

Places of Healing: Memory, Miracle, and Storytelling

Syllabus

A Cogut Center for the Humanities Topics Seminar
in collaboration with
Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology and the Ancient World
Fall 2012

Meets Fridays 3:00-5:20 pm at Pembroke Hall 202

Instructor: Ömür Harmanşah, Assistant Professor of Archaeology and Egyptology and Ancient Western Asian Studies and Cogut Center for the Humanities Faculty Fellow.

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Office Hours: Fridays 10 am-12 pm at Pembroke Hall 207

Course Description

The growing field of medical geography puts emphasis on the bodily experience of place and the production of local knowledge about specific places, while it draws on the constitutive link between bodies, wellness, memory, and place. From antiquity to our day, therapeutic landscapes such as mineral and thermal springs, mysterious caves, shrines and churches built at sacred springs, volcanic ash mud baths, rocky landscapes emitting odorous gasses that stimulate hallucination, and ponds filled with medicinal leeches that cure blood diseases, all attracted health pilgrims who immersed their bodies into the geological substance of these locales or ingested their waters for miraculous healing. Practices of storytelling transformed these locales into places of memory and long term pilgrimage. This seminar investigates places of bodily healing and miracle from a cultural studies perspective, and takes into account recent scholarly literature on place, bodily experience, memory, and storytelling. The case studies will be primarily drawn from the Mediterranean world and Western Asia. Special emphasis will be placed on geologically wondrous locales such as Lourdes in France, Hierapolis in Southeastern Turkey and the Agiasma churches of Byzantine Istanbul that link ancient places of healing to modern sites of pilgrimage and religious heritage.

Requirements

Most important expectation from the students is doing the weekly readings thoroughly, participating in the discussion sessions, and posing relevant questions during the seminars. Every Friday, the entire class will be dedicated to seminar discussions based on the weekly readings, following a brief introduction by the professor.

- **The chorus:** Starting with Week 3, each week I will ask 4-5 students to volunteer to act as the chorus for the discussion. The chorus will constitute the inner circle of discussants who will be responsible to do the weekly readings more carefully than others and be prepared to be very active during that week's discussion. Each chorus member will individually post 2-3 discussion questions on the wiki to be brought up the next day. Students who are outside this inner circle of discussants are also invited to intervene into the discussion and contribute but they are expected to respect the dominating role of

the chorus. Following the discussion, members of the chorus are expected write up brief responses in their logbooks, and/or post them on the wiki. It is advisable that you start looking at the weekly topics soon to choose your preferred theme for acting in the chorus.

- **Logbook: an intimate record:** You will be asked to keep a logbook throughout the semester to keep a consistent and rich documentation of your ideas, thoughts, projects, visual imagery that this class had provoked in your mind. You will use your logbook as a fieldbook and the exercise is intended to provide you the skills to keep a thorough and detailed record of your observations. Hard bound plain notebooks are recommended and are available at the bookstore. However you are free (and indeed encouraged to try different formats, or produce the logbook yourself. The logbook will be an accumulated product of the whole semester's work of note-taking, writing, sketching, drawing, cutting-pasting etc, using any kind of media. It will be your own design, your own work of art. It will be reviewed by Ömür twice during the semester. Expected minimum for the content of the logbooks will be the core concepts to be covered in seminar discussions. Please remember the logbook can not simply be composed of the notes that you keep in class. It is a written documentation of your personal thoughts and memories. Students who prefer to keep a digital notebook or those who'd like to create a blog instead of a logbook are welcome to do so.
- **Projects and Paper assignments:** You will be working on two small projects during the semester and a final research paper (12-15 pages). The deadlines for these projects and papers are on your weekly schedule. The first project (1500-2000 word essay with a visual component, written as a public access web document) will involve a group or individual work on a "place" or "landscape" in New England region and the stories attached to it. The topic(s) of the second assignment will be determined later, based on the interests of the class, but it will broadly look at the relationship between healing and the cultures of place. The final paper will be an 12-15 page individual research paper on a topic that is to be determined between you and the instructor. This final paper can be developed from the first two shorter writing assignments. It will be due in the beginning of the finals period (December 14th).
- **Grading:**
Attendance and Participation (including Chorus duty) 25%,
Two Projects 30%
Final Paper 30%
Logbook 15%

Books available at Brown Bookstore

- Bellamy, Carla; 2011. *The Powerful Ephemeral. Everyday Healing in an Ambiguously Islamic Place*. The University of California Press.
- Bradley, Richard; 2000. *An Archaeology of Natural Places*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Casey, Edward S.; 1993. *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Csordas, Thomas J.; 2002. *Body/meaning/healing*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Escobar, Arturo; 2008. *Territories of Difference: Place, Movements, Life, Redes*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Gesler, Wilbert M. and Robin A. Kearns; 2002. *Culture, Place and Health*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Gesler, Wilbert M.; 2003. *Healing Places*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Harris, Ruth; 2000. *Lourdes: Body And Spirit in the Secular Age*. Penguin.
- Tuan, Yi-Fu; 1977. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press.

Weekly Schedule

Schedule of Readings and Discussions

Week 1. September 7. *Introduction to Places of Healing: Keywords of the semester.*

Week 2. September 14. *Culture, place, and health: Gesler and the emerging field of medical geography.*

- Smyth, Fiona. 2005. "Medical geography: therapeutic places, spaces and networks." *Progress in Human Geography* 29.4: 488-495.
 - Gesler, Wilbert M. and Robin A. Kearns; 2002. *Culture, Place and Health*. London and New York: Routledge. Read the whole book.
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Week 3. September 21. *Place, Landscape and Space: the dwelling perspective*

- Heidegger, Martin; 1971. "Building, dwelling, thinking" in *Poetry, Language, Thought*. A. Hofstadler (trans.) Harper and Row: New York, Evanston, San Francisco, London.
 - Tuan, Yi-Fu; 1977. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press. (Chapters 1-4 and 9-10)
 - Casey, Edward S.; 2009. "How to get from space to place in a fairly short stretch of time" in *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 317-348.
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Week 4. September 28. *Political ecology: environment, places of cultural significance and local politics.*
[First writing assignment due- Places and Stories]

- Escobar, Arturo; 2008. *Territories of Difference: Place, Movements, Life, Redes*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1-68 and 111-155 (Chapters 1. place and 3. nature).
 - Appadurai, Arjun; 1996. "The production of locality," *Modernity at large: cultural dimensions of globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 178-199.
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Week 5. October 5. *Serbian landscapes of dreamtime and healing: Workshop with Marko Živković,*
Associate Professor of Anthropology, University of Alberta

- Živković, Marko; 2010. "Serbian landscapes of dreamtime and healing: clear streams, stones of prophesy, St. Sava's ribs, and the wooden city of Oz." In *Locating Health: Historical and Anthropological Investigations of Health and Place*. Erika Dyck and Christopher Fletcher (eds.). London: Pickering & Chatto, 169-186. (E-book)
- Basso, Keith. 1999. "Wisdom Sits in Places: Notes on a Western Apache Landscape." In *Senses of Place*. S. Feld & K. Basso eds. Boydell & Brewer, 53-90.

- Meier, Carl Alfred; 1966. "The dream in ancient Greece and its use in temple cures (incubation)" in *The Dream and Human Societies*. Gustave Edmund Grunebaum, Roger Cailliois, Gustave E. von Grunebaum Center for Near Eastern Studies. University of California Press, 303-318.
- Bilu, Yoram; 2000. "Oneirobiography and oneirocommunity in saint worship in Israel: A two-tier model for dream-inspired religious revivals," *Dreaming* 10: 85-101.
- Attend Marko Živković's Public Lecture at Brown:

Bubbles and Powder-Kegs: Buses in (ex)Yugoslav Imaginary

October 4th, at 5:30 pm, Cogut Center for the Humanities, Pembroke Hall 3rd Floor.

Week 6. October 12. *Body, health, healing: the corporeal experience of place*

- Csordas, Thomas J.; 2002. *Body/meaning/healing*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. (Selected Chapters)
 - Foley, Ronan; 2011. "Performing Health in Place: The Holy Well as a Therapeutic Assemblage," *Health & Place* 17: 470-479.
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Week 7. October 19. *Ancient practices and places of healing: From the cult of Asklepius in antiquity to Byzantine agiasma churches*

- Gesler, Wilbert M.; 2003. *Healing Places*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1-64.
 - Jackson, Ralph; 1990. "Waters and spas in classical antiquity" *Medical History* 10: 1-13.
 - Talbot, Alice-Mary; 2002. "Pilgrimage to Healing Shrines: The Evidence of Miracle Accounts." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 56: 153-173.
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Week 8. October 26. *Lourdes: springs, miracles, Marian apparitions, and the deep history of a healing place*

[Second writing assignment due- Place and Healing]

- Harris, Ruth; 2000. *Lourdes: Body And Spirit in the Secular Age*. Penguin. Read the whole book.
 - Gesler, Wilbert M.; 2003. "Lourdes: Healing Pilgrimages" in *Healing Places*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 65-82.
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Week 9. November 2. *Place, Healing, and Pilgrimage: Workshop with Carla Bellamy, Assistant Professor of South Asian Religion at Baruch College, New York*

- Bellamy, Carla; 2011. *The Powerful Ephemeral. Everyday Healing in an Ambiguously Islamic Place*. The University of California Press. Read the whole book.
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Week 10. November 9. *Towards an archaeology of natural places: Human interactions with the mineral world*

- Bradley, Richard; 2000. *An Archaeology of Natural Places*. London and New York: Routledge.

Week 11. November 16. *Hittite water cult and spring sanctuaries of rural Anatolia: healing landscapes*

- Harmansah, Omur; 2012. "Plato's Spring, Tudhaliya's Pool: Water, Place, and Storytelling in Hittite Landscapes" Unpublished manuscript.
- Erbil, Yigit and Alice Mouton; 2012. "Water in Ancient Anatolian Religions: An Archaeological and Philological Inquiry on the Hittite Evidence," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 71: 53-74.

November 23. Thanksgiving- no class

Week 12. November 30. Presentation of Final projects

Week 13. December 7. Presentations of Final Projects

December 8-12 Reading Period

December 14. Final Papers due