

APPROACHING SACRED SPACE

**APPROACHING SACRED SPACE:  
PLACES, BUILDINGS, AND BODIES IN ANCIENT ITALY**  
FALL 2024



Graduate Seminar  
**Time:** Thurs, 9.25-11.15am  
**Instructor:** Prof. Alexander Ekserdjian

Listed in Classics and History of Art

## APPROACHING SACRED SPACE

### Course Description

This graduate-level seminar will approach sacred space in ancient Italy (ca. 500 BCE – 100 CE) from several different evidential and methodological perspectives. The class will probe how different kinds of sacred artifacts (places, buildings, and bodies) textured ritual space, forming its recognizable character then and now. While assessing the available evidence for each of these categories (material, literary, epigraphic), we will devote time to untangling the ways that modern scholars and Roman authors have written about ancient holy places. The emphasis on ‘approach’ will also provide an avenue to begin to reconstruct the lived experiences of sacred space, moving from the realia of locations, structures, and objects to the possible responses of ancient people.

### Requirements and Evaluation

*The class requirements and the grade breakdown are as follows:*

Class Attendance, Participation	20%
Literature review for research paper topic (due in <u>Week 7</u> )	10%
Research Presentation with peer feedback (In class, Weeks 11-12)	20%
Research Paper (due electronically on <u>Sunday, Dec 15, by 5pm</u> )	50%

## APPROACHING SACRED SPACE

## MODULE 1 – APPROACHING THE SANCTUARY

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 Week 1 – Aug 29
 

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## Introductions

- Jaś Elsner, 'Material Culture and Ritual: State of the Question' in Bonna Wescoat and Robert Ousterhout (eds.), *Architecture of the sacred: space, ritual, and experience from classical Greece to Byzantium* (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 1-26.

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 Week 2 – Sept. 5
 

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## Approaching the Evidence for Sacred Spaces

- Archaeology: Emma Jayne Graham, 'Place' in *Reassembling Religion in Roman Italy* (Routledge, 2021), pp. 41-76.
- Text: Maik Patzelt, 'About servants and flagellants: Seneca's Capitol description and the variety of 'ordinary' religious experience at Rome' in Gasparini et al. (eds.), *Lived Religion in the Ancient Mediterranean World: Approaching Religious Transformations from Archaeology, History and Classics* (De Gruyter, 2020), pp. 117-136.
- Art: Christopher Hallett, 'The Wood Comes to the City: Ancient Trees, Sacred Groves, and the 'Greening' of Early Augustan Rome', *Religion in the Roman Empire*, vol. 7 (2021), pp. 221-274.

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 Week 3 – Sept. 12
 

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## Reconstructing Ancient Experience

- Big Picture: Dan-el Padilla Peralta, *Divine Institutions* (Princeton, 2020), 'Temples, Festivals, and Common Knowledge', pp. 131-177.
- Place-specific: Amanda Herring, 'Reconstructing the Sacred Experience at the Sanctuary of Hekate at Lagina' in *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 79, no. 3 (September 2020), 247–263.
- Single objects: Vicky Jewell, 'Haptic Colour: Experiential Viewing in Graeco-Roman Sacred Spaces' in Graham and Misić (eds.), *Senses, Cognition, and Ritual Experience in the Roman World* (Cambridge, 2024), pp. 89-117.

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**MODULE 2 – INSIDE THE SANCTUARY****Week 4 – Sept. 19**

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**Patrons and Pavements**

- Patrons and Politics: Penelope Davies, *Architecture and Politics in Republican Rome* (Cambridge, 2017), ONLY pp. 75-109.
- Patrons and Pavements: Mark Pobjoy, 'A New Reading of the Mosaic Inscription in the Temple of Diana Tifatina' in *Papers of the British School at Rome*, 1997, Vol. 65 (1997), pp. 59-88.
- Romans as patrons in Italy: Fay Glinister, 'Colonies and religious dynamism in mid-Republican Italy' in Stek and Burgers (eds.), *The impact of Rome on cult places and religious practices in ancient Italy* (London, 2015), pp. 145-156.

**Week 5 – Sept. 26**

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**Artists and Cult Statues**

- Meeting Gods: Verity Platt, *Facing the gods: epiphany and representation in Graeco-Roman art, literature and religion* (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 77-123 ('Material epiphany: encountering the divine in cult images').
- Making Gods: Eugenio La Rocca, 'Greek Sculptors in Rome: An Art for the Romans' in Palagia (ed.), *Handbook of Greek Sculpture* (Berlin, De Gruyter, 2019), pp. 579-619.

**Week 6 – Oct. 3**

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**Comparing Bodies**

- The view from above: Osborne, *The History Written on the Classical Greek Body* (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 185-215 ('Godsbodies').
- The view from below: Emma-Jayne Graham, 'Partible Humans and Permeable Gods: Anatomical Votives and Personhood in the Sanctuaries of Central Italy' in Draycott and Graham (eds.), *Bodies of Evidence* (Routledge, 2017), pp. 45-62.

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## MODULE 3 – CASES AND PLACES

Week 7 – Oct. 10

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**Case Studies: The Sanctuary of Diana at Nemi**

- Carin Green, 'The sanctuary of Diana at Aricia to the Augustan age' in *Roman religion and the cult of Diana at Aricia* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 3-33.
- Pia Guldager Bilde, 'The Sanctuary of Diana Nemorensis. The Late Republican Acrolithic Cult Statues' in *Acta Archaeologica* LXVI (1995), pp. 191-217.
- Francesca Diosono and Giulia D'Angelo, 'Nemi in contesto. La decorazione fittile delle diverse fasi del Tempio di Diana tra vecchie collezioni e nuovi dati stratigrafici' in *Deliciae Fictiles V. Networks and Workshops: Architectural Terracottas and Decorative Roof Systems in Italy and Beyond* (Oxbow, 2019), pp. 397-406.
- Francesca Diosono, 'Ricerche in corso nel santuario di Diana a Nemi' in *Dialoghi sull'archeologia della Magna Grecia e del Mediterraneo IV* (Pandemos, 2021), pp. 93-103.

**OCTOBER RECESS – NO CLASS ON OCT. 17**Week 8 – Oct. 24

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**Case Studies: The Temple of Fortuna Huiusce Diei**

- Daniele Miano, *Fortuna* (Oxford, 2018), pp. 99-113 ONLY.
- Anna Clark, *Divine Qualities* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 117-131 ONLY.
- Eleanor Leach, 'Fortune's Extremities: Q. Lutatius Catulus and Largo Argentina Temple B: A Roman Consular and his Monument' in *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 55 (2010), pp. 111-134.
- Maggie Popkin, 'Decorum and the Meanings of Materials in Triumphal Architecture of Republican Rome', *JSAH* 74.3 (2015), pp. 289-311.

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**Week 9 – Oct. 31**

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**Case Studies: The Thermal Sanctuary at San Casciano dei Bagni**

- Jacopo Tabolli, '1. Lost and Found: The Discovery of a Sanctuary at the Bagno Grande in San Casciano dei Bagni' in *Il santuario ritrovato* (Sillabe, 2021), pp. 13-21.
- Jacopo Tabolli, '1. Found and Refound: Two Years After' in *Il santuario ritrovato 2* (Sillabe, 2023), pp. 15-19.
- *Gli Dei ritornano: I Bronzi di San Casciano* (Treccani 2023). [Parallel text in English]

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**Week 10 – Nov. 7**

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**Case Studies: Munigua**

- Thomas Schattner, 'Munigua' in *Ciudades romanas de Hispania, 2. Cities of Roman Hispania, 2* (Rome, 2022), pp. 241-252.
- Filippo Coarelli, 'Munigua, Praeneste e Tibur. I modelli laziali di un municipio della Baetica', *Lucentum* 6 (1987), pp. 91-100.
- William Mierse, *Temples and towns in Roman Iberia: the social and architectural dynamics of sanctuary designs from the third century B.C. to the third century A.D.* (Berkeley, 1999), pp. 204-267, in particular. pp. 245-266.

**MODULE 4 – CONCLUDING**

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**Week 11 – Nov. 14**

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**Presentations**

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**Week 12 – Nov. 21**

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**Presentations**

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**Week 13 – Dec. 5**

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**Skills session: revising a paper**

\*\*\***Deadline: Sunday, December 15:** Research paper, due electronically.\*\*\*