

# INTERPRETING THE PAST

## MALS 662--010

### Fall 2009

#### **Course Description**

This interdisciplinary course considers different perspectives that can be applied to learning about the past. It begins with what neuroscientists have learned about how our memories work, enabling us to remember our own pasts. Then, the linkage between family history and world events will be considered in a book by the child of Holocaust survivors. The different approaches and interests of historians are addressed in case studies of the United States and Haiti. The remainder of the semester is devoted to how archaeologists study the past. Themes that run through these various readings include how political agendas and cultural affiliation can affect interpretations of history and prehistory, and how these interpretations have consequences for people living today.

The course will be run as a seminar with an emphasis on class discussions of the assigned readings and student projects. Students will write four short papers on interpreting photographs, changing interpretations of a well known historical figure, history as seen in the movies, and how the past is conveyed to the public in historical monuments and history and archaeology. For good discussion everyone must come to class having done the readings and prepared to talk. To do well, students must attend all classes, participate actively in class discussions, and demonstrate extra effort and pride in their work for all written assignments.

**Instructor:** Jill Neitzel

**e-mail:** [neitzel@udel.edu](mailto:neitzel@udel.edu) (all email messages to professor should have ANTH 101 in the subject line)

**Office:** Munroe 107; you can also drop off messages/papers to be put in my mailbox in Munroe 135

**Office Hours:** Mon, Fri 9:30-11:00, Tue, Thr 9:30-11:00; or see me before or after class, e-mail me, or make an appointment

**Phone:** 831-8755, 831-2802 (this is the Anthropology Dept. number where you can leave messages for me)

#### **Required Textbooks**

Byrne, Denis – Surface Collection :Archaeological Travels in Southeast Asia

Chatters, James – Ancient Encounters: Kennewick Man and the First Americans

Hodder, Ian – The Leopard's Tale: Revealing Mysteries of Catal Hoyuk

Hoffman, Eva – After Such Knowledge: Memory, History, and the Legacy of the Holocaust

Matyszak, Philip – Ancient Rome on Five Denarii a Day

Schacter, Daniel – The Seven Sins of Memory: How the Mind Forgets and Remembers  
 Sturken, Marita – Tourists of History: Memory, Kitsch, and Consumerism from  
 Oklahoma to Ground Zero  
 Trouillot, Michel-Rolph – Silencing the Past

## Assignments

4 papers – 100 pts/each

Paper # 1 – analysis of historical photographs

Paper #2 – analysis of changing views of a historical figure

Paper #3 – analysis of history in films

Paper #4 – review of historical monument, or history/archaeology museum

## Grades

The UD academic honesty policy, defined at <http://www.udel.edu/stuguide/08-09/code.html#honesty> will be enforced for this course.

Grades for all assignments will be posted on Sakai at <http://www.udel.edu/sakai>.

Semester grades will be assigned on a scale of:

	B+ 87-89%	C+ 77-79%	D+ 67-69%	
A 93-100%	B 83-86%	C 73-76%	D 63-66%	F 0-59%
A- 90-92%	B- 80-82 %	C- 70-72%	D- 60-62%	

## Schedule

The course's **tentative** reading list and tentative schedule is:

Mon, Sept 14 – course introduction

Mon, Sept 21 – read: The Seven Sins of Memory: How the Mind Forgets and Remembers

Mon, Sept 28 – **paper due:** analysis of historical photographs

Mon, Oct 5 – read: After Such Knowledge: Memory, History, and the Legacy of the Holocaust

Mon, Oct 12 – read: Tourists of History: Memory, Kitsch, and Consumerism from Oklahoma to Ground Zero

Mon, Oct 19 – read: Silencing the Past

Mon, Oct 26 – **paper due:** analysis of changing views of a historical figure

Mon, Nov 2 – read: The Leopard's Tale: Revealing Mysteries of Catal Hoyuk

Mon, 11/9 – read: Ancient Rome on Five Denarii a Day

Mon, 11/16 – **paper due:** analysis of history in films

Mon, 11/23 – read: Surface Collection: Archaeological Travels in Southeast Asia

Mon, 11/30 – read: Ancient Encounters: Kennewick Man and the First Americans

Mon, 12/7 – **paper due:** review of historical monument or history/archaeology museum