George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
School of Sport, Recreation, and Tourism Management

TOUR 342-DL1— Sacred Site / Dark Tourism
(3 credits) Fall 2023
Online - Asynchronous

Faculty

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Prerequisites/Corequisites

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

This is an upper-level 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 (76% or more) using an asynchronous format via Blackboard Learning Management system (LMS) housed in the MyMason portal. You will log in to the Blackboard (Bb) course site using your Mason email name (everything before @masonlive.gmu.edu) and email password. The course site will be available every day beginning August 20th, 2021. All course work and assignments must be completed within a strict timeline (See PROPOSED CLASS SCHEDULE below). **No late work is accepted.**

Under no circumstances, may candidates/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

In order 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, our week will start on Monday, and finish on Sunday.
- 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. Students are responsible for any and all information relayed on the website, including any announcements.
- 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. Keeping track of the weekly course schedule of topics, readings, activities, and assignments due is the student's responsibility.
- Instructor Support: Students may schedule a one-on-one meeting to discuss course requirements, content or other course-related issues. As the instructor is not on campus, all communication will be conducted via email, 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 others do not consider them personally 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 expected to be respectful in all communications as well.
- Accommodations: Online learners who require effective accommodations to insure accessibility must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services.

Course 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 personal experiences and management challenges of sacred site tourism and dark tourism.

Required Texts

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 through Blackboard. If there are issues with Blackboard, you may also email these assignments to the instructor. **No late work will be accepted.**

- **Assignments**
  This course will be graded on a point (and <u>NOT</u> on a percentage) system, with a total of 200 possible points. There are 5 grading requirements: (1) quizzes; (2) discussion posts; (3) group project; and (4) final paper. **Late work is not accepted**. Each requirement is briefly introduced below:

  1. Quizzes (20 points): There are two quizzes, one in Module 2 and one in Module 8. Each quiz is multiple choice and worth 10 points each.

  2. Discussion Board Posts (35 points): There are 7 discussion board posts. All initial posts are due by Friday at 11:59pm. You are also required to respond to two other posts, due Sunday nights by 11:59 pm. **You are required to put thoughtful reflections into your post, and will be graded accordingly.**

  3. Assignments (20 points): There are 2 assignments due, each is worth 10 points. See blackboard for instructions.

  4. Midterm (30 points): The Midterm is on Blackboard. It consists of 30 multiple choice questions from the assigned readings in Modules 1 through 7. You have 60 minutes to complete the test.

  5. Final Exam (30 points): The Final is on Blackboard. It consists of 30 multiple choice questions from the assigned readings in Modules 8 through 13. You have 60 minutes to complete the test.

  6. Site Visit (30 points): You must visit a local tourist site related to sacred sites or dark tourism. The approved list of sites can be found on blackboard. You must write a report and include pictures as evidence of your visit. See blackboard for more details.

  Note: SafeAssign will also help you to identify how to properly attribute sources rather than paraphrase, as well as to make sure that you are compliant with GMU's Honor Code.

  Other Requirements

Students are expected to respond to all emails from the instructor in a timely manner. Failure to do so will result in a loss of points coordinating to the assignment that necessitated the email.

- **Grading**
  This course will be graded on a point system, with a total of 175 possible points. **Late work will not be accepted.**

Requirements	Points
Quizzes (10 points each X 2 quizzes)	20
Discussion Posts (5 points each X 7 posts)	35
Assignments (15 points each X 2 assignments)	30
Site Visit	30
Midterm Exam	30
Final Exam	30
- TOTAL	175

Grading Scale

A+	= 170 – 175	B+	= 152 – 157	C+	= 135 – 139	D	= 105 – 122
A	= 165 – 169	B	= 147 – 151	C	= 130 – 134	F	= 0 – 104
A-	= 158 – 164	B-	= 140 – 146	C-	= 123 – 129		

Professional Dispositions

See https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/polices-procedures/

Class Schedule

PROPOSED CLASS SCHEDULE

WEEK	WEEKLY MODULES	TOPICS	READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS AND ACTIVITIES DUE
8/21-8/27	MODULE 1	Introduction: Tourism and Religious Journeys	Read Chapter 1	Discussion board posts (5 points)
8/28-9/3	MODULE 2	Sacred Spaces and Touristic Places	Chapter 2	Quiz #1 (10 points)
9/4-9/10	MODULE 3	Indo-Asian Pilgrimage	Chapter 9 Chapter 12	Discussion board posts (5 points)
9/11-9/17	MODULE 4	Islamic and Jewish Pilgrimage	Chapter 11 Chapter 13	Discussion board posts (5 points)
9/18-9/24	MODULE 5	Modern Christian Pilgrimage	Chapter 16 Catholic Pilgrimage Article	Assignment #1 (15 points)
9/25-10/1	MODLUE 6	Secular Pilgrimage	Chapter 3 Mt. Rushmore Secular Pilgrimage Site Article	Discussion board posts (5 points)

10/2-10/8	MODULE 7	Sacred Site Management	Chapter 8 Managing Ancient Sacred Sites Article	**Midterm Exam due Sunday, October 8th at midnight**
10/9-10/15	MODULE 8	Dark Tourism Introduction	Dark tourism: why are we attracted to tragedy and death? New Story A dark tourism spectrum Article	Quiz #2
10/16-10/22	MODULE 9	Survey of Dark Tourism Sites	Survey of sites Document	Assignment #2
10/23-10/29	MODULE 10	Ethics and Morality	Ethical Issue Article Tourism Ethics Article	Discussion board posts (5 points)
10/30-11/5	MODULE 11	Other Shades of Dark	Sex Tourism Article Naked Tourism Article	Discussion board posts (5 points)
11/6-11/12	MODULE 12	Economics and Management of Dark Tourism	The Rise of Dark Tourism Article Salem Article Thriving Article	Discussion board posts (5 points)
11/13-11/19	MODULE 13	The Sacred / Dark Contradiction	Commonalities in Managing Sacred Site and Dark Tourism Article	Assignment #3 – Site Visit Due 12/2/2023
11/20-11/26	Thanksgiving Break – No assignments			
11/27-12/2			No readings	**Final Exam due 12/2/2023**

Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary.

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/).

- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be silenced during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

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/.

- Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking: As a faculty member, I am designated as a "Responsible Employee," and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason's Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason's confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason's Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

- For information on student support resources on campus, see https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus

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