

**SACRED PLACES**  
**Fall 2020**

**Professor Lars Fogelin**

Wednesdays 1 PM - 3 PM, October 7, 14, 21, 28, and November 4, 2020

**Course Description:**

Religion is often viewed as among the most intangible aspects of culture. Yet, from cathedrals to pyramids, some of the largest and longest lasting monuments of past societies are religious. Today, people throughout the world continue to worship in, make pilgrimages to, and fight over sacred places. This class introduces students to the study of religion through the techniques of anthropology and archaeology. Specifically, we examine in detail the ways that sacred places reflect and shape the religious world of the people who create and use them. The key idea is that sacred places are not simply large, beautiful, evocative structures, but are also locations where people create their world, build their alliances, and allay their fears. Each week we discuss a foundational scholarly approach to religion and then analyze how that approach can help us understand the design and use of sacred places. Along the way, we study sacred places from India, Japan, Africa, North America, and Europe among others.

**Readings:**

There is no textbook for this course. Instead, please read the PDFs available on the course website. Readings listed under each date are those to be discussed on those days. Please try to read those assignments in advance.

**Class Schedule:**

Week 1: Forging Community/Ancient Indian Stupas

Reading: Selections from Emile Durkheim's *Society and Anomie*

Week 2: Containing Power/The Mukanda Ritual

Readings: Selections from Mary Douglas's *Purity and Danger*

Week 3: Building the World/Stonehenge and Borobudur

Reading: Sherry Ortner's "On Key Symbols"

Week 4: Harnessing Power/Christian Churches

Reading: Selections from Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*

Week 5: Inventing Traditions/Japanese Teahouses

Reading: Selections from Paul Connerton's *How Societies Remember*

**Bio:**

Lars Fogelin is Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Arizona. An archaeologist, he studies the origin, development, and eventual collapse of Buddhism in India. In addition to his work in India, Fogelin studies the archaeology of religion, archaeological theory, architecture, and the philosophy of science. He has published numerous articles and four books: *Archaeology of Early Buddhism* (2006), *Religion, Archaeology, and the Material World* (2008), *An Archaeological History of Indian Buddhism* (2015), and *An Unauthorized Companion to American Archaeological Theory* (2019).