

**Sophia Centre for the Study of Cosmology in Culture
University of Wales, Lampeter,
Module: Sacred Geography
Module Code: MARCH7520**

Assessment

One 1000 word essay (20% of marks) due end week 6 (7 November 2008).

Either

Compare and critically contrast Mircea Eliade and Emile Durkheim's views of sacred space.

OR

Is Barbara Bender's theory of contested space complemented by Christopher Tilley's phenomenological perspective?

(NB. In both cases, your discussion need not be limited to the specified authors)

One 4000 word essay (80% of marks) due beginning week 12 (15 December 2008)

Sacred space is a human construct. Discuss this point of view with reference to the work of at least three theorists.

N.B. You must negotiate your choice of subject with your tutor.

This essay allows you to pursue a research project of your own choice, as long as it is encompassed within a discussion of the theory of sacred space. Your research may focus on any culture or be cross-cultural, or investigate any time period, historical or contemporary. You may consider sacred landscape, sacred architecture or sacred geometry. You may adopt a phenomenological approach, placing yourself in the study, or distance yourself from it. You may consider one space or many, or examine the practice of pilgrimage through the landscape or between places. You may focus on human interaction with place, perhaps through ritual. You may consider the design of sacred space, or its function. You may consider traditional practices such as Feng Shui or the application of astrology to place, or contemporary issues such as space and gender. Your data may be purely literary, or you can pursue an anthropological or sociological study. You can distance yourself from the topic of research, or be personal and reflexive – as long as you have the academic background. You may wish to delve into psychological issues, as long as you have the academic resources. You may look at landscape, sacred wells and groves, Christian cathedrals and churches, mosques, temples and synagogues, or shopping malls and sports stadia, or how we relate to the land as a source of meaning, nostalgia, hope, inspiration social cohesion or political identity. The obvious key theorists to use are Eliade, Cassirer, Tilley and Durkheim. But you may draw on texts from the rest of the module reading or from other modules, such as the material from the compulsory modules on post-modernism, modernism, reflexivity and phenomenology (if you need access to such material on Moodle, please ask).

Remember: always bear in mind the MA assessment criteria and writing guidelines.

