

Module Code	HPCA7019
Title	Sacred Skies
Date	04/02/2021
Level	7
Credits	30
Pre-Requisites	None

AIM(S)

- To explore the concept of the sky as sacred through culture.
- To become familiar with the theory and practice of archaeoastronomy and skyscape archaeology.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon the successful completion of this module, the student should be able to demonstrate:

- a systematic understanding of the relationship between notions of the sacred and meaning in the sky, including the mythology of the sky in a variety of cultures
- a sophisticated knowledge of theory and practice in the relationship between sky and stars, and the material, built and visual environment.
- a critical awareness of the mapping and representation of the sky, and the construction of meaning, through zodiacs, constellations and related systems.

INDICATIVE CONTENT

The Sacred

- What is the sacred?
- The sacred and profane
- Notions of the sacred as set apart or universal

Phenomenology and Reflexivity

- Academic concepts and applications of phenomenology
- Reflexivity: understanding the self in research
- Phenomenological versus objectivist views of the sky
- The phenomenological sky: the sky as a landscape, patterns, time and narrative, notions of place.
- The objective sky: the sky as a neutral resource or a place to be colonised, notions of space and large scale astronomy.

Field work basics and measurements

- How the Sky Moves
- Basic concepts of positional astronomy
- Long-term changes in the appearance of the sky
- Stars and star-phases
- Basics of archaeoastronomical measurement

Introduction to the key principles and coordinates of naked-eye astronomy:

- Precession of the equinoxes and movement of the celestial sphere.
- Solar, lunar and stellar cycles.

- The use of an astrolabe.

Mapping the sky.

- The history of zodiacs and constellations
- Cross cultural comparisons of sky mapping

Calendars

- Calendars and their construction.
- The basis of calendars in observations of the sun, moon and stars.
- Ritual and social uses of calendars

Star myth

- Introduction to stellar mythology – Babylonian, Indian, Chinese, Japanese
- Myths and story as navigation – Polynesian and other cultures.
- Moon myth and lore

Architecture and the Built Environment

- Egypt –Pyramids as cosmological buildings, astronomical ceilings.
- Europe - Cathedrals, stain glass, domes and the sky.
- Medieval and Renaissance imagery.
- Cosmograms and urban planning.
- Modern use of sky in buildings.

Archaeoastronomy and Skyscape archaeology

- Archaeoastronomy, history, theory and method
- Locating archaeoastronomy within academia
- Introduction to skylscapes and Skyscape Archaeology

The Arts, Literature

- Views of the sky in classical and sacred literature.
- Images of the sky in non-western art
- The sky in Medieval and Renaissance painting.
- The sky in literature.

Study Time Allocation

The study time for the module is divided as follows:

Activity type	Hours	Percentage
Scheduled learning	30	10%
Independent learning	270	90%
Placement learning		
TOTAL	300	100%

ASSESSMENT

Assessment Component 1

- ☐ Written exam
 ☒ Coursework
 ☐ Practical

Mode of assessment	Volume	Weighting
Essay	2,500 words	33%

Assessment Component 2

☐ Written exam ☒ Coursework ☐ Practical

Mode of assessment	Volume	Weighting
Essay	5,000 words	67%

Assessment Summary

Activity type	Percentage
Written exam	
Coursework	100%
Practical	
TOTAL	100%

INDICATIVE READING LIST

Module Code	HPCA7019	
Module Title	Sacred Skies	
Classification	Reading List entry	Electronic*
Essential	Gunzburg, Darrelyn, ed. <i>The Imagined Sky: Cultural Perspectives</i> . Sheffield: Equinox Publishing, 2016.	✓
Essential	Campion, Nicholas and Rolf Sinclair (eds), 'INSAPVII: Proceedings from the Seventh Conference on the Inspiration of Astronomical Phenomena', <i>Culture and Cosmos</i> , Vol. 16, (2012) no 1 and 2.	✓
Essential	Campion, Nicholas (ed.), <i>Heavenly Discourses</i> (Lampeter: Sophia Centre Press, 2016)	✓
Essential	Silva, Fabio and Nicholas Campion (eds), <i>Skyscapes – The Role and Importance of the Sky in Archaeology</i> (Oxford: Oxbow, 2015).	✓
Further	Ruggles, Clive, <i>Astronomy in Prehistoric Britain and Ireland</i> (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999).	✓
Further	Aveni, Anthony, <i>Foundations of New World Cultural Astronomy: A Reader with Commentary</i> , (Denver: University Press of Colorado, 2008)	✓
Further	Malville, J.McKim, <i>Guide to Prehistoric Astronomy in the Southwest</i> (Boulder: Johnson Books, 2008).	✓
Further	Renfrew, Colin and Paul Bahn, <i>Archaeology: Theories, Methods and Practice</i> (6th ed), London and New York: Thames and Hudson, 2012.	□
Further	Pauketat, Timothy R, <i>An Archaeology of the Cosmos</i> , London and New York: Routledge, 2013.	✓
Further	Ruggles, Clive (ed), <i>Handbook of Archaeoastronomy and Ethnoastronomy</i> , New York: Springer, pp. 459-472.	✓
Further	Silva, Fabio, 'A Tomb with a View: New methods for bridging the gap between land and sky in megalithic archaeology.' <i>Advances in Archaeological Practice</i> 2(1), 2014, pp.24-37.	✓
Further	Iwaniszewski, Stanisław, 'Ancient Cosmologies: Understanding Ancient Skywatchers and their Worldviews', <i>Journal of Cosmology</i> , 2010, Vol. 9.	✓
Further	Hayden, Brian and Suzanne Villeneuve, 'Astronomy in the Upper Palaeolithic?' <i>Cambridge Archaeological Journal</i> 21(3), 2011, pp.331-55.	✓

Further	Silva, Fabio, Malville, Kim, Lomsdalen, Tore and Frank Ventura (eds) <i>The Materiality of the Sky</i> . Lampeter: Sophia Centre Press.	✓
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