

**JERUSALEM: DESIRE AND CONFLICT**  
**Jewish, Christian and Islamic Appropriations of the Holy City**

**ARTH 533C**

Instructor: Carol Knicely  
Fall 2004

**Description**

As today terrorism and the wars in the Middle East are more and more fueled by rhetoric of religious conflict and holy war of crusades and jihad, there is an important need to understand just how old the roots of this predicament are. Much of the current problems including the rise of Muslim Fundamentalism can be traced to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Nowhere are these issues more raw and difficult than at the symbolic centre of this whole debate in the Holy City of Jerusalem. For centuries Jerusalem has been revered by Jews, Christians and Muslims, not only as a locus of many sacred sites, among them the Jewish Temple, the Holy Sepulchre and the Dome of the Rock and the Aqsa Mosque, but also a city tied up with national and personal dreams of redemption. Today political control over Jerusalem and its holy sites is one of the most difficult sticking points for any accord that hopes to end the current Arab-Israeli conflict. Jews and Arab Palestinians each claim they have superior rights to the city while many Christians around the world would prefer some international arrangement that would insure respect for Jerusalem's Christian holy sites as well. Moreover, historically, Jerusalem has been at the centre of the development of concepts and practices of holy war that today are engulfing our world in ever-wider hostilities. Beginning with a brief look at the contemporary Arab-Israeli conflict whose political and economic issues are made more difficult to solve because of religious and national identity concerns, the aim of this course is to promote a better understanding of this deep-rooted conflict by exploring the sanctity and centrality of Jerusalem to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (to paraphrase the title of a book edited by Lee I. Levine) from Biblical times through the Middle Ages considering both the actual city and the city as metaphor for salvation. Special attention will be given to the role of art and architecture as well as space, vision, pilgrimage and ritual as they have helped to construct, and often contest, meaning and memory of this site for diverse audiences.

**Evaluation**

Assessment will be based on general participation, exercises, performance as a discussant for readings (35%), research topic presentation (15%) and final written paper (50%). Suggested topics will be provided later but students may choose to develop their own upon consultation. Note students should choose to be a discussant for readings in the area where they would like to pursue research for their papers.

## **Required Texts**

Karen Armstrong, *Jerusalem: One City, Three Faiths*, 1996. [Basic historical text] Eyewitness Travel Guide to Jerusalem & the Holy Land, Dorling Kindersly Travel Guides, May 2000 (useful for pictures and overview of the Holy Land) Martin Biddle, *The Tomb of Christ*, 1999 [Recommended] Gary Vikan, *Byzantine Pilgrimage Art*, 1982 [Can be ordered for \$4-5] Articles and Readings to be announced.