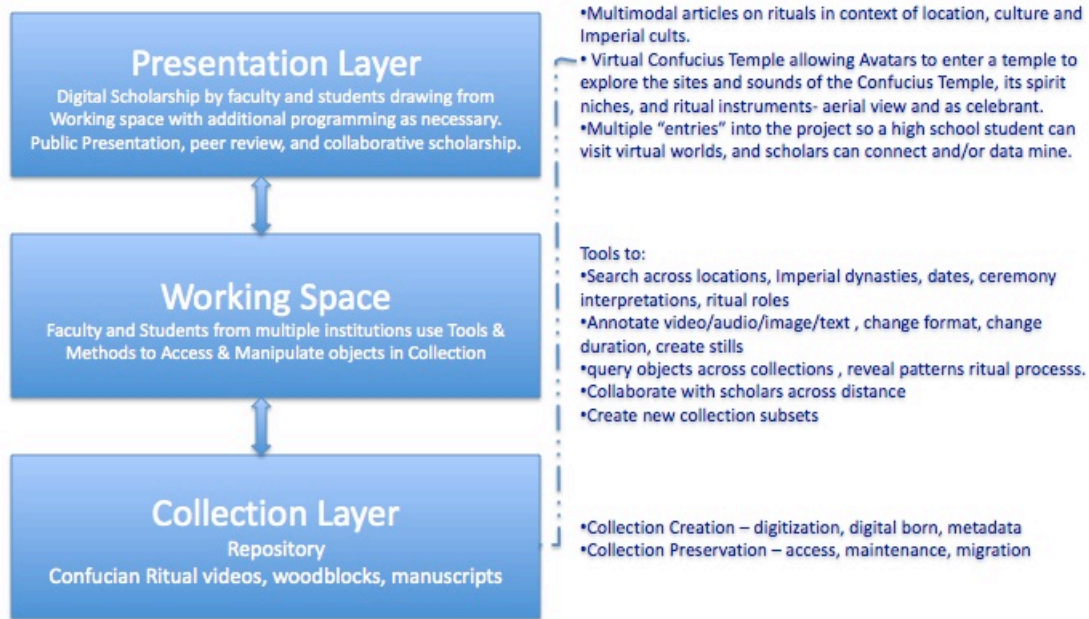


Figure 3

Professor Thomas Wilson's Confucian Ritual Project



Thomas Wilson, Professor of History: *Digital Humanities: The Autumnal Rites to Confucius and Beyond*

In September 1998, Dr. Wilson traveled to Tainan, Taiwan, with his student, Brooks Jessup, to film the annual sacrificial rites that venerate Confucius in the Confucius Temple. This rite was performed by officials of the imperial court at the county level throughout the empire as early as the seventh century and was subject to court debate and periodic reform until the early twentieth century. As official ceremony, these rites were no longer performed after the fall of the imperial court in 1911, but were revived again by local authorities as early as the 1920s and were formally adopted in Taiwan by the Republic of China in the 1960s. In the reform period of the post-Mao era, municipal authorities have allowed the revival of various forms of these rites at imperial Confucius temples throughout China, usually as a way to attract tourism. The rites were performed by officers of the city government of Tainan with only brief interruptions during the twentieth century, though tourism is evidently not a motive.

Phase 1: DVD and Website Development

A. Development of the existing DVD film. The current version of the DVD was edited by David Cohen, who also inserted Wilson's translations of the liturgy as subtitles. Stephanie Wong reformatted the DVD to make it more user-friendly. In Phase 2, Wong will need to (1) develop a voice-over narrative to existing video based on writings listed above; (2) add them to the video (with option to turn off narrative while keeping existing

audio); and (3) work with Wilson to develop interactive links, which will provide more detailed back ground on the rite, including (a) annotated illustrations from ritual manuals on the rite; (b) notes on key changes in the rite in imperial times; (c) a bibliography of sources.

B. Development of a digital webservice. Wong has already redesigned the form of the current website, “The Cult of Confucius: Images of the Temple of Culture”: http://academics.hamilton.edu/asian_studies/home/TempleCulture.html She will work with Wilson to revise the current content and add an additional page on the rite that is the subject matter of the DVD. This page might, for example, divide the rite into several parts and each part could include a short film clip taken from the DVD to illustrate key elements of that rite. The music performed during the rites should be audible. Wong could also include another page on Confucius Temples throughout Asia based on photographs Wilson has taken or include links to other web sites that have such pictures.

Phase 2: Conference

- A. Development of a virtual Confucius Temple that would allow the user to enter a temple to explore the sights and sounds of the Confucius Temple, its spirit niches, and ritual instruments.
- B. Conference (Hamilton College, Spring of 2011) attended by specialists on this and similar rituals, to discuss development of a consortium for a Digital Humanities resource on religious rituals focusing on the production of a web-based archive of films of religious ritual performed in Asia.

Phase 3: Creation of a program to support undergraduate research on temple rituals in Asia – a year-long research project on a particular ceremony or religious site culminating in the production of a resource available online.

- A. Research paper: conduct research on the history of a ceremony or sacred site and an analysis of the liturgies performed. The paper should incorporate an annotated bibliography of the scholarship on the ceremony or site in order help identify the issues posed by a ceremony.
- B. On-site visit of the place or places of the rites under study in consultation with relevant American specialist.
- C. Completion of a field report and production of visual record of the site, including an edited film in those cases where rites are still performed formal approval to film the ceremony has been obtained.