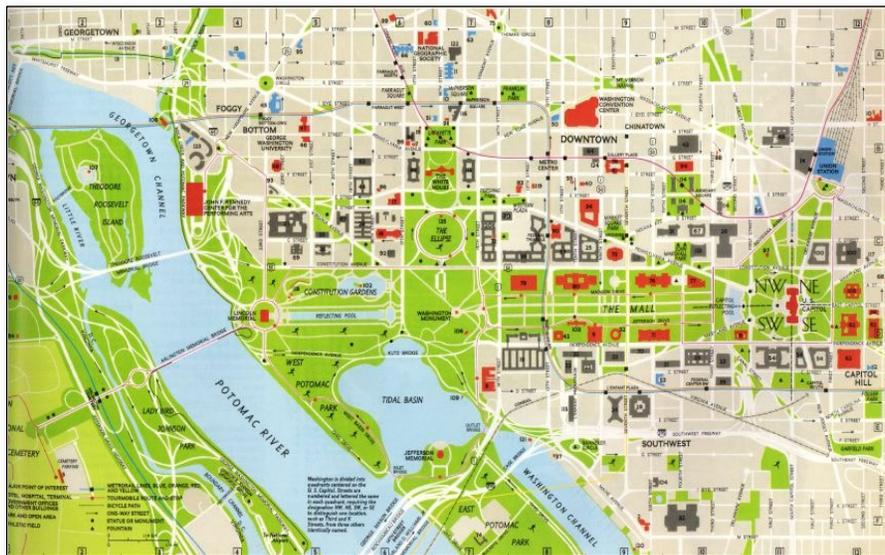


The Politics of National Memory

Spring Semester, 2018

Joel L. Swerdlow, PhD



“Every argument about the past is about the present and the future.”

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Email Guidelines

Please put "Archer" in subject line for emails.

I will always return your email or telephone call within 24 hours. If you do not hear from me, please assume your message or email never arrived, and call or write again.

Office Hours

Monday, 11AM - 2PM and 4 - 6 PM

Tuesday, 4-6 PM

And any day (including weekends) by appointment.

Course Pre-requisites/Other Restrictions

Acceptance into the Archer Fellowship Program

Course Description

This course focuses on the politics of national memory by fostering an ongoing conversation about the meaning of the American Republic and the historical memory found in memorials, monuments, and museums in Washington, D.C. The course will explore political and artistic controversies that have shaped the design and building of many monuments, memorials, and museums that define the architectural landscape of the nation's capital. Along with visiting many of these sites, the course will involve a critical discussion in the classroom of the monuments, museums, and memorials in light of primary texts. Students will engage in critical reflection about their personal experience of Washington, D.C., the National Mall, and many of the structures that do so much to define this city and national memory today.

Student Learning Objectives & Outcomes

After completing the course students will be able to:

1. Describe and explain the development of Washington, D.C., and the National Mall as places of historical memory.
2. Describe the political controversies that have shaped the building of major national memorials, monuments and museums in Washington, D.C.
3. Critically evaluate the goals and objectives of national memorials, monuments and museums in light of different political and historical contexts.
4. Understand through personal participation the process through which complex ideas, historic evidence and personal experience are woven together to formulate a useful and testable overall theory that stimulates discussion and invites improvements.

Required Texts

As shown in the Calendar below, readings—mostly primary source documents—will be assigned every week. Readings (some via links) will be provided to you. To participate in class you must do the readings.

Reading and Website Assignments

Details provided below; some weeks, assignments may be changed slightly; all changes will be discussed in class and confirmed in writing

You are expected to complete all readings and will be called upon in class to discuss them even if you do not raise your hand (as occurs in law school and in graduate seminars).

Suggest a book, short story or essay

Each student is encouraged to bring and discuss with me (preferably early in the semester) something from their own reading that they think would benefit the entire class.

Additional Requirement: You must obtain a Reader Card at the Library of Congress and Research Card at the National Archives—bring both cards to class on January 26th.

Grading Policy and Participation

The core of this class is your journal and class discussions. Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the material. The model for this class is a graduate seminar. You are expected to participate in class with questions and ideas, and by engaging in debates and discussions. More opportunities to participate will come by volunteering to make presentations; read from your journal; and take the lead during class discussions and activities.

It is assumed you are all honors-level students who will attend all classes and complete your journal and all other assignments satisfactorily and in a timely manner. All excuses for compelling personal or work-related reasons must be granted *beforehand*. Even one unexcused absence or late work *will* result in lower grades. Students will at all times conduct themselves according to their home University's rules.

Half of your grade will come from your journal and half from class discussions. Students who complete all assigned projects SATISFACTORILY AND in a timely manner will receive a B. Students who display excellence through written work and through class participation will receive an A. Students who fail to SATISFACTORILY complete assigned projects or to attend classes will receive lower than a B. Students are encouraged to discuss with faculty how they might display excellence in the course.

Midterm grades will be discussed with each student 7-8 weeks into the semester.

Final grades will be reported to your home UT System institution by May xx 2018, and posted in accordance with their respective grade submission deadlines.

There will be no scheduled tests, but unannounced quizzes will be conducted to help ensure that students are keeping up-to-date will all assignments.

Electronics in Class

You may take notes on your laptop or mobile device and *with prior permission* use a laptop or phone to explore something related to class discussion (simply raise your hand and ask). A zero-tolerance policy for other uses of electronics will be enforced. You will be *asked to leave immediately* if you break this rule.

Invited Speakers

Experts or other notable people may be invited to speak for a portion of a class if their experiences and accomplishments relate to the class agenda. All speakers will be able to help students to network.

Site Visits and Classes at the Archer Center

The semester is divided into classes held at a museum, monument or memorial, and classroom discussions that focus on questions and issues raised during these site visits. Often, before, during or after a class at a site, you will be required to visit other sites. All classes are mandatory. Unexcused absences will result in a lower grade.

Journals

Students will each keep a journal that focuses on what you think, feel and experience at each of the sites you visit as part of this class. **Journal entries must demonstrate that you have completed the required readings.**

Among the goals is for you to have a memoir of your semester in Washington, DC. Please note:

1. All entries must be in the same email thread with me (each Archer has his or her own thread);
2. Questions and assignments will augment journal entries at various sites;
3. All content must be in the body of the email, *not* sent as attachments; photos and videos (which you may include) can be attached;
4. The journal must be a single thread, so it captures your walks through Washington, DC as the semester unfolds
5. Your journal will be kept confidential; I may ask you to share an idea, etc. with the class;
6. There are no length limits; journal entries can be as short or long, and as visual, as you want;
7. My responses to journal entries will focus on content, not writing—which is expected to meet basic standards of grammar and clarity.

Adjustments Due to Weather

For our visits to outdoor sites, please be prepared for outdoor weather conditions by dressing appropriately (e.g. rain protection and comfortable walking shoes). In cases of extreme weather, classes will be at The Archer Center; you will be notified via text message or email by 3 pm the day of the scheduled site visit. Whether we meet outside, or inside a museum, you must be on time so the entire class does not have to wait. Plan your travel; the subway running late, or that you got lost are *not* valid excuses.

Class Discussions

Discussions—in the classroom and at the sites we visit—are modeled on a graduate seminar; you are expected to participate and may be called upon even when you do not volunteer. Discussions will not be dominated only by the people who are most eager to talk.

Calendar

Before each class, we will listen to portions of a lecture delivered in 1938 by Thomas Mann, the Nobel Prize-winning German novelist, who escaped from Nazi Germany and became an American citizen. The topic of his lecture is “The Coming Triumph of Democracy.”

Among other things, we will be trying to understand why the poem “Song of Myself” by Walt Whitman provided Mann with (according to Mann’s description) his understanding of what “democracy” means. (Whitman lived and worked in the area of Washington, DC we will visit in our walk.)

You must also read the following, which will be part of every class discussion:

- Thucydides, *Peloponnesian Wars* (circa 410 BCE) [excerpts from the Thomas Hobbes translation which Thomas Jefferson used throughout his life.]
- Plutarch, “Cicero.” [you will probably skim much of this, but please note that, without realizing it, Plutarch is describing how the Roman people lost their freedoms as a republic.]

National Archives

Wednesday, January 10

Thursday, January 11

Before class, read and think about the following three articles; they introduce ideas and modes of analysis we will be discussing at semester:

- Francis Fukuyama, “The End of History” (1989) <http://www.wesjones.com/eoh.htm>
- Niall Ferguson, “Complexity and Collapse” (2010)
- Robert Gordon “The death of innovation, the end of growth” (2013) [TED Talk] https://www.ted.com/talks/robert_gordon_the_death_of_innovation_the_end_of_growth

We will begin this walk at the National Archives, where we will see, among other things, originals of the Declaration of independence, U.S. Constitution, and Bill of Rights. The walk will continue to at least a half-dozen other sites. Among our goals: to find what ideas connect the following documents:

- *British Bill of Rights (1689)* http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/england.asp
- Thomas Jefferson, Draft of the Declaration of Independence (1776)
- Robert F. Kennedy, *Speech to the Students of South Africa* (1966)
- Investigation Into The Assault On Anti-War Demonstrators On The Capitol Steps On May 3, 1972” (1975)
- David Forte and Matthew Spalding, *The Heritage Guide to the Constitution* (2014) [excerpts]
- Select briefs from *Masterpiece Bakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission* <http://www.scotusblog.com/case-files/cases/masterpiece-cakeshop-ltd-v-colorado-civil-rights-commn/>

Tuesday, January 16 Writing Workshop (VOLUNTARY)

Readings:

- Martin Luther King, Jr., “*Letter from Birmingham Jail*”
- Abraham Lincoln, *Gettysburg Address*

Friday, January 26th: Museum of African-American History and Culture

Before class:

- Visit: Museum of African Art
- Read: James Baldwin, “Going to Meet the Man” (1965); warning: has vivid description of lynching

Monday-Tuesday, January 29-30 Archer Center Discussion

Saturday, February 3: Newseum and Holocaust Memorial Museum

Before class:

Read:

- Plato, *The Republic*, Chapter VII [excerpt; allegory of the cave]
- Conceptual Vocabulary on Reality and Truth [to be distributed]
- William Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of Third Reich* (1960) [excerpt]
- Michael Berenbaum, *The World Must Know* (2005) [excerpt]

Monday-Tuesday, February 5-6 Archer Center Discussion

Monday-Tuesday, February 12-13 Archer Center Discussion

Before class visit: Museum of the Bible

Monday-Tuesday, February 26-27 Archer Center Discussion

Before class visit: Arlington National Cemetery
List of sites to the visited will be provided

Friday, March 9: Smithsonian Science Walk

**We will meet at the Museum of Natural History and walk to
the Air and Space Museum**

Before class—

Familiarize yourself with arguments about the mid-1990s Enola Gay exhibition.

- <http://www.airforcemag.com/SiteCollectionDocuments/Enola%20Gay%20Archive/122894LtrtoCo-curator.pdf>
- <http://www.ipnw.org/pdf/mgs/2-2-goldberg.pdf>
- http://airandspace.si.edu/collections/artifact.cfm?object=nasm_A19500100000

Read: “Federalist 51”; think about how it relates to what you will see at the Museum of Natural History

Monday-Tuesday, March 12-13 Archer Center War Walk

**We will meet at the World War I memorial, and walk to the
WWII, Korean War, and Vietnam War memorials.**

Before class:

Visit: the Peace Monument

Read:

- Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) [excerpt]
- Woodrow Wilson, “Peace Without Victory” (1917)
- Dwight D. Eisenhower, “Farewell Address to the Nation” (1961)
- John F. Kennedy, “American University Commencement Address” (1963)
- Swerdlow, “To Heal a Nation” (1985)
- Linda J. Bilmes, “The Financial Legacy of Iraq and Afghanistan: How Wartime Spending Decisions Will Constrain Future National Security Budgets” (2013)

Saturday March 24 Basin Walk

**We start at the Jefferson Memorial, and walk (in order) to
the George Mason; FDR; and Martin Luther King, Jr
Memorials**

Read before class:

- Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Law* (1760) [excerpts]
- Edward Gibbon *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1778) [excerpts]
Alexis de Tocqueville, “Why the Americans Raise Some Insignificant Monuments and Others that are Very Grand” (1840)
- Alexis de Tocqueville, “Why Americans Are So Restive in the Midst of Their Prosperity” (1840)
- Franklin D Roosevelt, Fireside Chat on the Supreme Court
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KxjqoGeTji4>

Familiarize yourself with:

- Resurrection City

http://www.npr.org/programs/morning/features/2008/jun/jill_freedman/gallery/

<http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Multimedia.jsp?id=m-2054>

and think about how Martin Luther King, Jr.s ideas fit in with:

- Franklin D. Roosevelt’s “Economic Bill of Rights,” and
- Ronald Reagan, “America’s Economic Bill of Rights” (1987)
<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=34513>

Monday-Tuesday, April 2-3: Lincoln Memorial

During this class, we will, among other things, see new things in the Gettysburg Address and try to find why every generation of Americans invents the Abraham Lincoln it needs.

Before class—

Visit:

- The “Emancipation” statue in Lincoln Park—the only memorial to Abraham Lincoln in Washington, DC built by people who knew him.
- Ford’s Theater and the Peterson House (across the street)

Read:

- Abraham Lincoln, *First Inaugural Address* (1861)
- Frederick Douglass, “Oration in Memory of Abraham Lincoln” (1876)
- William Eliot, *The Story of Arthur Alexander* (1885) [excerpt]

CONGRATULATIONS!!!! ENJOY YOUR VACATION!!!!