



---

## MAJOR-SPECIFIC STUDY & INTERN ABROAD PROGRAMS

---

63 Sickletown Road • West Nyack • New York • 10994 • United States of America  
Ph. 1.212.931.9953 • Fx. 1.212.528.2095 • info@KEIabroad.org • www.KEIabroad.org

### **(PSY 390) Special Topics in Psychology: Ecopsychology and the Aesthetics of Spirituality**

#### **Description:**

*What environmental impact does the aesthetic and spiritual vision of a people have upon the ecology of a region? How are the cultural, social and spiritual practices of a particular civilization reflected in the architecture and landscaping of their sacred space? We shall focus in particular upon the built environment of sacred spaces, such as the Incan ruins at Macchu Picchu and elsewhere, as well as the Wari or Huari ruins at Pikillacta and the colonial churches in Cuzco. The visions of artists as well will lend an aesthetic dimension to our vision of place. How do the still existing traditions of weaving, pottery, gourd-carving as well as stone masonry and hydrology still reflect the cultural, aesthetic and spiritual values of civilizations past. What was the Incans view of the heavens as well as the earth. Each student will choose to focus upon on particular aesthetic and/or spiritual aspect of the preceding civilization and how that compares to our current understanding of such practices. Students will be required to keep a journal of their encounters, as well as being tested upon the required texts.*

#### **Main Objectives and Goals:**

Change your perspective and you change the world. In this course we shall examine our unexamined and largely unconscious assumptions about where, how, and why we live the way we do. How can we revision and reimagine the place we inhabit? Our aim is to resacralize a world that has been desacralized by Western assumptions. To do so, we must adopt a different manner of seeing the world called fractal consciousness, the ability to see self-similar patterns at multiple levels of inquiry. These can be spatial as well as temporal, but either requires a flexibility of perception that is necessary to understanding the ecology of any watershed or bioregion. Our ultimate goal is to create a frame of reference that enhances the possibility for a sustainable community in the Andes or in Appalachia, for this generation as well as the next.

#### **Student Assessment:**

At the beginning of the course, each student will spend the first week deciding which aspect of the culture they want to focus upon. All will be related to the landscape and the environs, but a student may choose to focus on any culturally defined and aesthetically enhanced product of the peoples under study. These may include but are not limited to sacred architecture, pottery, weaving, rituals with mummies, stonework, shamanism,

gourd carving, or astronomical understanding and its spiritual implications. The focus of each individual student, or a group of students who focus upon that particular cultural artifact, will ultimately be brought together in order to realize an integrated cosmovision of these people and how it compares to the sustainability of our own. The purpose is to integrate the psychological with the ecological, to ensure that the human face is discerned in their vision of place as well as space. I will also require the students to keep a journal of the sites that we have visited and the artistic visions we have viewed in the ruins of the Inca and perhaps other civilizations such as the Huari and the Moche, Catholic churches, as well as the weaving, pottery, stone masonry, metallurgy, and architecture both sacred and profane. I plan to require short papers on the students' reactions to a particular site or work of art that they find particularly numinous. I hope to use photo-journaling as well, which will help further the cultural literacy aspect of the program. Understanding the environment particular to Peru will demonstrate how our own civilizing influences have impacted the ecology of the region.