

George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
Hospitality, Tourism and Events Management

TOUR 342 DL1- Sacred Site / Dark Tourism
3 Credits, Spring 2018
Online

Faculty

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Prerequisites

TOUR 200, TOUR 210

University Catalog Course Description

In-depth examination of the tourist experience at popular sacred sites and at attractions that offer socially unapproved or harmful personal touristic experiences. Management issues at touristic sacred sites and dark tourism enterprises will be identified and compared.

Course Overview

The course identifies the nature of sacred sites and related tourist experiences (pilgrimage, gawking, conversion, enterprise). The juxtaposition of profane exposition and sacred involvement will be examined from participant and site management perspectives. Students will survey a range of practices for managing the sacred site tourism experience. The course also identifies the nature and extent of tourism that is based on socially unacceptable and possibly illegal leisure activities. Inversion theory will be applied to tourist behavior and the practical aspects of managing dark tourism will be examined. Students will compare the personal experiences and management challenges of sacred site tourism and dark tourism.

Course Delivery Method

This course will be delivered online using an asynchronous format via Blackboard Learning Management system (LMS) housed in the MyMason portal. Students will log in to the Blackboard (Bb) course site using their Mason email name (everything before @masonlive.gmu.edu) and email password. The course site will be available on December 15, 2017.

Under no circumstances, may students participate in online class sessions (either by phone or Internet) while operating motor vehicles. Further, as expected in a face-to-face class meeting, such online participation requires undivided attention to course content and communication.

Technical Requirements

To participate in this course, students will need to satisfy the following technical requirements:

- High-speed Internet access with a standard up-to-date browser, either Internet Explorer or Mozilla Firefox is required (note: Opera and Safari are not compatible with Blackboard).
- Students must maintain consistent and reliable access to their GMU email and Blackboard, as these are the official methods of communication for this course.
- Students may be asked to create logins and passwords on supplemental websites and/or to download trial software to their computer or tablet as part of course requirements.
- The following software plug-ins for PCs and Macs, respectively, are available for free download:
 - Adobe Acrobat Reader: <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>
 - Windows Media Player: <https://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/downloads/windows-media-player/>
 - Apple Quick Time Player: www.apple.com/quicktime/download/

Expectations

- Course Week: Because asynchronous courses do not have a “fixed” meeting day, the week will start on Monday, and finish on Saturday.
- Log-in Frequency: Students must actively check the course Blackboard site and their GMU email for communications from the instructor, class discussions, and/or access to course materials at least 3 times per week.
- Participation: Students are expected to actively engage in all course activities throughout the semester, which includes viewing all course materials, completing course activities and assignments, and participating in course discussions and group interactions.
- Technical Competence: Students are expected to demonstrate competence in the use of all course technology. Students who are struggling with technical components of the course are expected to seek assistance from the instructor and/or College or University technical services.
- Technical Issues: Students should anticipate some technical difficulties during the semester and should, therefore, budget their time accordingly. Late work will not be accepted based on individual technical issues.
- Workload: Please be aware that this course is **not** self-paced. Students are expected to meet *specific deadlines* and *due dates* listed in the **Class Schedule** section of this syllabus. It is the student’s responsibility to keep track of the weekly course schedule of topics, readings, activities and assignments due.
- Instructor Support: Students may schedule a one-on-one meeting to discuss course requirements, content or other course-related issues. Those unable to come to a Mason campus can meet with the instructor via telephone or web conference. Students should

email the instructor to schedule a one-on-one session, including their preferred meeting method and suggested dates/times.

- **Netiquette:** The course environment is a collaborative space. Experience shows that even an innocent remark typed in the online environment can be misconstrued. Students must always re-read their responses carefully before posting them, so as others do not consider them as personal offenses. *Be positive in your approach with others and diplomatic in selecting your words.* Remember that you are not competing with classmates, but sharing information and learning from others. All faculty are similarly expected to be respectful in all communications.
- **Accommodations:** Online learners who require effective accommodations to insure accessibility must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services.

Learner Outcomes or Objectives

This course is designed to enable students to do the following:

1. Differentiate between sacred and profane tourism sites and experiences.
2. Classify tourist sites or events according to their sacredness to different population segments.
3. Identify and describe management practices that protect or enhance the sacred experience.
4. Identify and develop management practices that appropriately interpret sacred sites or events to profane audiences.
5. Demonstrate appropriately respectful behavior at a variety of sacred sites.
6. Define and provide examples of dark tourism.
7. Describe the motivations and desired benefits of tourists traveling for ‘dark’ experiences.
8. Apply inversion theory to understanding the appeal of dark tourism.
9. Describe significant management challenges and opportunities in the field of dark tourism.
10. Compare and contrast the the personal experiences and management challenges of sacred site tourism and dark tourism.

Required Text

Timothy, D. and Olsen, D. 2006. *Tourism, Religion, and Spiritual Journeys.* (Contemporary Geographies of Leisure, Tourism and Mobility) Routledge. Pp. 304.

Course Performance Evaluation

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor (i.e. Blackboard).

- **Assignments and Examinations**

Module Tests (12)	120 points
Discussion responses	120 points
Assignments (3)	45 points
Final Exam	95 points
Site Visit	120 points

Submitted assignments must be original work and are to be submitted on-time and in the prescribed format. Directions for each assignment include an evaluation rubric.

Assignments may include:

1. A field trip report
2. A thoughtful response to an assigned reading
3. A comparative analysis of two religious or cultural perspectives
4. A survey of sacred touristic sites
5. A review of the history of a dark tourism destination
6. An inventory of dark tourism opportunities
7. A personal interview with a pilgrim

The evaluation rubric for each assignment outlines the criteria against which that assignment will be evaluated. Generally, these criteria include on-time submission, appropriate format, professional presentation, originality, and the inclusion of all elements of the assigned task.

All assignments must be typed and presented in a professional format. Only electronic versions of assignments will be accepted. Late assignments will not be accepted.

- **Other Requirements**

Active participation in on-line class discussions is required.

- **Grading Policies**

- The following semester point accumulation scale will be used by the instructor as a guide for determining the final grade:

- 480 -500+ A+
- 465 to 479= A (A grades indicate excellent performance on evaluated items)
- 450 to 464= A-
- 430 to 449= B+
- 415 to 429= B (B grades indicate very good performance on evaluated items)
- 400 to 414= B-
- 370 to 399= C+
- 350 to 369= C (C grades indicate adequate performance on evaluated items)
- 300 to 349= D (a D grade indicates marginal performance on evaluated items)
- 299 and below = F (an F grade indicates unacceptable performance on evaluated items)

Professional Dispositions

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

Core Values Commitment

The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles: <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>.

GMU Policies and Resources for Students

Policies

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students **solely** through their Mason email account.
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see <http://ods.gmu.edu/>).

Campus Resources

- Support for submission of assignments to Tk20 should be directed to tk20help@gmu.edu or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <http://coursessupport.gmu.edu/>.
- The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing (see <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>).
- The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance (see <http://caps.gmu.edu/>).
- The George Mason University Office of Student Support staff helps students negotiate life situations by connecting them with appropriate campus and off-campus resources. Students in need of these services may contact the office by phone (703-993-5376). Concerned students, faculty and staff may also make a referral to express concern for the safety or well-being of a Mason student or the community by going to

<http://studentsupport.gmu.edu/>, and the OSS staff will follow up with the student.

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website <https://cehd.gmu.edu/>.

Class Schedule

- Each module is presented during succeeding weeks throughout the semester. During each week, the student will review materials presented, complete assigned reading, contribute to on-line discussions, and be tested on that week's subject matter.
- No module is given for the week of Spring Break (March 12-17).
- The final module is given in the week of April 16-21.
- The Site Visit report is due on April 23.
- Students may take the on-line Final Exam anytime during the period of April 24-May 5.

DATE		TOPIC	READINGS/ASSIGNMENT DUE
22	January	27 Module 1 - Introduction	Chapters 1 and 2 Selected readings Discussion Test
29	Jan/Feb	3 Module 2 - Indo-Asian Pilgrimage	Chapters 9, 12, 14 and 15 Selected readings Discussion Test
5	February	10 Module 3 - Islamic and Jewish Pilgrimage	Chapters 11 and 13 Selected readings Discussion Test
12	February	17 Module 4 - Modern Christian Pilgrimage	Chapters 16 and 17 Selected readings Discussion Test Assignment #1
19	February	24 Module 5 - Secular Pilgrimage	Chapter 3 Selected readings Discussion Test
26	Feb/Mar	3 Module 6 - Sacred Site Management	Chapters 7 and 8 Selected readings Discussion Test

5	March	10	Module 7 - Dark Tourism (Introduction)	Selected readings Discussion Test Assignment #2
12	March	17	SPRING BREAK – No class meetings	
19	March	24	Module 8 - Survey of Dark Tourism Sites	Selected readings Discussion Test
26	March	31	Module 9 - Ethics and Morality	Selected readings Discussion Test
2	April	7	Module 10 - Other Shades of Dark	Selected readings Discussion Test Assignment #3
9	April	14	Module 11 - Economics and Management of Dark Tourism Sites	Selected readings Discussion Test
16	April	21	Module 12 - The Sacred / Dark Contradiction	Selected readings Discussion Test
23	April	23	Site Visit Report due	Site Visit Report
24	April/May	5	FINAL EXAM (On-Line)	
			On-Line Course Evaluation	

Note: The instructor reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

Assessment Rubrics

Included with the description of each assignment.