

**American Sacred Space**  
RELST 206 / WES 200

Definition of Sacred Space

- Assignment (from the class Website):

On (or before) the date specified, you must submit a statement (of no less than 1500 words) defining “sacred,” both generally and as it relates to your previously selected space. This paper must provide evidence of integrating arguments / definitions developed in class with the data gathered during your investigation of your previously selected space.

This statement will serve as the research foundation for your larger project, so be certain to consider different aspects of your topic: history / description of the space, descriptions of people connected to the space, etc.

- Strategies

> *BEFORE YOU START WRITING:*

Think about what you mean by designating the space you have selected as “sacred.”

- Have you chosen a space that others have designated as sacred? Why might they consider it sacred? Did something out of the ordinary happen there?
- Have you chosen a space that others have not designated as sacred? Might they agree with you (even a little) if they learned that you were identifying the space a sacred?
- Have you chosen a space that might be sacred only to you (and / or one other person)? Why do you consider it sacred? Did something out of the ordinary happen there?

> *ONCE YOU START WRITING:*

- Offer a definition: “Space can be defined as sacred if...”
- “Locate” your definition (in terms of what we’ve read):
  - In what ways (if any) does your definition borrow from others we have read (Eliade, Foote, Chidester / Linenthal, Lane, etc.)?
  - In what ways (if any) does it differ from others we have read?
- “Contextualize” your definition:
  - How might the space you’ve chosen serve as an example of your definition?
  - How might your definition be universalized (used in other situations)?
- Starting Prompt: “Sacred space can be defined as ...”