



HISD93: The Politics of the Past: Memories, Monuments and Museums

Instructor: Dr. Joshua Arthurs

Location: KW223, Wed. 11-1

Office Hours: KW238, Wed. 2-3

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Course Description: This course examines the politics of historical commemoration. We explore how the representation of the past both informs and reflects political, social, and cultural contexts, and examine case studies involving controversial monuments; debates over coming to terms with historical legacies of genocide, slavery, and imperialism; and processes of truth, reconciliation, and cultural restitution. We also examine the role played by institutions (like museums and archives) and disciplines (archaeology, history, anthropology) in the construction of local, national, transnational, and colonial identities.

Important Note: Our course content will sometimes include topics, readings, language, and images that some students may find controversial, disturbing, offensive and/or traumatizing. Our classroom provides an open space for the critical and civil exchange of ideas; I ask all students to help to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and sensitivity. If you are aware of course material that may be traumatizing to you, I'd be happy to discuss any concerns you may have with it before it comes up in class. Likewise, if you ever wish to discuss your personal reactions to such material with the class or with me afterwards, I welcome such discussion as an appropriate part of our coursework.

Assignments:

Public history project (50%): Students will work in groups to develop a public history project in conjunction with a community partner. Instructions and rubrics will be posted to Quercus. The assignments include both group and individual components:

- Preliminary group proposal – 10%, due Friday, Feb. 14th.
- Final portfolio and reflective essays – 30%, due date TBA from Registrar's Office.
- Presentation – 10%, in class in Week XII.

Quercus Discussion (30%): Every week, I will post discussion prompts related to the lectures and readings. Over the course of the semester, students must post **five responses**. Unless otherwise indicated, these are **due by Tuesdays at noon**. As these assignments are taken up in class, posts will not be accepted after the start of the class in which they are discussed. You may comment on your peers' posts for additional points toward that week's grade. You may also post more than five responses; if you do so, I will count the five highest scores for the semester. Guidelines are available on Quercus.

Participation (20%): This is a discussion-oriented seminar. Students are expected to attend all meetings, with class materials and notes in hand. Be prepared to ask questions and contribute to our discussion. Participation criteria is available on Quercus. Your final grade is calculated as follows: grade for participation minus 4% for each absence. Students are granted one “free” absence that will not count against your attendance grade. So, for example, if you had an 85% for participation and attended all classes, your final participation grade would be 85; if you missed three classes, one would be excused and the other two would reduce your participation mark by 8%, for a final grade of 77%. Keep in mind that you can only be evaluated for participation if you are present in class! Frequent absences can also affect your participation mark.

Grading Scale: A+ 90+; A 85-89; A- 80-84; B+ 77-79; B 73-76; B- 70-72; C+ 67-69; C 63-66; C- 60-62; D+ 57-59; D 53-56%; D- 50-52; F 0-49.

Late/Missed Assignments: Late assignments will be deducted 2% for every 24 hours that they are late, beginning at the time at which they are due, and including weekends. Normally they will be accepted up to a week after their original due date, though in the case of the final exam this will be determined by the university calendar. If you know that you will be unable to submit an assignment on time, please request an extension prior to the due date.

Course Policies and Expectations:

Communication: As your professor, I am profoundly invested in your learning and success, both in this course and beyond. Whether you are struggling in the course, have unanswered questions, want suggestions for further exploration, or would like to discuss future goals, please reach out and schedule a meeting with me. I will often communicate with the class via your University email account, so please check it regularly. Email is also the best way to contact me. When emailing, please ensure that you are polite and professional; an unpunctuated message with no salutation and emojis will not be answered. I will work hard to get back to you in a timely manner.

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 need 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 silence all devices that may make noise during class. You may use a laptop for taking notes, but if you are distracting other students with it, I will ask you to leave class.

Academic Integrity: The University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences. Potential offences in papers and assignments include using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement, submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor, making up sources or facts, obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment. On tests and exams cheating includes using or possessing unauthorized aids, looking at someone else's answers during an exam or test, misrepresenting your identity, or falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including (but not limited to) doctor's notes. Penalties for violations of academic integrity in this course will range from zero for an assignment to an F in the course.

Artificial Intelligence: Students may not copy or paraphrase from any generative artificial intelligence applications, including ChatGPT and other AI writing and coding assistants, for the purpose of completing assignments in this course. This policy is designed to promote your learning and intellectual development.

If I have reason to believe that an assignment was produced using AI, I will require an in-person meeting with the student to determine the originality of the work. If there is sufficient reason to

believe that AI was used, or if the student does not attend the meeting, penalties will range from zero for an assignment to an F in the course.

Plagiarism Detection: Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation website (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).

Accessibility: Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the AccessAbility Services Office as soon as possible:

<http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/ability>. AccessAbility Services staff (located in Rm AA142, Arts and Administration Building) are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations 416-287-7560 (tel/TTY) or email ability.utsc@utoronto.ca. The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

Religious Accommodations: The University has a commitment concerning accommodation for religious observances. I will make every reasonable effort to avoid scheduling tests, examinations, or other compulsory activities on religious holy days not captured by statutory holidays. According to University Policy, if you anticipate being absent from class or missing a major course activity (like a test, or in-class assignment) due to a religious observance, please let me know as early in the course as possible, and with sufficient notice (at least two to three weeks), so that we can work together to make alternate arrangements.

Specific Medical Circumstances: Students who need to miss academic activities due to illness or other reason should submit a [self-declaration form](#) through ACORN. If you become ill and it affects your ability to do your academic work, consult the course instructor right away. If you get a concussion, break your hand, or suffer some other acute injury, you should register with Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

Health and Wellness: Your health and well-being are important to all of us at UTSC. If you feel you are in need of support, the campus has a number of services to assist you. You can find out more about these services at: <https://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/hwc/>

- [Student Mental Health web portal](#)
- [Health and Wellness Peer Support](#)
- [UTSC International Student Centre](#) (UTSC students)
- [Navi](#) - Your mental health wayfinder.
- [Contacts to support you through different types of distress](#) (24/7 Emergency, mental health, academic, financial, housing, sexual assault/safety, equity offices and communities of care on campus).
- [My Student Support Program \(MySSP\)](#) - Confidential mental health counselling by online chat or phone is available from anywhere in the world, 24/7, in multiple languages through.

Schedule

Week I (Jan. 8): What Are the Politics of the Past?

- David Blight, “The Memory Boom: Why and Why Now?” In *Memory in Mind and Culture*, edited by Pascal Boyer and James V. Wertsch, 238–51. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Michael H. Bernhard and Jan Kubik, “A Theory of the Politics of Memory.” In *Twenty Years after Communism: The Politics of Memory and Commemoration*, edited by Michael H. Bernhard and Jan Kubik, 7–34. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Week II (Jan. 15): Authorized Heritage and Dominant Memories

- Richard Harvey Brown and Beth Davis-Brown. “The Making of Memory: The Politics of Archives, Libraries and Museums in the Construction of National Consciousness.” *History of the Human Sciences* 11, no. 4 (1998): 17–32.
- Maoz Azaryahu, “Naming the Past: The Significance of Commemorative Street Names.” In *Critical Toponymies: The Contested Politics of Place Naming*, edited by Lawrence D. Berg and Jani Vuolteenaho, 53-70. New York: Taylor and Francis, 2017.
- ~~J. Michael Martinez and Robert M. Harris. “Graves, Worms, and Epitaphs: Confederate Monuments in the Southern Landscape.” In *Confederate Symbols in the Contemporary South*, edited by J. Michael Martinez, William D Richardson, and Ron McNinch-Su, 130–92. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000.~~ **REPLACE – SOUTHERN DISCOMFORT?**

Week III (Jan. 22): Silencing and Counter-Narratives

- Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1995, 108-140.
- Saidiya Hartman, “Venus in Two Acts.” *Small Axe* 12, no. 2 (2008): 1–14.
- Amy Lonetree, “Decolonizing Museums, Memorials, and Monuments.” *The Public Historian* 43, no. 4 (2021): 21–27.

Week IV (Jan. 29): Dissonant and Difficult Heritage

- Sharon Macdonald, *Difficult Heritage: Negotiating the Nazi Past in Nuremberg and Beyond*. New York: Routledge, 2009, 2-7.
- Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2006, 80-82.
- Julia Rose, *Interpreting Difficult History at Museums and Historic Sites*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016, 25-48.
- Sharon Macdonald, “Undesirable Heritage: Fascist Material Culture and Historical Consciousness in Nuremberg.” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 12, no. 1 (2006): 9–28.

Week V (Feb. 5): History Wars

- Joshua Arthurs, “The Anatomy of Controversy, from Charlottesville to Rome.” *Modern Italy* 24, no. 2 (2019): 123–38.
- Melanie J. Newton, “Henry Dundas: Naming Empire and Genocide.” *History Workshop* (blog), November 11, 2020.
- Henry Dundas Committee blog

Week VI (Feb. 12): Project workshop

FEB. 19 – READING WEEK

Week VII (Feb. 26): De-Commemoration and Re-Commemoration

- Sarah Gensburger and Jenny Wüstenberg. “Making Sense of De-Commemoration.” In *De-Commemoration: Removing Statues and Renaming Places*, edited by Sarah Gensburger and Jenny Wüstenberg, 95–105. New York: Berghahn Books, 2023.
- Jordan Brasher and Derek Alderman. “From De-Commemoration of Names to Reparative Namespaces: Geographical Case Studies in the United States.” In *De-Commemoration: Removing Statues and Renaming Places*, edited by Sarah Gensburger and Jenny Wüstenberg, 309–18. New York: Berghahn Books, 2023.
- Paul Williams, “The Afterlife of Communist Statuary: Hungary’s Szoborpark and Lithuania’s Grutas Park.” *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 44, no. 2 (2008): 185–98.
- PROJECT PROPOSALS DUE BY START OF CLASS.

Week VIII (Mar. 5): Apology, Reconciliation, and Restitution

- Michel-Rolph Trouillot, “Abortive Rituals: Historical Apologies in the Global Era.” *Interventions* 2, no. 2 (2000): 171–86.
- Michael Morden, “Historical Revisionism and the Settler State: The Canadian Experience.” In *Law and Memory*, edited by Uladzislau Belavusau and Aleksandra Gliszczyńska-Grabias, 374–94. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017.
- Jisgang Nika Collison and Cara Krmpotich. “Saahlinda Naay – Saving Things House: The Haida Gwaii Museum Past, Present and Future.” In *The Routledge Companion to Indigenous Repatriation*, edited by C. Timothy McKeown, Honor Keeler, and Cressida Fforde, 44–62. New York: Routledge, 2020.

Week IX (Mar. 12): Teaching Difficult Histories

- Julia Rose, *Interpreting Difficult History at Museums and Historic Sites*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016, 48-68.
- Monica Eileen Patterson, “Teaching Tolerance through Objects of Hatred: The Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia as ‘Counter-Museum.’” In *Curating Difficult Knowledge: Violent Pasts in Public Places*, edited by Erica T. Lehrer, Monica Patterson, and Cynthia E. Milton, 55–71. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011.
- Andrew Stuart Bergerson, “In the Shadow of the Towers: An Ethnography of a German-Israeli Student Exchange Program.” *New German Critique*, no. 71 (1997): 141–76.

Week X (Mar. 19): Research week – optional instructor meetings on Zoom

Week XI (Mar. 26): Project workshop

Week XII (Apr. 2): Research presentations