

Curating the Holocaust

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This course is designed to provide students with basic curatorial skills for working in both Holocaust Museums and Heritage Sites. Comprised of 2 modules, theoretical and practical, students will be given the opportunity to study the academic components of Museum Studies, and subsequently, translate their historical knowledge into practical skills within Museum spaces and Heritage Sites.

The course will place a strong emphasis on Holocaust Museums in particular. We will explore the birth of Holocaust museums in the 20th Century and how they have evolved; didactically, architecturally and advancements in educational directives through museum spaces. Furthermore, students will assess how audiences in future generations will engage Holocaust Sites and museums.

Academic components of the course explore a variety subject including Heritage Interpretation, Understanding Significance, Collections Management & Object Care, Building Memorials, Intangible Heritage and Shared Heritage. Practical components of the course will include an in-depth assessment of curatorial styles used in Holocaust museums and memorials in Israel and abroad. We will delve into the details of current Holocaust memorial design and its impact on 21st Century memorialization. Finally, we will explore the effects of the current trend in removal and destruction of monuments globally.

Course Requirements:

- Weekly Readings: Students will be required to read the set texts for each component of the course.
- Class Participation: Active attendance in at least ten weeks of the course is required.
- Yom Hashoah Presentation: Students will be required to give a 5-10 minute presentation to the class.
- Written Assignments:

Response papers:

Significance – One page Significance Statement

Interpretation – One-to-two-page reflection

Final Assignment: In-depth research paper on one current Holocaust Memorial.

Assessment:

Oral Presentation – 30%

Response Papers– 20% each [total 40%]

Report on Practical component – 30%

Options available to write the following in this course:

- Referat paper, theme or idea-based research - 10 pages.
- Seminar Paper, Original research - 30 pages.

Class Schedule:

1. Class 1: November 6th

- Course outline – expectations and projects
- Birth of museums, and creation of Holocaust museums
- “Sites of Pain and Shame”

2. November 13th

- Heritage interpretation \ teaching difficult histories

3. November 20th

- Differences and similarities between museums and heritage sites
- Spaces of difficult heritage

4. November 27th

- Significance – how to determine significance of a site / event / artefact / individual

5. December 4th

- Continuation of significance
- How do we interpret the space
- Visitor experience

6. December 11th

- Continuation of visitor experience

7. December 18th

- Building memorials – distinguishing between educating and memorializing

8. January 1st

- Holocaust memorials
- Classifications of memorials
- Design, use and meaning of memorials

January 8th

- Designing Holocaust memorials in the 21st century
- Memorial design competition
- Analysis of current Holocaust memorial design. Breakdown of 21st century approaches to; design, politics and implementation of Holocaust memorials

January 15th

- Presentation of current memorial design projects
- Breakdown of current Holocaust Memorial designs internationally
- Critique of strengths and weaknesses in contemporary designs

January 22nd

- Destruction of monuments and memorials throughout history
- Downfall of monuments in 2020 and potential impact on future Holocaust memorials

January 29th

- Guest speaker Liz Elsby

February 5th

- Flex Date

Due Dates:

- December 18th – Significance Statement
- March 12th – Written Memorial Project
- February, at end of course, exact date TBD – Yom Hashoah / January 27th / October 7th presentations

Required reading:

November 6th

Logan & Reeves. "*Places of Pain and Shame. Dealing With Difficult Heritage.*" [Routledge, New York, 2011] page 1-14 "Introduction"

November 13th

Tilden, F. "*Interpreting Our Heritage*" Third Edition. [University of North Carolina Press, 1977] Part 1

November 20th

Rose, J. "*Interpreting Difficult History at Museums and Historic Sites*" [Roman & Littlefield, 2016] Page 14 -21

November 27th

Williams, P. "*Memorial Museums. The Global Rush to Commemorate Atrocities*" [Berg Publishers, UK, 2007] Pages 25-50: "The Surviving Object: Presence and Absence in Memorial Museums"

December 4th

Rose, J. "Interpreting Difficult History at Museums and Historic Sites" [Roman & Littlefield, 2016] page 78 -95 "Five R's"

Williams, P. "*Memorial Museums. The Global Rush to Commemorate Atrocities.*" [Berg Publishers, UK, 2007] Pages 77-104 "Rocks and Hard Places: Location and Spatiality in Memorial Museums. Pages 181-192 "Fighting the Forgetful Future"

December 11th

Rose, J. "Interpreting Difficult History at Museums and Historic Sites" [Roman & Littlefield, 2016] page 117 -132 "Narratives"

Rose, J. "Interpreting Difficult History at Museums and Historic Sites" [Roman & Littlefield, 2016] page 34 – 48 "Risks of Interpreting Difficult Histories"

December 18th

Logan & Reeves. "*Places of Pain and Shame. Dealing With Difficult Heritage.*" [Routledge, New York, 2011] "Auschwitz – Birkenau. The Challenges of Heritage Management Following the Cold War." Page 50 -67. By Katie Young

Young, J. "*The Texture of Memory.*" [Yale University Press, 1993]. Page 263-282. Chapter 10 "When a Day Remembers: A Performative History of Yom Hashoah"

January 1st

Stevens & Franck. *“Memorials as Spaces of Engagement. Design, Use and Meaning.”* [Routledge NY, 2016] Pages 11-33 “From Viewing to Engaging”

Tolia-Kelly, Waterton and Watson. “Heritage, Affect and Emotion. Politics, Practices and Infrastructures” [Routledge NY, 2017] Pages 75-92 “Affect and the Politics of Testimony in Holocaust Museums” By Cooke & Frieze

January 8th

Young, J. *“The Texture of Memory. Holocaust Memorials and Meaning”* [Yael University Press, 1993] Page 27-48 “The Countermonument: Memory against Itself in Germany”

Stevens & Franck. *“Memorials as Spaces of Engagement. Design, Use and Meaning.”* [Routledge NY, 2016] Pages 139-162. “Interpreting”.

January 15th

Stevens & Franck. *“Memorials as Spaces of Engagement. Design, Use and Meaning.”* [Routledge NY, 2016] pages 192-218 “Planning”

Yad Vashem. “Yad Vashem. Moshe Safdie - The Architecture of Memory.” Yad Vashem Publications 2011

Frihammar & Silverman. “Heritage of Death. Landscapes of Emotion, Memory and Practice.” [Routledge NY, 2018] pages 195-208 “Death Everywhere”

January 22nd

LJ Smith, “Emotional Heritage. Visitor Engagement at Museums and Heritage Sites. Visitor Engagement at Museums and Heritage Sites.” [Routledge NY, 2021] pages 240-258 “Intergenerational Communication and Connection”

McRainey & Russick. *“Connecting Kids to History with Museum Exhibitions”* [Left Coast Press California, 2010] Chapter 11 page 241-256 “Is It Real? Kids and Collections”

January 29th

Lord and Piacente. *“Manual of Museum Exhibitions”* Second Edition. [Rowman & Littlefield UK, 2014] Chapter 2 page 7 -18 “Purpose of Museum Exhibitions”

Alivizatou. “Intangible Heritage and The Museum. New Perspectives on Cultural Preservation”. [UCL Institute of Archaeology Critical Cultural Heritage Series 8] West Coast Press. Walnut Creek, California, 2012. Chapter 8. “Rethinking Cultural Preservation, Museum Curation and Communities.” Page 189 -192

Reynolds, D. *“Postcards from Auschwitz. Holocaust Tourism and the Meaning of Remembrance”* [New York University Press, 2018] pages 29-70. “Listening to Auschwitz”

Harel Dorit. “*Facts and Feelings. Dilemmas in Designing the Yad Vashem Holocaust History Museum*”

Yad Vashem Publishing. 2010 Pages 16-20 “Content and Form, Form and Content: Fundamental Questions in Planning the Museum [16-20]

Lord and Piacente. “*Manual of Museum Exhibitions*” Second Edition. [Rowman & Littlefield UK, 2014] Page 269 – 280 “Collection, Research and Exhibition Text”

Yad Vashem. “Yad Vashem. Moshe Safdie - The Architecture of Memory.” Yad Vashem Publications 2011