

HIST 397-01: Museums, Monuments, and Memorials (3 credit hours)

Dr. Sarah Myers

Spring 2021

Description: This course offers a study of how American experiences have been remembered and memorialized through museum exhibits, monuments, and memorials. Themes include the ways organizations influence the construction of memorials and monuments, federal government funding for national monuments, whose histories are prioritized, histories that are forgotten, the historical context of monument erections and the establishment of memorial sites, and national debates over the construction of historical narrative. Class discussions will be based on assigned books, articles, primary sources, and films. You will get hands-on experience in public history as you conduct research in an archive's digital collection and curate an online museum exhibit.

Required Texts:

Nina Simon, *The Participatory Museum* (available as free ebook online)
Primary sources and other readings available on Canvas

Assignments and Grading:

Discussion (20%) – 90 points
Quiz 1 (11%) – 50 points
Quiz 2 (11%) – 50 points
Quiz 3 (11%) – 50 points
Public History Project (45%) – 250 points
TOTAL: 490 points

Grade Breakdown:

93-100 A	87-89 B+	77-79 C+	67-69 D+	59 or below F
90-92 A-	83-86 B	73-76 C	60-66 D	
	80-82 B-	70-72 C-		

Discussion

This course is discussion and writing based so you should come to class prepared to discuss the required readings and assignments. Ask questions about the authors' arguments and make connections between class discussions, films, and reading assignments. You are graded on participation in discussion and your comments should be thoughtful and analytical, showing your engagement with the reading and with the rest of the class. If you are not in class, you will not receive a grade for that day because you were unable to participate in the discussion.

Quizzes

This are three in-class quizzes taken on Canvas where you will short questions on material covered in the course, from the readings to film clips to discussions. You will answer these questions without the use of notes or other materials. The purpose of these quizzes is to connect the major themes and ideas of the course, while analyzing historians' arguments about war, peace, and memory.

Missed Quizzes

-You are responsible for knowing the dates of the quizzes that are posted on Canvas.
-If you know in advance that you will miss one of these, you must notify me ahead of time and provide official documentation (such as a doctor's note or university letter). I will then make arrangements for you to take the quiz before the missed date or **up to one week** after the missed date.
-If there is an emergency and you miss the quiz, you are still required to show documentation of that emergency and you have **one week** after the quiz to make it up.

Public History Project (45%)

All assignments should be submitted to Canvas.

Citation Style: Chicago

Late Policy: 10% taken off for each day the assignment is late, including weekends.

Project: You will create a digital museum exhibit that contains 1000 words of narration and at least 5 primary sources from a digital archival collection. Since this course addresses the ways histories have been constructed and remembered in national narratives and public memory through museums, monuments, and memorials, your project's purpose is to educate a general audience. How will you engage an intended audience? For this project, you will want a topic that is interesting to you and that you enjoy discussing with others.

Think about the historical context of the issues you are interested in discussing. Tell the history of an individual, event, institution, law, specific moment during a social movement, etc. Or, of a specific museum, monument, or memorial. How have they/it been remembered in the public memory? How commemorated or ignored? Who has participated in the construction of this history?

Your exhibit should clearly support your thesis-driven argument with your use of primary and academic source evidence. Be sure to consider your argument from multiple perspectives and describe how it fits in with larger academic debates surrounding museum exhibits, memorials, or monuments. You need to show your ability to evaluate primary and secondary sources and use them to establish the validity of your thesis. A rubric for this assignment will be posted on Canvas and you will be graded on format and visual appearance, overall content, and historical narration. (You may use free online platforms including Wix, Scalar, Squarespace, or another site/program for creating your exhibit.)

CHECKLIST FOR PUBLIC HISTORY PROJECT:

Topic Proposal + Annotated Bibliography – In around 500 words, describe the main theme of your museum exhibit and the basic research questions that you hope to explore or discover. Cite which archival collection you plan on utilizing. Annotated Bibliography: You should have at least 2 primary sources and 2 academic sources (beyond those used in class) and explain how these sources will help you answer those research questions. Each source should have a description of the main arguments of the source and how it will contribute to your topic.

Working Thesis Statement + Outline – Draft an outline and create a working thesis statement about what you hope to argue in your museum exhibit's narrative. You need to have read through all of your sources prior to drafting the outline of your exhibit. Make it clear why your research is significant. Outline the major themes: Introduction, Historical Context/Background, Major Points, and Conclusion. You should utilize all of your academic sources in the narration of your exhibit. Include footnotes or endnotes for this narrative.

Rough Draft – Your museum exhibit should have a hook (specific story, quote, a problem to solve, a question to answer, etc) that catches the attention of the reader/viewer. Your digital exhibit should clearly support your thesis with your use of source evidence. Be sure to consider your argument from multiple perspectives. Organize material in a clear manner. You need to have identified your 5 primary sources and planned out the general presentation of your exhibit, but it can be "rough" in the sense of the design.

Final Draft – Based on student and instructor feedback, edit your digital exhibit into a final version. You will be graded based on how clearly and effectively you argue your thesis. You should have a thesis, support your thesis with evidence, consider different perspectives, and use analysis that shows critical

thinking. You must include: thematic sections, works cited list, at least 5 primary sources from a digital archival collection and 1000 words of narration.

Trigger Warning

This class will cover intense themes that might surprise or disturb you, so I wanted to issue a brief trigger warning. Discussions will include sensitive topics including but not limited to racism, death, sexual assault, violence, religion, politics, and cultural beliefs.

SCHEDULE

WEEK ONE: Introduction to the Course and Public History

Jan 21 – Virtual Museum Exhibit Tours of Anne Frank House, the Louvre, National Portrait Gallery “Votes for Women” exhibit, National Museum of the American Latino, and sample undergraduate virtual museum exhibits

WEEK TWO: Museums

Jan 28 – *Richard Kohn, “History and the Culture Wars: The Case of the Smithsonian Institution’s *Enola Gay* Exhibition,” *The Journal of American History*, Dec 1995.

*Lonnie G. Bunch III, “The Definitive History of How the National Museum of African American History and Culture Came to Be,” *Smithsonian Magazine*, September 2016

*Articles on Museum Exhibit Reviews and Museum Labels:

- “Practicing Theory: What’s Really Happening When You Write Exhibit Text for Museums,”
<http://activehistory.ca/2019/03/practicing-theory-whats-really-happening-when-you-write-exhibit-text-for-museums/>

- American Alliance of Museums, “Excellence in Label Writing Awards,” <https://www.aam-us.org/2017/10/04/excellence-in-label-writing-awards/>

- “Writing a Museum Title Card,”
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject_specific_writing/writing_in_art_history/museum_title_cards.html
-WATCH: “Slavery at Jefferson’s Monticello: A Paradox of Liberty”

WEEK THREE: Museums

Feb 4 – **Proposal + Annotated Bibliography Due**

*Tour of *Matter + Spirit* exhibit in The High Center

*Articles from Museums and Race organization, “Statement of Purpose” and “Museum Report Card”

* Elisa Shoenberger, “What Does It Mean to Decolonize a Museum?” *Museum Next*, Feb 2020.

*Farah Nayeri, “To Protest Colonialism, He Takes Artifacts from Museums,” *The New York Times*, Sept 21, 2020.

*Tristram Hunt, “Should museums return their colonial artifacts?” *The Guardian*, June 2019.

WEEK FOUR: Museums

Feb 11 – *Nina Simon chapters from *The Participatory Museum* (free online)

*Lyon, et al, Chapter 5: “Interpreting and Exhibiting History,” in *Introduction to Public History*, 83-112.

*Watch Nina Simon’s *Ted Talk*

WEEK FIVE: Museums

Feb 18 – *Chapter 1 of Beverly Serrell’s *Exhibit Labels*

*Lyon, et al, “Writing Interpretive Text,” in *Introduction to Public History*

*Margaret Burchenal and Michelle Grohe, “Reimagining School Programs,” *Visual Arts Research* 34 no. 2 (2008), 66-75.

WEEK SIX: Museums

Feb 25 – **Quiz 1**

**Monumental Crossroads* documentary

WEEK SEVEN: Monuments

Mar 4 – **Working Thesis + Outline Due**

*Kurt Piehler, "Introduction," in *Remembering War the American Way*

*Keisha Blain, "Destroying Confederate monuments" in *Washington Post*

*James W. Loewen, "In What Ways Were We Warped?" and "Hieratic Scale in Historic Monuments," in *Lies Across America: What Our Historic Sites Get Wrong*

*Video tour of Stone Mountain in Georgia

WEEK EIGHT

Mar 11 – NO CLASS (Spring Long Weekend)

WEEK NINE: Monuments

Mar 18 – *Adam Dombay, "Toppling statues is a first step toward ending Confederate myths," *Nat Geo*

*Articles on the Commonwealth Monument Project

WEEK TEN: Monuments

Mar 25 – Guest Speaker Dr. Todd Allen on his Confederate museums and monuments research

Guest Speaker Lenwood Sloan on the Commonwealth Monument Project

WEEK ELEVEN: Monuments

Apr 1 – **Quiz 2**

*Kurt Piehler, "From the Korean War to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial," in *Remembering War the American Way*

*Maya Lin documentary clips, *A Strong Clear Vision*

*Teresa Bergman, Chapter 4: "Sex and Gender in the Lincoln Memorial: The Politics of Interpreting Lincoln's Legacy" in *Exhibiting Patriotism: Creating and Contesting Interpretations of American Historic Sites*, 2013, p117-141.

WEEK TWELVE: Memorials

Apr 8 – **Rough Draft of Project Due**

*Robert Hayashi, "Transfigured Patterns: Contesting Memories at the Manzanar National Historic Site," *The Public Historian*, 2003

*Frank Hays, "The NPS: Groveling Sychophant or Social Conscience: Telling the Story of Mountains, Valley, and Barbed Wire at Manzanar National Historic Site," *The Public Historian*, 2003.

*Matthew Irwin, "Native American Students Fight to Remove Colonial Imagery from University of New Mexico"

<https://hyperallergic.com/322003/native-american-students-fight-to-remove-colonial-imagery-from-university-of-new-mexico/>

*Tony Horowitz, "The Horrific Sand Creek Massacre Will Be Forgotten No More," *Smithsonian magazine*, Dec 2014

*Cynthia Prescott, "Think Confederate Monuments Are Racist? Consider Pioneer Monuments," Aug 2018

WEEK THIRTEEN: Memorials

Apr 15 – *Steven Greenhouse, "In a Tragedy, a Mission to Remember," March 2011, *New York Times*

*Kate Clarke Lemay, Chapter 3 from *Triumph of the Dead: American WWII Cemeteries, Monuments, and Diplomacy in France*, 2018

*Ivey DeJesus, "Decades after black cemetery's gravestones removed and lost, families try to restore dignity to sacred space," *Penn Live*, June 2019 (on Lincoln Cemetery in Carlisle, PA)

WEEK FOURTEEN: Memorials

Apr 22 – *Micki McElya, "Remembering 9/11's Pentagon Victims and Reframing History in Arlington National Cemetery," *Radical History Review* 111, (Fall 2011).

*Erika Doss, "Remembering 9/11: Memorials and Cultural Memory"

*Michael Kimmel, "Finding Space for the Living at a Memorial," *New York Times*

*Patrick Smith, "American exceptionalism and American innocence: The misleading history and messages of the 9/11 Memorial Museum," *Salon*, June 2014

WEEK FIFTEEN: Memorials

Apr 29 – **Final Draft of Project Due**

*Linda Norris, "We As Citizens": Approaches to Memorialization By Sites of Conscience Around the World in *Controversial Monuments and Memorials*

*Delande Justinvil and Chip Colwell, "U.S. Museums Hold the Remains of Thousands of Black People" April 2021

<https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/black-remains-in-museums>

*"What Should Museums Do With the Bones of the Enslaved?" *NYT*. April 2021

*"Someone Keeps Leaving Toys and birthday cards at a 7-year-old's grave in a historic Black cemetery," *Washington Post*, April 2021

FINAL EXAM (Quiz 3) is on Tues, May 4 at 1:30pm to 3:30pm