

**On Location: Exploring America: *Ground Zero***  
L98 AMCS 3500 (Spring 2015)  
T/TH 3:30 to 5 PM | Busch 14

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American Culture Studies  
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“Once we have assigned monumental form to memory, we have to some degree divested ourselves of the obligation to remember.”

-- J. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*

“People make attachments to places that are critical to their well-being or distress.”

-- Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place*

## Course Description

When tragic events and public disasters occur, Americans often rush to clear the sites and erect monuments. Calls for rebuilding the World Trade Center and creating a 9/11 memorial began before the pile stopped smoking. In recent decades, the processes of commemoration (or erasure) have sped up, foreclosing important struggles over meaning that once took decades. This course will consider various “ground zeros” past and present – problematic sites of violence, disaster, and trauma – and the politics of memory that have shaped them.

Who owns these sites? Does large-scale or impactful tragedy give the public some claim? What makes them so potent, even dreadful? Why are some of them “fixable,” while others are so troubling or toxic that we feel the need to obliterate them? As we answer these and other questions, we will consider how ground zeros are defined in spatial, cultural and political terms; how they are managed and interpreted; and what modes of remembrance, forgetting and resistance have taken place there. What do these sites tell us about ourselves?

“Our human landscape is our unwitting autobiography, reflecting our tastes, our values, our aspirations, and even our fears, in tangible, visible form...”

-- Peirce F. Lewis, “Axioms for Reading the Landscape”

Following Peirce Lewis and a number of other cultural geographers, we will think about ground zero sites as part of broader cultural landscapes that are created over time based on established conventions and structures, but never wholly stable or fixed (in other words, in a continual state of change). In this sense, these sites are products of ongoing cultural construction; they have histories, textures, and multiple, sometimes contradictory dimensions and qualities, and they express our tastes, values, ideas, longings and fears. They reflect **efforts to preserve and celebrate or remember** and **efforts to erase, conceal, suppress, or just neglect** past events or experiences.

We will engage with several different types of ground zeros, from the newly-formed (e.g. the Ferguson QuikTrip) and the iconic (the former World Trade Center and its emerging replacement) to the willfully forgotten (the African Burial Ground in Manhattan, the former Pruitt-Igoe site in North St. Louis) and wholly invisible (the site of the 1917 labor/race riots in East St. Louis). In our effort to locate these sites in a broader cultural landscape, we will consider many forms of evidence, and do a fair amount of field-based observation.

## Course Objectives

During the course, you can expect to

- Engage with a variety of sites of memory (and of forgetting) as part of the broader cultural landscape in which we live.
- Identify / explore the defining material, political, and cultural features of “ground zero” sites. *What makes some sites so problematic?*
- Draw upon various strategies for identifying, reading and interpreting these sites (e.g. by situating them within cultural / political debates at various historical moments; linking them to conceptions of cultural memory and loss; interpreting their material, symbolic, and political content; etc.).
- Assess how these sites contribute to the production / contestation of shared cultural ideas e.g. about patriotism, citizenship, public history, memory and national identity; and consider their significance in the broader history of urban planning and preservation.

NOTE: This course fulfills the fieldwork requirement for AMCS majors.

## Readings

There are two required texts (both available in the campus bookstore):

1. Kenneth Foote, *Shadowed Ground: America's Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy* (Austin: University of Texas Press; ISBN: 0292705255)
2. Philip Nobel, *Sixteen Acres: Architecture and the Outrageous Struggle for the Future of Ground Zero* (Picador, 2005; ISBN: 0805080023).

Other required readings are accessible on Blackboard (<http://bb.wustl.edu>).

## Required Work

<b>Group Presentations / Post-NYC Trip Research Findings</b> (2 at 10% each)	20%
<b>Midterm</b> (essay, 7-8 pp.)	20%
<b>Final Project</b> (presentation 10%; 8-10 pp. essay 20%)	30%
<b>Attendance / Contributions to Discussion</b>	20%
<b>Short Responses</b> (Four 1-2 pp. response required; the 5 <sup>th</sup> response is optional extra credit)	15%

## Local Sites

We will devote several class sessions to site-based exploration in and around St. Louis:

**In-class sessions** (unless otherwise noted, we will be returning by the end of class time):

- **Jan. 22** (Confederate Memorial, Forest Park)
- **Jan. 30** (Campbell House Museum, accessible by Metrolink. We will be returning to campus at about 5:30 PM...if you can't make that work you can visit on your own.)
- **Feb. 15** (East St. Louis)
- **Feb. 19** (Eagle Cliff. We will be returning to campus at 5:30.)
- **Feb. 26** (Delmar Avenue Bike Memorial)
- **March 31** (the former Pruitt-Igoe site)
- **April 7** (Ferguson)

**Saturday walking tours:** Jan. 31 (12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.) and Feb. 15 (1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.). These absolutely crucial tours will introduce sites and concepts we will reference throughout the semester. We have canceled class sessions to account for the extra contact hours we'll have on these tours. Please put them on your calendar now.

## New York City

Our spring break trip to New York City will include **three days of site visits**. We will all fly together from St. Louis to NYC **on Sunday March 8**; you should plan to schedule your own flight from NYC to your home or St. Louis or wherever you plan to spend the rest of spring break (you can depart any time after 6:00 PM on Wednesday March 11).

**The course has a travel fee of \$400** which will be charged to your student account. This fee will cover **transportation to all local sites** (except those involving Metrolink travel – be sure you have your UPass for those). It will also cover **all site visits and hotel costs, as well as some meals in NYC** (more on meals as we get closer to the trip) and also **airfare from STL to NYC**. You will be responsible for your airfare for the return trip.

## Attendance and Discussion

This course is driven by site-based study and discussion; attendance and participation in all the site visits is essential, and will be strongly represented in your grade. Come to each class session having read the material assigned for that day and ready to share your thoughts about it. Your contributions will be especially important at the sites themselves, where we will aim to explore and think creatively, engaging with the cultural landscape on multiple levels, and making connections to the readings and other sites we have seen. If you have to miss a class for any reason, please notify us in advance, and plan to do a written response to the assigned material to make up for your absence. If you absolutely have to miss one of the site visits, this will require a more substantial make-up effort. The reason for this policy is not simply to encourage you to attend class, but to put appropriate emphasis on the site-based study that is so central to *On Location* model.

## Short Responses

Periodically you will be asked to write short responses to sites we visit. Typically, prompts will be distributed in advance (and posted to Blackboard). Your responses should be brief (1-2 pp.) but thoughtful, and supported by details from field-based observation. You need to do 4 of the 5 assigned; the NYC response is required of all. The fifth response is optional, and can be done for extra credit.

## The Midterm (7-8 pp.)

The midterm will take the form of a take-home essay due by email on Monday 2/23. The essay will involve analysis of one of the sites we experience on the St. Louis walking tour, focusing on Foote's typology of sites of violence (sanctification, designation, rectification, obliteration). Details will be provided in class.

## The Final Project (9-10 pp.)

Your final project will engage with a given ground zero site, and do two things:

- 1) **Characterize and interpret the site as it is currently functioning** inside the cultural landscape(s) of which it is a part. This interpretation of the site should be based on your own observation as well as traditional research, and should be approximately 4-5 pp. in length). As part of this interpretation, you should identify any existing manifestations of commemoration and any official or unofficial designations it has been given (e.g. historic landmark status as official, appearance in a guidebook or website as unofficial).
- 2) **Propose an alternative use or interpretation of the site** that responds to your reading of the site and represents an appropriate intervention or change. This could involve alternative uses / interpretations of the site, new forms of demarcation, monuments of other forms of commemoration, etc. This part of your project should be approximately 5-6 pp. in length and should include suitable documentation of your plan (e.g. descriptive material, drawings, text for a proposed site marker, etc.) as well as a rationale: why your plan is necessary and appropriate.

Both parts of the project should be informed by course readings and methodologies.

## Academic Integrity

You are responsible for adhering to the university's academic integrity policies (for a full articulation of them, see <http://studentconduct.wustl.edu/integrity/policy>). In particular, you are expected to **produce your own work**, to **avoid inappropriate collaboration** (especially on the written assignments), and to **avoid various other forms of academic dishonesty**, including falsification of data and misrepresentation of sources.

**Failure to cite and formally acknowledge your sources constitutes plagiarism**, and will result in a failing grade (and likely disciplinary action within the bounds of Washington University's usual policies). You should produce work that is *very clear* in its acknowledgement of others' work – not only quoted material, but ideas and language as well. This is a standard of quality research

that you are expected to meet. *When in doubt, cite!*

### Citations and Formatting

All work for the course should use **the Chicago Style of documentation** (footnoting of each source each time you quote, paraphrase, summarize or otherwise reference it – see [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html) or other such sources for guidance). Please use **an 11-point font, double space your work, and provide page numbers.**

Week	Dates	Topics / Priorities	Sites	Readings / Assignments
1	1/13 1/15	Introduction; material evidence of remembrance / erasure; cultural landscape	Campus sites, monuments erasures	Foote, <i>Shadowed Ground</i> Chs. 1-2 Hayden, <i>Power of Place</i> excerpt?
2	1/20 1/22	Preservation / heritage Site visit during class	Confederate Memorial	Foote, CHs. 3-4; Linenthal, “A Joint and Precious Heritage” (Gettysburg); J.B. Jackson, “The Necessity for Ruins,” <i>Necessity for Ruins</i> ; Dolores Hayden, Introduction to <i>The Power of Place</i>
3	1/27 1/29	Discussion of city planning Conflicting claims to space Site visit during class	Campbell House Museum	<i>Public Art in Saint Louis</i> ; Civic Center Plan; <i>Saint Louis After WWII</i> ; 1947 Plan; “Progress or Decay?”; MA’s essay on bank; Ron Fagerstrom, <i>Mill Creek Valley: A Soul of St. Louis</i> excerpts. <b>Short Response 1 (Confederate Memorial) due 1/28</b>
<b>Walking/Driving Tour (Saturday 1/31)</b>			Locust Ave.; Schiller statue; Civic Center; Soldiers’ Memorial; Public Library; Mill Creek Valley site; Pruitt-Igoe... <i>Typology of Sites: preserved, sanctified, rehabilitated, reconstructed, neglected, unruly. Key concepts: development, erasure/clearance, rectification, commemoration</i>	
4	2/3 2/5	<i>No class</i> Discussion of tour / CHM		Foote, Ch. 5; “Campbell House Museum” essay, Kolk, “The Opening”; View <i>The Shining</i> <b>Short Response 2 (on Campbell House) due 2/6</b>
5	2/10 2/12	<i>The Shining</i> ; violence /shame Set-up of East St. Louis		East St. Louis materials; Charles Lumpkins, <i>American Pogrom</i> excerpts Ned Kaufman, “Protecting Storyscape”; Foote, Ch. 6
<b>Walking Tour (Saturday 2/7)</b>			East St. Louis / environs (with John Kelly?)	
6	2/17 2/19	Discussion of East St. Louis Site visit during class	Eagle Cliff	<b>Introduce midterm</b> ; Foote, Ch. 9; John W. Allen, excerpts, <i>Legends and Lore of Southern Illinois</i> ; Eagle Cliff newspaper sources
7	2/24 2/26	Discussion of Eagle Cliff Site visit during class	UCity Jewish cemetery & ghost bike memorial	<b>Midterm due by email Monday 2/24.</b> Prepare NYC presentations Nobel, <i>Sixteen Acres</i>

<b>8</b>	3/3 3/5	NYC presentations NYC presentations		<b>Short Response 3 due.</b> Sturken, "Aesthetics of Absence" and excerpt, <i>Tourists of History</i> ; Lisle, "Gazing at Ground Zero"; Mekell, "Negative Heritage and Past Mastering"; ABG materials.
<b>SPRING BREAK (NYC Trip: March 8-11)</b>			African Burial Ground; 9/11 Memorial/Museum/Firefighters' Memorial (GZ area walking tour students on their own); pairs work at optional sites, e.g. Ellis Island, Irish Hunger Memorial, Tenement Museum; Triangle Shirtwaist building. <i>Ghost tour?</i>	
<b>9</b>	3/17 3/29	No class NYC site findings/discussion		<b>Short Response 4 (NYC) due 3/18.</b> Prep site findings presentations <i>Guardian</i> essay: "9/11 Ground Zero: Why has its rebirth turned sour?"
<b>10</b>	3/24 2/26	NYC site findings/discussion Pruitt-Igoe Urban abandonment, demolition, depletion		Alexander Von Hoffman, "Why They Built Pruitt-Igoe"; Katherine Bristol, "The Pruitt Igoe Myth"; Jeff Byles, "There Goes The Ghetto," <i>Rubble: Unearthing the History of Demolition</i> ; Mitchell Schwarzer, "St. Louis," <i>Harvard Design Magazine</i> 16 (2002).
<b>11</b>	3/31 4/2	Pruitt-Igoe discussion	Pruitt-Igoe return trip	Vergara, "Energies of the Outmoded" and "Swimming Against the Tide" ( <i>American Ruins</i> ); view <i>Pruitt-Igoe Myth</i> ; entries on <a href="#">Pruitt-Igoe Now</a> website (and Allen and Wendl, " <a href="#">The Unmentioned Modern Landscape</a> "); Allen and Wendl, "After Pruitt Igoe: An urban forest as an evolving temporal landscape"; Quivik, "The Historical Significance of Tailings and Slag: Industrial Waste as Cultural Resource."
<b>12</b>	4/7 4/9	Site visit during class Ferguson discussion	Ferguson	Allen and Kolk, " <a href="#">Reckonings: Ferguson and the Politics of Site Definition</a> "; Lowery, " <a href="#">The QuikTrip gas station, protestors' staging ground, is now silent</a> "; Davey and Blinder, " <a href="#">After Disputed Verdict, Reckoning for Ferguson</a> "; NYT, " <a href="#">What Happened in Ferguson?</a> " Introduce Final Project
<b>13</b>	4/14 4/16	Ferguson and beyond Presentations of Final Projects		Readings? <b>Short Response 5 (Ferguson) due 4/15</b>
<b>14</b>	4/21 4/23	Presentations of Final Projects Wrap-up discussion		Grades due May 7 <b>Final Project due Monday 5/4 at NOON</b>