



HIST 635

The Politics of the Past: Museums, Monuments and Memory

Robinson B203, MW 7:20-10:00

Instructor: Dr. Joshua Arthurs

Office Hours: Science and Technology II, room 8, by appointment.

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Description:

This course explores the politics of historical representation and commemoration. How do the recovery, study and display of the past – in archaeological digs, museums, monuments and archives – both shape and reflect national, transnational and local identities? Are the historical disciplines objective sciences or deeply ideological practices? How and why do we “use” or “abuse” the past? We will examine these questions across case studies including the politics of excavation in Israel/Palestine; the Atlantic slave trade and the challenges of historical documentation; World War One memorials; and the problem of the Nazi past in postwar Germany. Students are encouraged to explore the themes of the course in relation to their own research.

Evaluation:

Paper: There is only one paper for this class, of around 15-20 pages and accounting for 50% of your final grade. In consultation with the instructor, each student will choose a particular case study – e.g. a monument, museum exhibit, archive, etc. – to research and analyze using the concepts of the course. Students are encouraged to choose a topic that relates to their own program of study. A 1-2 page proposal and short bibliography must be submitted for approval by the beginning of Week Four, and students must meet with me individually prior to this date to discuss their projects. In the final week of the term, students will present their research to the rest of the class for a constructive discussion.

Presentations/participation: Over the course of the term, each student must lead discussion on an assigned article or book chapter. This includes a reading summary of around 10 minutes and then posing some questions that will serve as the basis for our conversation. Attendance and

participation in all sessions is required. This presentation, coupled with general participation and attendance, accounts for 50% of your final grade.

Readings:

The titles listed below are available in the campus bookstore and can readily be ordered online. Copies are also available on one-day reserve at Fenwick Library. All other readings (indicated with an asterisk*) are available for download from the course website, www.hist635.weebly.com. The website also features study questions for the longer readings, useful links and a comments page.

John R. Gillis, ed., *Commemorations: the Politics of National Identity* (Princeton University Press, 1996).

Brian Ladd, *The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape* (University of Chicago Press, 1998).

Sanford Levinson, *Written in Stone: Public Monuments in Changing Societies* (Duke University Press, 1998).

Suzanne Marchand, *Down from Olympus: Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750-1970* (Princeton University Press, 2003).

Andrew McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre: Art, Politics and the Origins of the Modern Museum in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Cambridge University Press, 1994)

Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Beacon Press, 1997).

Course Expectations:

Attendance is required and is a fundamental part of your grade. Please let me know in advance if you are forced to miss class.

Assignments: the proposal and final paper must be submitted in **HARD COPY** and stapled – not sent via email. They should be double-spaced and in 12-point font. Late papers will be deducted half a grade for every day of lateness. No extensions will be given.

Courtesy during class: It is disruptive to others to arrive late to class or leave early. Please don't do it. If you know that you will have to leave class early, explain the situation to me beforehand and sit near the door so that you can exit as quietly as possible. Please turn off all cell phones, beepers, or any other wireless device that may make noise during class. I will confiscate your device if it rings in class. You may use laptops in class for taking notes, but if you are using it for email, instant-messaging, or any other activity I will ask you to stop using your computer.

Academic integrity: Any evidence of cheating or plagiarism will result in a zero in the course and referral to the Honor Committee.

Disability and Academic Accommodation: If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at (703) 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. Please note:

students who do not produce the proper paperwork from the DR office have no right to claim accommodation for a learning disability.

Office Hours: Since this is the summer term, I will not be holding regularly scheduled office hours. However, I am happy to meet with you anytime – please consult with me to find a mutually convenient time.

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Week I: Introduction to the Politics of the Past

- *Pierre Nora, “Between History and Memory: les Lieux de Mémoire.” *Representations* 26 (1989), 7-24.
- John R. Gillis, “Memory and Identity: the History of a Relationship” in Gillis, ed., *Commemorations*, 3-24.
- Richard Handler, “Is ‘Identity’ a Useful Cross-Cultural Concept?” in Gillis, ed., *Commemorations*, 27-40.
- David Lowenthal, “Identity, Heritage, and History” in Gillis, ed., *Commemorations*, 41-57.

Week II: Traces and Silences: Archives and the Production of History

- Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*.
- *Richard Harvey Brown and Beth Davis-Brown, “The Making of Memory: the Politics of Libraries, Archives and Museums in the Construction of National Consciousness.” *History of the Human Sciences* 11.4 (1998), 17-32.
- *Durba Ghosh, "National Narratives and the Politics of Miscegenation: Britain and India" in Antoinette Burton, ed., *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions and the Writing of History*, 27-44.
- *Craig Robertson, “Mechanisms of Exclusion: the Archive and the Passport” in Antoinette Burton, ed., *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions and the Writing of History*, 68-86.

Week III: Digging in the Earth: the Politics of Archaeology

- Suzanne Marchand, *Down from Olympus: Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750-1970*.
- *Bruce Trigger, “Alternative Archaeologies: Nationalist, Colonialist, Imperialist.” *Man* 19.3 (1984), 355-370.
- *Bettina Arnold, “The Past as Propaganda: Totalitarian Archaeology in Nazi Germany.” *Antiquity* 64 (1990), 464-78.
- *Nadia Abu El-Haj, “Translating Truths: Nationalism, the Practice of Archaeology, and the Remaking of Past and Present in contemporary Jerusalem.” *American Ethnologist* 25.2 (1998), 166-188.

- *Jane Kramer, "The Petition: Israel, Palestine and a Tenure Battle at Barnard." *The New Yorker*, (April 14, 2008).

Week IV: History on Display: Museums, Power and Politics

- Andrew MacLellan, *Inventing the Louvre: Art, Politics and the Origins of the Modern Museum in Eighteenth-Century Paris*
- *Richard H. Kohn, "History and the Culture Wars: the Case of the Smithsonian Institution's Enola Gay Exhibition." *The Journal of American History* 82.3 (1995), 1036-1063.
- Eric Davis, "The Museum and the Politics of Social Control in Modern Iraq" in Gillis, ed., *Commemorations*, 90-104.
- *Joshua Arthurs, "(Re)Presenting Roman History in Italy, 1911-1955" in Claire Norton, ed., *Nationalism, Historiography and the (Re)Construction of the Past* (New Academia Press, 2007), 27-41.

Week V: Commemorations: Monuments and Memorials

- Sanford Levinson, *Written in Stone: Public Monuments in Changing Societies*.
- Thomas W. Laqueur, "Memory and Naming in the Great War" in Gillis, ed., *Commemorations*, 150-167.
- G. Kurt Piehler, "The War Dead and the Gold Star: American Commemoration of the First World War" in Gillis, ed., *Commemorations*, 168-185.
- Daniel J. Sherman, "Art, Commerce, and the Production of Memory in France after World War I." in Gillis, ed., *Commemorations*, 186-211.

Week VI: Memory Landscapes: History and the Environment

- Brian Ladd, *The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape*
- *Robert Bevan, "Cultural Cleansing: Who Remembers the Armenians?" in Robert Bevan, *The Destruction of Memory: Architecture at War*.
- *Terence Ranger, "Whose Heritage? The Case of Matobo National Park." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 15.2 (1989), 217-249.

Week VII: Presentation of Research Projects

FINAL PAPER DUE BY NOON ON WEDNESDAY, JULY 24TH