

St.FrancisCollege
Department of Foreign Languages, Fine Arts,
and International Cultural Studies

Spring 2012 FA 2408 Commemorative Practices in the United States Prof. J. Wingate
Tuesday/Thursday 1:20 – 2:45 p.m. 3 Credits, Room 7213

Office Hours: Tues. 11:10-12:10
Thurs. 3:00 to 4:00
or by appointment

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Course Description: This course surveys commemorative practices in the United States from the colonial period to the present, focusing on how individuals and groups remember the past, honor people and events, and reflect on occasions of personal and/or national significance. It will examine “cultural memory,” how it relates to history, and how it is produced by objects and images. While this course places an emphasis on how memories and tributes are given physical form in monuments, souvenirs, and impromptu shrines, other commemorative practices covered will include oral histories, poetry, and film. The histories and debates surrounding a number of major memorials will be studied in depth. The class will visit two memorial sites in New York, as well as archival collections at the Brooklyn Historical Society.

Objectives:

- 1) To develop an understanding of the social and cultural forces that shape memory and to develop a set of critical and analytical tools to approach the study of commemorative practices. To appreciate the different ways that memory, history, and identity inform one another.
- 2) To understand how memory is embodied in (and produced by) objects, artworks, and monuments and to become familiar with a selection of major commemorative artworks from throughout U.S. history.
- 3) To appreciate the decision making process behind memorial planning and to identify the meanings and functions of memorials, both intended and unintended, from the perspective of their makers and of their audiences.
- 4) To become familiar with different kinds of primary research sources by consulting archival materials at the Brooklyn Historical Society (BHS) as part of the “Students and Faculty in the Archives” (SAFA) project. To consult BHS archives to enhance understanding of 19th- and 20th-century U.S. commemorative practices

Required Texts:

Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories: the Vietnam War, the AIDS epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering* (Berkeley, CA: Univ. of California Press, 1997)

Harriet F. Senie and Sally Webster, eds., *Critical Issues in Public Art: Content, Context, and Controversy* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998)

Complimentary Text:

Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1997)

Course Requirements:

1. Regular class attendance and class participation including two trips to the Brooklyn Historical Society and two trips to local monuments (all take place during class time). A maximum of three hours of absence is allowed per semester for reasons of illness or other necessity.
2. Assigned readings in texts and posted on Angel, written responses to questions about readings, posted reflections on the class website (<http://safa.brooklynhistory.org>), and ability to knowledgeably discuss readings in class.
3. Two exams (one on March 1 and one during Finals period). Make-up exams may only be given at the professor's discretion for serious and documented reasons (e.g. certified doctor's note on letterhead for serious illnesses), and only then if you contact the professor within a week of the exam. Please make every effort to contact the professor as soon as possible.
4. A final paper (due April 26) OR lead class discussion for part of class (with slides) on a day of your choosing starting March 27. Prof. Wingate to provide details.
5. Regular consultation of class information on Angel: slide presentations from class (to be posted as the semester progresses), reading questions, announcements, and other course materials as they become available. I will also send e-mail reminders and announcements to student Angel accounts.

Basis for the Grade and Grading Standards:

midterm exam	25%	100 – 93	A
final exam	25%	92 – 90	A-
paper/project	25%	89 – 88	B+
class participation	12.5%	87 – 83	B
assignments	12.5%	82 – 80	B-
		79 – 78	C+
		77 – 73	C
		72 – 70	C-
		69 – 60	D
		59 or lower	F

Exams: Exams may include slide IDs, slide ID discussions, term discussions, multiple choice questions and one or more essay.

Slides: For **straight slide IDS**, identify slides by artist, title, and period (see study list). For **slide ID discussions**, identify the work and then discuss how it is important within the context of the course. **Terms:** Multiple choice and/or short answers for which you will define and describe the terms (choosing 4, for example, from a list of 6 to 8) as they pertain to the history of U.S. commemorative practices, discussing their significance within the context of the course and providing examples of art works to illustrate your answer.

Short Answers/Essays: These may include slide comparisons or may ask you to address a particular theme covered in the course.

Academic Integrity: Academic dishonesty (cheating or plagiarism) on exams or papers is a very serious matter and will be dealt with as such. Such conduct may incur very severe penalties. Consultation of electronic devices during an exam will result in automatic failure.

Lecture Topics and Assignments:

Thurs. Jan. 19 Introduction: What is memory? What does the study of commemorative practices entail?

Tues. Jan. 24 Commemoration and Family Keepsakes in Early America: Colonial Portraits, Gravestones, etc. Download from Angel and read (for Tues. Jan. 24): John Gillis, "Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship," in Gillis, ed., *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1994), pp. 3-24. **Answer accompanying reading questions.**

Thurs. Jan. 26 Commemorating Nationhood: Early Presidential Portraiture, the Nation as Landscape, the Washington Monument

Download from Angel and read (for Thurs. Jan. 26): Kirk Savage, "The Self-Made Monument: George Washington and the Fight to Erect a National Memorial," in Senie and Webster, eds., *Critical Issues in Public Art: Content, Context, and Controversy* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998), pp. 5-32. **Answer questions.**

Tues. Jan. 31 Early Photography and the Emergence of an American "Visual Culture": Daguerreotypes, the Popularization of Portraiture and Sculpture, the Cult of Celebrity

Download from Angel and read (for Tues. Jan. 31): "Introduction" and "Presenting the Self" in Miles Orvell, *American Photography* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 13-37.

Thurs. Feb. 2 Visual Culture of the Civil War Era: Abolitionist Imagery; Civil War Era Paintings, Sculpture, and Photography

Download from Angel and read (for Thurs. Feb. 2): "Seeing and Believing," in Miles Orvell, *American Photography*, pp. 61-67

Tues. Feb. 7 Trip to see Photographs from the BHS collection (Meet in SFC lobby at 1:20. We will walk together to the BHS as a group)

Read BHS "History of Photography" handout (for Feb. 7); Review insets from last Tuesday's reading in Orvell: "The daguerreotype and other early processes" (p. 21), "Photographic Formats" (p. 25), and "Amateur Photography" (p. 35). **Post visit reflections on website.** Prof. Wingate will provide writing prompts.

Thurs. Feb. 9 Guest Lecture by Dr. Wendy Galgan on Civil War Writing and Memory

Read Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in 19th-Century America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1997), pp. 3-20 (Chapter 1)

Tues. Feb. 14 Civil War Commemorative Sculpture

Read Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves*, pp. 90-128 (Chapter 4). **Answer questions.**

Thurs. Feb. 16 Trip to Grand Army Plaza (Dress warmly! We'll take the subway)

Start reading Chapter 6 (pp. 162-208) in Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves*

Tues. Feb. 21 Trip to BHS to look at archival materials pertaining to Civil War commemorative practices

Complete reading Chapter 6 in Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves* plus handouts for BHS trip (materials related to the Cranston papers, the Lincoln Monument subscription books, and the Personal War Sketches album of the Harry Lee Post of the G.A.R.) **Post visit reflections on website.** Prof. Wingate will provide writing prompts.

Thurs. Feb. 23 Overview of themes from Tuesday's BHS visit; plus visit to Howard Skril's exhibit in the Callahan Center

Tues. Feb. 28 Review for Midterm

Thurs. March 1 Midterm

Tues. March 6 World War One: Fighting Soldiers

Download from Angel and read: Jennifer Wingate, "Over the Top: The Doughboy in World War I Memorials and Visual Culture," *American Art* 19, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 26-47. Read selected excerpts from Steven Trout, "Introduction: Memory, History, and America's First World War" in *On the Battlefield of Memory: The First World War and American Remembrance, 1919-1941* (Tuscaloosa: Univ. of Alabama Press, 2010) **Answer questions.**

Thurs. March 8 Trip to Red Hook Doughboy (Dress appropriately if it's cold or wet! We'll take the bus)

Read poem "Saint Peter Relates an Incident of the Resurrection Day" in *Saint Peter Relates an Incident: Selected Poems by James Weldon Johnson* (NY: Viking Press, 1935), 13-22. **Post visit reflections on website.** Prof. Wingate will provide writing prompt.

Tues. March 13 Follow up discussion of WWI readings. Watch movie, *All Quiet on the Western Front*

Thurs. March 15 Women as Keepers and Makers of Memory: Pacifist Memorials

Download from Angel and read: Jennifer Wingate, "Motherhood, Memorials, and Anti-Militarism: Bashka Paeff's *Sacrifices of War*" *Woman's Art Journal* 29, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2008): 31-40. **Answer questions.**

Tues. March 20 and Thurs. March 22 NO CLASS spring recess

Tues. March 27 World War Two, Living Memorials, and the Pursuit of "Better Living"

Read Andrew Shanken, "Planning Memory: Living Memorials in the United States during World War II," *The Art Bulletin* 84, no. 1 (March 2002): 130-147. **Answer questions.**

Thurs. March 29 Holocaust Memorials and "Counter-Monuments"; Distribution and discussion of paper assignment In Senie and Webster, read James Young, "Holocaust Memorials in America: Public Art as Process," pp. 57-69

Tues. April 3 Watch movie, *Maya Lin: A Strong Clear Vision*

Read Chapter 2 in Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories*, "The Wall and the Screen Memory," pp. 44-84 **Post reflections on website.** Prof. Wingate will provide writing prompts.

Thurs. April 5 NO CLASS Easter recess

Tues. April 10 Watch movie, *The Deer Hunter*

Read Chapter 3 in Sturken, "Reenactment and the Making of History: The Vietnam War as Docudrama," pp. 85-121

Thurs. April 12 Discuss both movies and Sturken's *Tangled Memories*; begin discussion of AIDS Activist Art and Commemoration; Read Chapter 5 in Sturken, "AIDS and the Politics of Representation," pp. 145-182

Tues. April 17 Paying Homage to the Civil Rights Movement in Art of the 1970s and 1980s

Assignment TBA

Thurs. April 19 The History of Collecting Oral Histories; Guest Visit by BHS Oral Historian Sady Sullivan

We'll also listen to some WWII and Civil Rights Movement oral histories from the BHS collection

Assignment TBA

Tues. April 24 Guest Lecture by Dr. Greene on the 9/11 Memorial in Lower Manhattan

Assignment TBA

Thurs. April 26 Other 9/11 Commemorative Practices; Review for Exam (Final Papers are Due)

Date of Final TBA