- Close to outstanding
- B+ Very Good Work
- B Good Work
- B- Good work with some problems
- C+ Slightly Above Average Work
- C Average Work
- C- Average Work with some problems
- D+ Poor Work with some effort

- D Poor Work
- E Inadequate Work

The current UF grading policies for assigning grade points can be found at <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>.

Note the new provisions relating to minus grades. An incomplete grade may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor as an interim grade only in cases of extreme extenuating circumstances. The University of Florida maintains a student honor code regarding cheating and use of copyrighted materials produced by others. Specific policies can be found at: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/honorcode.php>.

## **POLICY ON RETAINING WORK**

Please note that the University of Florida College of Design, Construction and Planning policies state that students' work may be retained indefinitely for academic purposes. You should be prepared for the instructor to ask that it be exhibited and/or photographed during or after the term. Having your work retained for photography and/or exhibition is evidence of its quality and value to the school. You will always be able to either retrieve your original work or retrieve it temporarily to make copies/photograph it for your own personal purposes.

## **STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

Students with special physical needs and requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. All attempts to provide an equal learning environment for all will be made.