

This CultSense Learning Module focuses on developing Cultural Sensitivity in travel through Spirituality. The different learning goals and activities can be used separately or be combined any way that is considered suitable, and thus the duration and amount of student work can be adjusted according to present needs.

Spirituality

The Everyday Presence of Sacred Sites, Rituals and Practices

Developed by Maria Engberg, Peter Björkroth, and Silvia Aulet **Designed by** Giannella Bonilla

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Erasmus University Rotterdam

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Instituto Politécnico de Viana do Castelo









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Overview

Learning Objectives	Resources	Activities	Assessment
To reflect on the role of rituals, spirituality and religion in everyday life as well as in tourism encounters	St Jordi/Catalunya (video) Salt mats and the drumming group (video) Feeling Religious Sites in Tourism (case study)	4.1 Warm up 4.4 Exchange	Oral presentation Discussion Photo-report Self-reflection
To raise awareness and sensitiveness to different types of travellers and reactions to the places and sites they visit	Culture in a Grain of Sand: Finnish Sauna Bathing (case study)	4.2 Interview	Podcast/Interviews Individual report
To recommend how to develop an understanding for different types of local hosts and local citizens	St Jordi/Catalunya (video) Salt mats and the drumming group (video)	4.2 Interview 4.3 Observation 4.4 Exchange	Podcast Essay Photo-report Self-reflection Report
To examine different motivations for visiting Religious Heritage Sites	Feeling Religious Heritage Sites in Tourism (case study)	4.2 Interview	Podcast/Interviews Individual report
To formulate potential strategies to minimize tensions and favour good, open and constructive relationships between hosts and visitors, taking into account different motivations, needs, expectations and emotional responses	Culture in a Grain of Sand: Finnish Sauna Bathing (case study)	4.3 Observation 4.4 Exchange	Photo-report Self-reflection Report



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1. Learning Objectives



To reflect

on the role of rituals, spirituality and religion in everyday life as well as in tourism encounters;

To raise

awareness and sensitiveness to different types of travellers and reactions to the places and sites they visit;



To recommend

how to develop an understanding for different types of local hosts and local citizens;

To examine

different motivations for visiting Religious Heritage Sites



To formulate

potential strategies to minimize tensions and favour good, open and constructive relationships between hosts and visitors, taking into account different motivations, needs, expectations and emotional responses

CultSense Learning Module 2 2. Contextualization

We take leave in sand. A grain of sand can be seen as exactly that – a grain, but, at the same time, that grain has an immense number of stories to tell. Sand can describe a journey backwards in time: from a grain of sand to what once was a mountain. Sand can also be a beginning: sand gave us glass, gave us skilled glassmakers in Venice (Murano), gave us lens grinding, gave us Galileo Galilei's telescope, gave us a moving planet and a kind of split between religion and science. Our perception of a phenomenon varies with the meaning we attach to it. The same concerns also sacred sites and a phenomenon's potentiality to affect us spiritually. Bluntly said: if we have not learned that something is sacred – then it is not sacred, for us. The phenomenon can still be sacred for someone else.

The spiritual quest has become a predominant characteristic of society since the final years of the twentieth century, a symptom of the collective uncertainty of our age (Sharpley & Jepson, 2011). According to Heelas & Woodhead (cited in Sharpley & Jepson, 2011: 54), contemporary Western society has been defined as the society of "spiritual revolution", with the emergence of two apparently contradictory phenomena. Religious practice and involvement in religious institutions is decreasing on the one hand, while on the other hand the search for spirituality is growing rapidly via a wide variety of beliefs and practices (such as feng shui, and yoga), most of which are based on the idea that what is related to the spirit is not material. The situation becomes complex. There are visitors that travel to sacred sites with religious/spiritual motivations but there are tourists in sacred sites that visit the place because it is considered part of the tourist offer. There are numerous infamous examples of tourists as well as other people, who, in their ignorance, have crossed lines that for the local community, or for parts of that local community, have been totally unacceptable. Sometimes these mistakes have caused a lot of commotion, with dire consequences for the person breaking an "unwritten rule", a code of conduct. It is thus important for visitors and locals alike to interact and to have an open mind to comprehend how the other perceives the situation or site. Only after accepting that there are different views on a phenomenon, a mutual understanding can be developed.

This learning module wants to demonstrate that a tourist attraction, just like a grain of sand, can carry a lot of meaning, hidden for the uninitiated. The more acquainted one is with a (cultural) concept or phenomenon, the more one sees in it. A church, a pilgrimage hike, or a sacred place is not sacred because of any innate feature in the phenomenon. It is sacred because we give it a particular meaning. Sacred is not easy to define. It's a place or object that is considered holy for a certain religion or community because it has a special meaning. Eliade (1956) uses the term hierpophany to refer to the manifestation of sacred; sacred sites are considered sacred because a hierophany has taken place there. According to him, there are different types of spaces



This learning module wants to demonstrate that a tourist attraction, just like a grain of sand, can carry a lot of meaning, hidden for the uninitiated.



propitious to become sacred sites; on the one hand, the impressive and unattainable places where nature shows its greatness and, on the the other hand, those places that are linked to holy person's life or where important moments for the history of religion happened. We can differentiate clearly between sacred and profane; the sacred space and the profane space; the sacred time and the profane time. It is also worth noting that many sacred places or sites are not man-made at all. Often the sacred places of indigenous people for example are related to nature. They can be for example mountains (see photo by <u>Simo Räsänen</u>).



In 2017 the sacred place of the Sámi-people was turned into light installation art, shining in the colors

of the Finnish flag. According to the project's brief, the Saana fell is a holy and mystic site. However, the region's indigenous population is not mentioned in their communication.

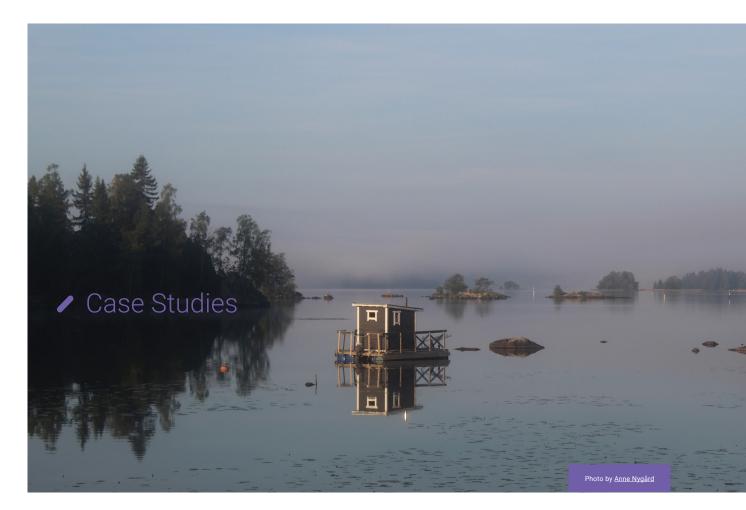
The sacred intrinsic properties of sites are thus something that must be learned, and learning happens in a cultural context. This cultural context creates a challenge for tourists, for the tourism industry and the locals. How can the industry mediate what for the locals is sacred and for the tourists is invisible? Or what is visible for some tourists and inexistent to others? And if this is a continuum with the authentic sacred experience at the one extreme and a tourist's rather superficial "snap-shot" experience at the other, what can be done for the two extremes to get closer to each other in a meaningful way?

> To see a World in a Grain of Sand And a Heaven in a Wild Flower Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand And Eternity in an hour ...

> > William Blake Auguries of Innocence

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3. CultSense Resources



Finnish Sauna Bathing as a Culture in a Grain of Sand

Summary: Sauna has a long tradition in Finland and in this study, different aspects of sauna in Finland in the 21st century are explored. The text describes present day smalland large-scale saunas, some historical aspects, and how sauna bathing is part of the Finnish identity. In the process of commercializing the tradition of sauna to suit tourism, one must recognize what characteristics in the sauna tradition are of interest to today's tourists and what modifications must be made to suit the tastes of them. MacCannell claims that what tourists experience might not be authentic. He introduces the term staged authenticity, a space developed especially for tourists and, therefore, false, and inauthentic. Making use of terminology from Goffman's dramaturgical model of social interaction, MacCannell coined the concepts of "frontstage" and "backstage", denoting the areas developed especially for tourists, and the "true" local areas, where the local people live and to which tourists usually have no access.

Björkroth, P. & Engberg, M. (2022). Culture in a Grain of Sand: Finnish Sauna Bathing. In Engberg, M., Björkroth, P. & Marques, L. (2022). Creating Cultural Understanding Through Travel. CultSense Case Collection (pp. 28–37). Arnhem: ATLAS / CultSense Project. <u>https://www.cultsense.com/academicpublications/ casestudies/</u>



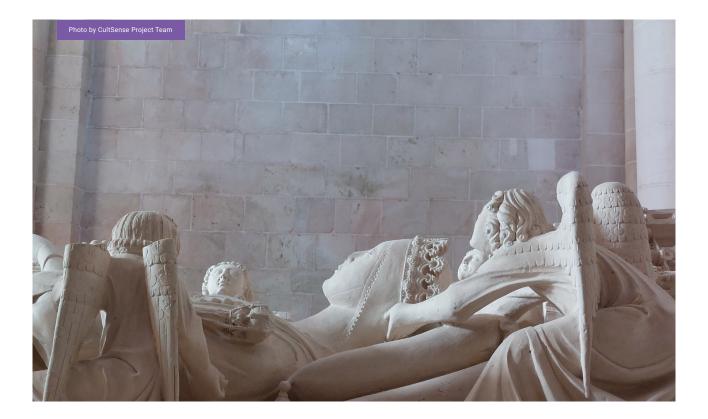
Feeling Religious Heritage Sites in Tourism

Summary: This case study focuses on religious sites and their relationship with tourism activity. The case study analyses three known religious sites (World Heritage Sites) in Catalonia, Spain, considering their different tourism proposals and their functions as religious sites. In religious sites multiple uses are performed by different visitors, how religious sites are presented is analysed, also taking into account the sensory landscape of places as an aggregating element of a religious atmosphere. Are these places just sites where architectural heritage, aesthetic beauty and history stand out as the religious meaning of the space is not perceived by visitors? Is the religious character of the site transformed due to tourists?

Aulet, S., Rodrigues, G. F.. & Vidal, D. (2022). Feeling religious heritage sites in tourism. In Engberg, M., Björkroth, P. & Marques, L. (2022). *Creating Cultural Understanding Through Travel. CultSense Case Collection* (pp. 38–44). Arnhem: ATLAS / CultSense Project. <u>https://www.cultsense.com/academicpublications/</u> <u>casestudies/</u>



Photo by CultSense Project Team





CultSense Resources





St Jordi/Catalunya (WATCH HERE)

Summary: This video is about the legend of Sant Jordi and explains its history. It also relates to modern Catalan culture. The legend is well-known in the region of Catalonia, Spain and is commemorated on April 23. The video explains how the books' day is commemorated together with the day of Sant Jordi.



Salt mats and the drumming group (WATCH HERE)

Summary: The festivities of the Romaria de Nossa Senhora da Agonia of Viana de Castelo (Portugal) is considered a symbol of the region's culture and is one of the main reasons for visiting the city. These festivities include the design and creation of salt carpets in the streets. The video shows the importance of this tradition to local community identity and the way they feel about tourists' behaviour.



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4. Activities

4.1 Warm-up: Rituals and Practices 🥒

Preparation: The students should read the case study on Finnish Sauna Bathing as a Culture in a Grain of Sand and watch the videos on St Jordi/Catalunya and Salt mats and the drumming group as part of the introduction of this module.

Duration: 45 minutes

This activity aims at raising awareness among students of what is a ritual and the importance they have, not only in a religious context, but also in our daily live.

For an older generation in Finland, in many families, the 2-o'clock coffee in the summertime was a ritual and almost a sacred ceremony. This ritual was not questioned, but instead taken for granted. Coffee was not served before 2 pm, no matter how much you wanted it. Sitting outside was important – in difficult weather conditions, wind and cold, the location could be changed to a less windy place, but only in rain was the coffee served indoors.



In pairs: describe a phenomenon that your grandparent(s) or some other elderly person kept in high regard and that you found/find at least a bit amusing. **Duration:** 10 min.

Step 3



Step 2

The whole group: ask for a few examples. Try to analyse why the phenomenon feels a bit amusing? What do you think was the reason for this phenomenon? Where did it come from? **Duration:** 15 min.

The lecturer introduces MacCannell's and/or Goffman's concepts relevant for this context. **Duration:** 20 min.



4.2 Spirituality and Sacred Sites 🥒

Preparation: The students read the case study Feeling Religious Heritage Sites in Tourism before the lesson.

Field work: Audio-interviews with visitors at local sacred site or participants in a ritualistic event.

The following activity, which will be developed based on the guidelines below, will consist of interviewing visitors in local sacred sites. The goal is to explore the different motivations of people to go to a sacred site and realising the importance of finding a balance between different uses, including both religious and touristic ones.

The activity will be performed in small groups of two-three students, and each group will select the site where they will go to conduct the interviews. Once selected, the professor will in class lead a discussion on possible questions to ask. The aim is to co-create a short questionnaire based on the previous theoretical presentation of the main theories concerning different motivations of visitors at sacred sites. Each pair/group will interview several visitors depending on the sight and tourism activity there and will present the main results for the rest of the class. Once all pairs have presented their results, the main issues will be discussed with the whole group.

Step 3

Step 1



Brainstorm: what motivations might visitors/participants have for participating? Create questions (only a few).

Step 4

Create short audio-presentations (podcasts) demonstrating the above concepts and the motivations. Short interviews on-site, using e.g. phone.

Analysis using MacCannell or Goffman.

The preparation of the questionnaire can be based on the following ideas:

- Do you consider yourself a pilgrim or a tourist?
- Why are the main reasons for visiting this site?
- What other sites are you going to visit during your stay?

The above questions are aimed at guiding and inspiring the students and they will themselves come up with additional questions for the questionnaire that they will use on site.

4.3 Explore by doing/Participatory observation

Field work: A visit to a sacred/spiritual site, including participating in activity. Alternative activity: Hiking part of a pilgrimage route with the students.

Duration: Half-day

An interesting activity to make the students feel and perceive the importance of spirituality and sacred sites is to go and visit the place including participating in an activity, practice or ritual, especially regarding nature spaces.

This activity will have to be adapted according to the context of each lecturer. If there are pilgrimage routes, like Saint James's Way, Saint Olav's Way or other local ones, one suggestion could be to go there with the students and walk part of it. If this is not possible, an important sacred site linked to nature could be chosen. Students observe other hikers and take pictures during the hike.







4.4 Interreligious exchange 🥒

Classroom activity: Discussion with/among the students about Christmas and Easter and traditions and ceremonies in connection with these.

Duration: 30 minutes

We live in complex societies and sometimes you do not need to travel abroad to realise the diversity in which we are immersed. This activity that we propose aims at raising awareness of the diversity of religious traditions and beliefs in our own context.

- 1) Share your own religiosity and that of your parents
- 2) Understand your own cultural heritage

A classroom activity that we propose to work on are the annual festivals of Christmas and Easter. The students are encouraged to share their experiences either in small groups or as a class discussion. Do all your peers celebrate it? What traditions do you stick to (if any) or are there particular important ceremonies that you participate in? Ask the students to take notes on what they hear from their peers.



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Learning Module 2 🥒

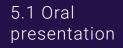
5. Assessment

For assessing the achievement of the different learning goals, several assessment methods are proposed.

5.2 Visual presentation & self-reflection

1) Each student presents 3-4 pictures with a title and short description of something that surprised them during the visit/ hike.

2) The student writes an individual self-reflection on what they have learnt with the help of a few questions.



Oral presentation of group results followed by a discussion in class. The main aim is to promote dialogue and reflection among students.

5.3 Audio-presentations &

essay

In groups – create short audio-presentations (podcasts) demonstrating the above concepts and motivations

based on ability to connect theories with the interviews

 how well are the different motivations for visiting a religious site brought forward in the podcast.

Individual – an essay where the student analyses motivations for visiting religious sites and discusses the possibility to fulfil the motivations

5.4 Report The student writes a report of the activity.





6. To explore

Why rituals matter by Michael Norton (WATCH <u>HERE</u>)



Why we still need rituals? TEDX Heythrop College (WATCH <u>HERE</u>)



For more tolerance we need more tourism (WATCH <u>HERE</u>)

World religions from 1 AD to 2100 (WATCH <u>HERE</u>)





In this section support materials will be provided to deepen the subject and relate it to the study of the Learning Module. In addition, it presents what the students need to know to make better use of the contents. The lecturer will indicate contents referring to previous knowledge that the students must have or contents that must be reviewed to continue with the theme of the module.

6.1 References

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6.2 Films & series

Eat Pray Love (2010)

Who hasn't dreamed of dropping everything and going out into the world? That's what Liz Gilbert (Julia Roberts) did when she realized she wasn't happy, even with a stable relationship, a home of her own and a successful career. Confused about her desires, Liz steps out of her comfort zone, gets divorced, packs her bags and leaves for a year-long trip to Italy, India and Indonesia. In the luggage, a goal: self-knowledge and, consequently, inner peace. In this film you can see the local environments and a little of the culture of each country that the character chose to live this experience.

The Way (2010)

Tom Avery is a renowned ophthalmologist from California who one day receives a call informing him of the death of his son, Daniel, in the Pyrenees. Devastated by the news of the death of his only son, with whom he did not have a good relationship, Tom travels to Donibane Garazi to expatriate his body. During his stay in France, however, he discovers that Daniel was following the Way of Saint James. In order to see this last wish of his son fulfilled, Tom resumes the journey in his place. During the long journey to Santiago de Compostela, Tom will be leaving small stones of his son's ashes in the most emblematic places of the Cantabrian landscape. Moreover, although his spirit will seek solitude, along the way he will also meet other pilgrims who will have their own reasons for traveling.



3 Caminos (2021) Serie

3 Caminos tells the life story of five friends, each one of a different nationality, all of them connected by El Camino in three specific moments of their lives.

Watch on

https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/B08VLP315Z/ref=atv_dp_amz_det_c_UTPsmN_1_1. https://www.rtp.pt/programa/tv/p40491

6.3 Music

Gospel. Tibetan Singing Bowl Music. Ancestral Chants from the Native Americans. African Chants. Dogon Tribal Music. Traditional Japanese Music. Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan. Gregorian Chant. Mantras.

6.4 Youtube clips

Why rituals matter by Michael Norton

What is a ritual, and what is its impact in today's society? "What isn't a ritual?" asks Michael Norton in this fascinating talk about the role that ritual continues to play in our lives.

Why we still need rituals? TEDX Heythrop College

How do we create real moments of meaning in our lives? Humans have always used ritual to create meaning in celebrating life, love and death - and Tiu de Haan is a Celebrant creating 21st century rituals for moments both big and small. She takes us on a journey to explore how to create

For more tolerance we need more tourism

Aziz Abu Sarah is a Palestinian activist with an unusual approach to peacekeeping: Be a tourist. The TED Fellow shows how simple interactions with people in different cultures can erode decades of hate. He starts with Palestinians visiting Israelis and moves beyond.

World religions from 1 AD to 2100

The world's principal religions and spiritual traditions may be classified into a small number of major groups, though this is not a uniform practice. This theory began in the 18th century with the goal of recognizing the relative levels of civility in societies, which in many modern cultures is considered offensive.

In world cultures, there have traditionally been many different groupings of religious belief. In Indian culture, different religious philosophies were traditionally respected as academic differences in pursuit of the same truth. In Islam, the Quran mentions three different categories: Muslims, the People of the Book, and idol worshipers. World religions is a category used in the study of religion to demarcate the five—and in some cases up to twelve, largest and most internationally widespread religious movements. Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism are always included in the list, being known as the "Big Five". Some scholars also include other religions, such as Taoism, Sikhism, Jainism, Confucianism, Shinto, Zoroastrianism, or the Bahá'í Faith, in the category. These are often juxtaposed against other categories, such as "indigenous religions" and "new religious movements", which are also used by scholars in this field of research. The world religions paradigm was developed in the United Kingdom in the 1960s, where it was pioneered by phenomenological scholars like Ninian Smart. It was designed to broaden the

study of religion away from its heavy focus on Christianity by taking into account other large religious traditions around the world. The paradigm is often used by lecturers instructing undergraduate students in the study of religion and is also the framework used by school teachers in the UK and other countries. The paradigm's emphasis on viewing these religious movements as distinct and mutually exclusive entities has also had a wider impact on the categorisation of religion—for instance in censuses—in both Western countries and elsewhere.

Since the late twentieth century, the paradigm has faced critique by scholars of religion like Jonathan Z. Smith, some of whom have argued for its abandonment. Critics have argued that the world religions paradigm is inappropriate because it takes the Protestant variant of Christianity as the model for what constitutes religion; that it is tied up with discourses of modernity, including modern power relations; that it encourages an uncritical understanding of religion; and that it makes a value judgement as to what religions should be considered "major". Others have argued that it remains useful in the classroom, so long as students are made aware that it is a socially constructed category.

6.5 E-book: "Creating Cultural Understanding Through Travel: CultSense Case Collection"

Engberg, M., Björkroth, P. & Marques, L. (2022). Creating Cultural Understanding Through Travel. CultSense Case Collection. Arnhem: ATLAS / CultSense Project. <u>https://www.cultsense.com/</u> <u>academicpublications/casestudies/</u>



6.6 YouTube channel "CultSense Project"





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Spirituality - The Everyday Presence of Sacred Sites, Rituals and Practices

CultSense Learning Module 2

2022

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