

College of Visual Arts and Design, University of North Texas



Fall 2020
AEAH 4824.002: Topics in Asian Art

Cave Temples of India

Dr. Lisa N. Owen
Email: through Canvas
Office Hours: Zoom appointment



Course description: From the 3rd century BCE to the 15th century CE, rock-cut temples and ascetic residences were carved into natural rock across the Indian subcontinent. Commonly known as ‘cave temples,’ these sculpted spaces exhibit a variety of architectural forms that facilitate different worship practices and ascetic uses. This course will highlight select cave temples across three religious traditions in India: Jainism, Buddhism, and Hinduism. Questions that we will attempt to answer include: 1) why carve into rock when you can build a structure? 2) what are the relationships between architecture and ritual in India? and 3) how does carved imagery and space shape devotional practices? Throughout the course, we will engage in scholarship that addresses both the art historical evidence of India’s cave temples and the performative and social dimensions of devotional practice.

Course content & objectives: This course is designed to familiarize students with select rock-cut monuments across India. By the end of this course the student will be able to identify these monuments through their religious, regional and/or socio-cultural affiliations and be able to associate these works within their historical contexts. By engaging in the visual cultures of India, students can cultivate a thorough knowledge of this important specialization within the discipline of art history, and, at the same time, foster the essential skills of critical looking, reading, and writing about art.

Goals of the course include:

- (1) to interpret artworks as objects that shape (and are shaped by) their larger socio-historical contexts
- (2) to identify select frameworks and paradigms employed in the study of premodern Indian art

Course structure and materials: Delivery of course materials is through assigned readings, prerecorded lectures, and videos. There is no assigned textbook for this course—all readings are found on Canvas. As this course is asynchronous, students have the opportunity to complete the weekly coursework at their own time and pace. However, activities *need to be completed each week*. Through Canvas, I am able to track student activities in accessing, viewing, and/or downloading course material. In other words, I can verify that students are keeping up with the weekly scheduled readings, lectures and assignments. If I notice a period of inactivity, I will reach out to the student via their UNT email.

Technological requirements: Students will need to have access to a computer and to the internet. For best performance, according to CLEAR— “Canvas should be used on the current or first previous major release of Chrome, Firefox, Edge, or Safari. Because it’s built using web standards, Canvas runs on Windows, Mac, Linux, iOS, Android, or any other device with a modern web browser.” Students also should feel comfortable with working in .docx and .pdf for written assignments. Access to a printer might also be helpful in order to print out images for study.

Communication: I am always available to answer questions and/or concerns through the Canvas course email. Alternatively, you may email me at lowen@unt.edu but please identify this particular class in the subject line of your email (e.g., Cave Temples of India). I am also happy to schedule a Zoom appointment with you!

Course requirements and grading criteria:

Essay Exams (2 @ 25% each).....	50%
Special Lecture Analysis (2 @ 15% each).....	30%
<i>A Passage to India</i> Analysis.....	20%

Description of Essay Exams: One week before the exam, I will upload select images and an image list onto Canvas to help you focus your study on those specific artworks. At this point, all of the prerecorded lectures will still be available for review. However, upon uploading the actual exam on the exam date (highlighted in the schedule), I will remove the prerecorded lectures and you will need to rely on your notes from those lectures and the assigned readings to answer the exam questions. Typically there are 4 essay questions with the artworks identified for you and specific questions for you to answer. Although the exam is open book/note, I ask that you do not go beyond class materials in constructing your essays. Also, when citing directly or paraphrasing material from the readings, please record the author's last name and page # in parenthetical citation, e.g. (Dehejia 200).

Grading scale for Essay Exams: Typically each exam has 4 essay questions with each question worth 25 points. ***ALL exams will be graded on content AND the quality of writing. Please refer to the grading criteria for written work at the end of this syllabus.***

Here is how points are distributed for each essay question with the corresponding letter grade:
25 = A+; 24 = A; 23 = A-; 22 = B+; 21 = B; 20 = B-; 19 = C+; 18 = C; 17 = C-; 16 = D+; 15 = D;
14 = D-; 13 and below = F

Description of Special Lecture Analysis: Students will be able to view two recorded public lectures on India's rock-cut monuments and write responses to the content examined in each. The first video is a public lecture that I gave at UC Davis for their newly implemented Jain Studies program. The lecture is titled *The Jina Image as 'Lord of the Hill' in Early Medieval Tamil Nadu* and was recorded on October 10, 2019. The second video is from the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Annual Distinguished Lecture on the Arts of South and Southeast Asia. Pia Brancaccio presents her lecture *Early Buddhist Rock-Cut Monasteries of India: Asceticism and Art* that was recorded on March 15, 2019. Links for viewing these recordings as well as the accompanying assignments will be uploaded on Canvas at the appropriate time.

Description of *A Passage to India* Analysis: Towards the end of the semester, students will view the award-winning film *A Passage to India*. A link for viewing the movie and the accompanying assignment will be uploaded on Canvas at the appropriate time.

Late work: Late work is ***not accepted unless there is a documented (and university sanctioned) emergency.*** In this case, the student must notify me about the emergency prior to the posted deadline. If I agree to accept late work, it will be marked down 10 points per *day* (including weekends) that it is late.

Illness: If you are experiencing any [symptoms of COVID-19](#) please seek medical attention from the Student Health and Wellness Center (940-565-2333 or askSHWC@unt.edu) or your health care provider. UNT also requires you to contact the **UNT COVID Hotline at 844-366-5892** or

COVID@unt.edu for guidance on actions to take due to symptoms, pending or positive test results, or potential exposure. Also, please communicate with me over email so that we may work together in regard to any potential missed work for this class. Please visit this link for more info and a scenario guide for UNT students: <https://healthalerts.unt.edu/symptoms-monitoring>

Posting of grades: Grades will be posted on Canvas. If you would like to discuss a grade with me, we can set up a Zoom appointment. Students have a window of two weeks to talk to me about a grade. In other words, at the end of the semester, I will not look over past material for you and/or re-grade any exams or assignments.

Academic integrity standards and consequences: According to UNT Policy 18.1.16, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism necessitates that I file an incident report to the appropriate authorities and this may result in your failing the assignment, failing the course, and/or being expelled from the University. Please ask me if you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism and how you should give proper acknowledgement to your sources in your written work.

Sexual discrimination, harassment, and assault: UNT is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these acts of aggression, please know that you are not alone. The federal Title IX law makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses. UNT has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

ADA accommodation statement: UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must communicate with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website at disability.unt.edu

Emergency notification and procedures: UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). Please make sure your information is current with this system.

Required readings on Canvas:

Introduction to the course

Vidya Dehejia, "Into the Mountainside," in Vidya Dehejia, *Indian Art*, London: Phaidon, 1997, 103-104.

Michael W. Meister, "Asceticism and Monasticism as Reflected in Indian Art," in Austin B. Creel and Vasudha Narayanan, eds., *Monastic Life in the Christian and Hindu Traditions: A Comparative Study*, Lewiston, [N.Y.]: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990, 219-244.

Section 1: India's Jain rock-cut monuments

Lisa N. Owen, "Rock-Cut Caves," in Knut A. Jacobsen, John E. Cort, Paul Dundas, and Kristi L. Wiley, eds., *Encyclopedia of Jainism* vol. 1, Leiden: Brill, 2019, 697-705.

R. Champakalakshmi, "South India," in A. Ghosh, ed., *Jaina Art and Architecture*, vol. 1, New Delhi: Bharatiya Jnanpith, 1974, 92-103.

Lisa N. Owen, "Local Bhakti or Monastic Advertising? The Functions of Medieval Jain Rock-Reliefs in Tamil Nadu," in Emmanuel Francis and Charlotte Schmid, eds., *The Archaeology of Bhakti II: Royal Bhakti, Local Bhakti*, Pondicherry: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 2016, 423-442.

Janice Leoshko, "Artfully Carved: Udayagiri/Khandagiri in Orissa," *Artibus Asiae* 70/1 (2010): 7-24.

Lisa N. Owen, "Carving Sacred Space," in Lisa N. Owen, *Carving Devotion in the Jain Caves at Ellora*, Leiden: Brill, 2012, 165-188.

Section 2: India's Buddhist rock-cut monuments

Vidya Dehejia, "Into the Mountainside," in Vidya Dehejia, *Indian Art*, London: Phaidon, 1997, 104-124.

Vidya Dehejia and Peter Rockwell, "Carving Buddhist Chaityas in Deccan Trap," in Vidya Dehejia and Peter Rockwell, *The Unfinished: Stone Carvers at Work on the Indian Subcontinent*. New Delhi: Roli Books, 2016, 130-147.

Walter M. Spink, "The Archaeology of Ajañtā," *Ars Orientalis* 21 (1991): 67-94.

Lisa N. Owen, "Constructing Another Perspective for Ajanta's Fifth-Century Excavations," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 24.1 (2001): 27-59.

Robert DeCaroli, "The Abode of the Nāga King: Questions of Art, Audience, and Local Deities at the Ajanta Caves," *Ars Orientalis* 40 (2011): 142-161.

Section 3: India's Hindu rock-cut monuments

Lisa N. Owen, "Mountain and Cave: Hindu Rock-Cut Architecture and its Symbolisms," in Julia Hegewald, ed., *Studies in Asian Art and Culture*, Bonn: University of Bonn, in press.

Michael Willis, "The Archaeology and Politics of Time at Udayagiri," in Michael Willis, *The Archaeology of Hindu Ritual: Temples and the Establishment of the Gods*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, 10-30.

Vidya Dehejia, "Into the Mountainside," in Vidya Dehejia, *Indian Art*, London: Phaidon, 1997, 124-134.

Schedule

Please note: The professor reserves the right to alter this syllabus if necessary. © 2020 Lisa N. Owen

Welcome videos: Intro to the course and why caves? Overview of the syllabus

Week 1 (Aug 24-28)

Readings: 1) Dehejia_Ch5: 103-104; and 2) Meister; **Recorded lecture:** Caves and Asceticism in India

Section 1: India's Jain rock-cut monuments

Week 2 (Aug 31-Sept 04)

Recorded lecture: Intro to Jainism; **Video link:** *India's Jains*; **Reading:** Owen_Rock-Cut_Caves;

Reading: Champakalakshmi; **Recorded lecture:** Jain Caves: Southern India (Madurai district)

Monday, Sept 07 Labor Day

Week 3 (Sept 08-11)

Reading: Owen_Local_Bhakti; Recorded lecture: Intro to Special Lecture 1

Video link: Special Lecture 1: *The Jina Image as 'Lord of the Hill' in Early Medieval Tamil Nadu*

Analysis due on Friday, Sept 11 by 5pm CST

Week 4 (Sept 14-18)

Reading: Leoshko; Recorded lecture: Jain Caves: Eastern India (Khandagiri/Udayagiri)

Recorded lecture: Jain Caves: Deccan India (Ellora); Reading: Owen_Sacred_Space

Week 5 (Sept 21-25)

Exam 1 uploaded on Monday, Sept 21 at 9am CST

Exam 1 due on Friday, Sept 25 by 5pm CST

Section 2: India's Buddhist rock-cut monuments

Week 6 (Sept 28-Oct 02)

Reading: Dehejia_Chp5: 104-112; Recorded lecture: Early Buddhist Caves: An Introduction

Reading: Dehejia_Chaitya; Recorded lecture: Early Buddhist Caves: Patronage and Process

Week 7 (Oct 05-09)

Recorded lecture: Intro to Special Lecture 2

Video link: Special Lecture 2: *Early Buddhist Rock-Cut Monasteries of India: Asceticism and Art*

Analysis due on Friday, Oct 16 by 5pm CST

Week 8 (Oct 12-16)

Reading: Dehejia_Chp5: 112-124; Recorded lecture: Buddhist Caves at Ajanta: Part 1

Video link: *Canyon of Caves*; Reading: Spink

Reading: Owen_Ajanta; Recorded lecture: Buddhist Caves at Ajanta: Part 2

Week 9 (Oct 19-23)

Reading: DeCaroli; Recorded lecture: Buddhist Caves at Ajanta: Part 3

Week 10 (Oct 26-30)

Exam 2 uploaded on Monday, Oct 26 at 9am CST

Exam 2 due on Friday, Oct 30 by 5pm CST

Section 3: India's Hindu rock-cut monuments

Week 11 (Nov 02-06)

Reading: Owen_Symbolism; Recorded lecture: Hindu Caves: An Introduction

Reading: Willis; Recorded lecture: Early Hindu Caves: Northcentral India (Udayagiri)

Week 12 (Nov 09-13)

Reading: Dehejia_Chp5: 124-129; Recorded lecture: Early Hindu Caves: Deccan India (Elephanta)

Recorded lecture: Early Hindu caves: South India (Mamallapuram);

Video link: *Mamallapuram: A Riddle in the Sands*

Week 13 (Nov 16-20)

Reading: Dehejia_Chp5: 129-134; Recorded lecture: The Kailasanatha Temple at Ellora

Week 14 (Nov 23-25)

Recorded lecture: Intro to the film *A Passage to India*

Video link: start watching the film *A Passage to India*

Thanksgiving Holiday (Nov 26-27)

Week 15 (Nov 30-Dec 03)

Continue watching *A Passage to India*

***A Passage to India* Analysis due on Thursday, Dec 03 by 5pm CST**

Friday, Dec 04 Reading Day—No Class/End of Class

Grading Criteria for Written Work:

A = Such a grade indicates that the student was able to execute the assignment/exam with rigor and clarity of thought. An ‘A’ grade means that there were little to no errors in grammar/spelling and that the introduction and conclusion were clear as was the development of the body of text. An ‘A’ grade also demonstrates that the student provided exceptional responses to the questions posed in the assignment/exam guidelines.

B = Such a grade indicates that the student was able to execute the assignment/exam with diligence and forethought, though some main issues were not addressed fully by the student. A grade of ‘B’ also usually indicates that there were limited structural, spelling, or grammatical problems.

C = This is similar to the ‘B’ description, but the number of problems is more extensive. These may include significant grammatical or structural problems, adding irrelevant material or new material inappropriately, too many generalities, and/or not fully addressing the main questions posed in the guidelines. ‘C’ essays often contain too many quoted passages.

D = A grade of ‘D’ indicates that the student did a poor job in following the prompt and/or in answering questions to complete the assignment/exam. Further, grammatical/structural problems make a ‘D’ essay quite difficult to follow. There are usually far too many generalities and a lack of analysis.

F = This either indicates that the assignment/exam was not done or what was done was simply unacceptable for any number of reasons. This includes any indication of plagiarism, which may entail further academic penalty. Please see the section on plagiarism in this syllabus.