

The Politics of National Memory



Course Information

PSCI 4373

The Politics of National Memory

Archer Center

Spring 2026

Thursdays 6:30-9:30 PM

Lecturer Contact Information

Lecturer (Anacostia): [Prof. Irene Newman, Ph.D.](#)
Email: Irene.Newman@UTDallas.edu
Office hours: By appointment

Lecturer (Brookland): [Prof. Mary Nugent, Ph.D.](#)
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Lecturer (Capitol): [Prof. Joshua Howard, Ph.D.](#)
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Lecturer (Dupont): [Prof. Shema Mbyirukira, JD](#)
Email: Shema.Mbyirukira@UTDallas.edu
Phone: 571-214-4385
Office hours: By appointment

Instructor of Record: [Derek O'Leary, Ph.D.](#)
Email Address: Derek.O'Leary@UTDallas.edu
Office hours: 5-6 PM Monday to Friday and by appointment

We enthusiastically encourage you to meet with the faculty—both your lecturer and the other lecturers—in office hours throughout the semester. All faculty are available to meet by appointment, either individually or with a group of students, to discuss the course as well as your academic and career development. Please reach out to faculty by email to schedule a time to meet virtually or in-person.

Note: Please use only your University of Texas at Dallas account to email Archer Center faculty.

Course Description

Course overview: This course approaches the monuments, memorials, museums, and other sites of memory between Arlington National Cemetery and Capitol Hill as a classroom to examine the stories that the United States has told about itself. In four course modules and a final project, we will explore these sites and analyze the historical context, ideological structures, and political stakes behind these narratives. This enables us to engage with difficult but essential civic questions related to our historical legacy, national identity, and responsibilities to each other. In doing so, you will cultivate a lifelong relationship with the nation's capital; strengthen your ability to make sense of historical sites and narratives in and beyond Washington, D.C.; sharpen your critical

thinking and writing skills, and enhance your confidence and effectiveness in civic dialogue.

Course format: In addition to engaging in weekly lectures, discussions, and activities with the entire class, you will meet each week with your assigned Neighborhood Group and lecturer. Each lecturer leads a Neighborhood Group of thirteen students. Your assigned lecturer is here to support your success in the course. For their Neighborhood Group, the lecturer will assess each student's weekly engagement and submitted assignments.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the semester, you will be able to:

- Employ your historical skillset to analyze the creation, meaning, and impact of complex monuments, memorials, museums, and other sites of memory.
- Recognize how various historical narratives have intersected with important federal policy questions throughout U.S. history.
- Engage in constructive, civic conversations about how we understand, represent, and respond to the nation's historical legacy.

Calendar of Classes and Assignments

| SESSION | MEETING DATE | LOCATION/ SPEAKER | REFLECTION JOURNAL | READING |
|--|--------------------------------------|-------------------|---|--|
| Week 1: Sunrise Class | Thursday, January 29, 7 – 8:30 AM | Lincoln Memorial | Please bring your reflection journal. | None |
| I. Text | | | | |
| <i>By Wednesday, February 4 at 12 PM, submit your “Our Archives” assignment in eLearning.</i> | | | | |
| Week 2: Our Archives | Thursday, February 5, 6:30 – 9:30 PM | Archer Center | In your journal, reflect on these prompts: <i>How do you and your family preserve history? What documents,</i> | Michel-Rolph Trouillot, <i>Silencing the Past</i>, chapter 1 : pgs. 1-30. ~60 minutes. |

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| | | | <i>artifacts, sites, and stories do you preserve, and how? What history do you not preserve, and why?</i> | |
| Week 3: Founding Documents | <p>I. Thursday, February 12, 6:30 to 8 PM</p> <p>II. Friday, February 13, 8:30 to 10 AM</p> | <p>I. Archer Center</p> <p>II. National Archives (Special events entrance, 701 Constitution Ave.)</p> | <p>Prior to Thursday's class, reflect on the following prompts:</p> <p><i>What do the founding documents of the U.S. represent to you? How would you describe your relationship with these texts?</i></p> <p><i>What responsibility should the federal government have to preserve historical texts, such as the Declaration of Independence?</i></p> | <p>Reading:</p> <p><u>"Petition for Freedom to the Massachusetts Council and the House of Representatives"</u> (1777).</p> <p><u>Texas Declaration of Independence</u> (1836).</p> <p><u>"Declaration of Sentiments"</u> in <i>Report of the Woman's Rights Convention</i> (1848).</p> <p><u>Universal Declaration of Human Rights</u> (1948)</p> <p><u>Introduction to the 1619 Project</u> (2019).</p> <p><u>"Presidential Message on the 249th Anniversary of the Adoption of the Declaration of Independence"</u> (2025).</p> |

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| Week 4: Archiving the Nation | Thursday, February 19, 6:30 to 9:30 PM | Archer Center Guest speakers: Library of Congress staff | None, but: <i>Prior to class, register for and pick up your Library of Congress reader's card at the reader registration office in the Madison or Jefferson Building.</i> | Reading: Arlette Farge, <i>The Allure of the Archives</i> , "Traces by the Thousands," pgs. 1-17. ~45 minutes. |
| <p><i>First assignment due March 1 at 11:59 PM. This assignment requires you to have a Library of Congress reader's card and go to the Reading Room in the James Madison building at the Library of Congress, open Monday through Saturday from 8:30 to 5 PM. Please plan accordingly.</i></p> | | | | |
| <h2>II. Stone</h2> | | | | |
| Week 5: Designing D.C., Imagining the Nation | Thursday, February 26, 6:30 – 9:30 PM | Archer Center Lecturer: Dr. O'Leary | Before class, explore streets between the Capitol and the White House: <i>How does the experience of moving through D.C. compare with your home? What vision of the nation and its people was embedded in the design of D.C.? To what extent</i> | <i>Read:</i> Chapter 1 in Kirk Savage, <i>Monument Wars</i> (2009), pgs. 25-60. ~60 minutes. |

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| | | | <p><i>do you find that our built environment influences our identity, society, and politics? How would you design the ideal national capital?</i></p> | |
| Week 6: Contested Monuments | Thursday, March 5, 6:30 – 9:30 PM | <p>Meet at Emancipation Memorial in Lincoln Park</p> <p>Lecturer: Prof. Mbyirukira</p> | <p>Please bring your reflection journal to the park.</p> | <p><i>Read:</i></p> <p>Michael Kammen, <i>Mystic Chords of Memory</i> (1991), introduction.</p> <p>Chapter 2 in <i>Monument Wars</i> by Kirk Savage (2009), pgs. 63-89. ~60 minutes.</p> |
| Week 7: Women: A part and apart | Thursday, March 12, 6:30 – 9:30 PM | <p>Meet at General Lafayette Statue in Lafayette Square, then Archer Center</p> <p>Lecturer: Dr. Nugent</p> | <p>Prior to class, select any monumental or memorial site in the city and reflect on these prompts in your journal:</p> <p><i>Who is represented in the monument or memorial—men, women, both? Describe the materials, style, and composition used to depict people in the monument or memorial. What does the monument or</i></p> | <p><i>Read:</i></p> <p>“Votes for Women: A Portrait of Persistence” (National Portrait Gallery exhibition). ~30 minutes.</p> <p>Public Law 116-217 (2020). ~Five minutes.</p> <p>Executive Order on Recognizing and Honoring Women’s History (2024). ~10 minutes.</p> <p>Public Law 118-226 (2025): “Women’s</p> |

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| | | | <i>memorial communicate about the attributes, identities, and historical significance of men and women?</i> | <p>Suffrage National Monument Location Act” (2025). ~Five minutes</p> <p>“How a Monument to Women Finally Won a Place on the National Mall,” <i>New York Times</i> (2025). ~10 minutes. (You can log in through your school account in the NYT log in page.)</p> |
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Second Assignment due by March 22 at 11:59 PM.

III. Space

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| Week 8: Performing History | Thursday, March 19, 7 PM | Ford’s Theater (511 10 th Street NW) | None | <p><i>Read:</i></p> <p>“Foundation Document: Ford’s Theatre National Historic Site” (National Park Service, 2013). ~45 minutes.</p> <p>“Interpretive Planning at Ford’s Theatre” (2019). ~30 minutes.</p> |
| Week 9: | Thursday, March 26, | Archer Center | Prior to class, visit the National | <i>Read:</i> |

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| Possessing and Dispossessing History | 6:30 – 9:30 PM | Guest speaker from National Museum of the American Indian [TBD] | <p>Museum of the American Indian and reflect in your journal on the following prompts:</p> <p><i>Describe your experience moving through the space of the museum. How do the design, collections, and interpretative materials compare with other museums you have visited? How do we determine who has the authority to own and make meaning from historical objects? How would you advise the Smithsonian to approach the question of repatriating Native remains and objects?</i></p> | <p>Philip Deloria, “The New World of the Indigenous Museum,” <i>Daedalus</i> (2018). ~30 minutes</p> <p>“Repatriation of Native American Remains and Cultural Items: Requirements for Agencies and Institutions” (Congressional Research Service, 2024). ~15 minutes</p> <p>25 USC Ch. 32: Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation. ~15 minutes</p> |
| Week 10: Expanding the National Story | Thursday, April 2, 6:30 to 9:30 PM | <p>Archer Center:</p> <p>Guest speaker from National Museum of the American Latino [TBD]</p> | <p>Before class, examine the website and virtual space of the National Museum of the American Latino. In your journal, reflect on these prompts:</p> | <p><i>Read:</i></p> <p>S.1267 - National Museum of the American Latino Act</p> <p>Smithsonian's National Museum of the American</p> |

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| | | | <p><i>Describe your experience engaging with the museum in this virtual space. What themes and narratives emerge in the exhibitions? What do you see as the most important goals for Smithsonian museums going forward?</i></p> | Latino Inaugural Strategic Plan, 2024 – 2029 (2024). |
| <p>Third Assignment due Sunday, April 12 at 11:59 PM</p> | | | | |
| <p>IV: Voice</p> | | | | |
| Week 11: | Thursday, April 9, 6:30 to 9:30 PM | Archer Center Lecturer: Dr. Newman | | <p>Alessandro Portelli, “What Makes Oral History Different” (1979). ~30 minutes</p> <p>Kariann Akemi Yokota, “Oral Histories as Living Histories” (2002). ~30 minutes</p> |
| Week 12: Oral Histories of Political Change | Thursday, April 16, 6:30 to 9:30 PM | Archer Center Guest speaker from the National Museum of | | |

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| | | African American Culture and History | | |
| Week 13: Local voices, national narratives | Thursday, April 23, 6:30 – 9:30 PM | Archer Center | None | Submit your fourth assignment by Wednesday the 22 nd . |
| Fourth assignment due by 11:59 PM on Wednesday, April 22 at 11:59 PM. | | | | |
| Graduation week: Sunset Class | Monday, April 27, 7 to 8:30 PM | Ulysses S. Grant Memorial | Please bring your reflection journal. | |

Assignments and Engagement (100 points)

Instructions: After each of the four course modules—Text, Stone, Space, Voice—you will submit a short assignment. Each assignment will require you to synthesize and apply what you have learned during that module.

Your grade for each will reflect both your submitted assignment and your classroom engagement during the class sessions for that module (15 points for the submitted assignment, 5 points for classroom engagement). Each assignment will be assessed according to a rubric in eLearning, which you should consult as you develop your assignment.

1. Assignment #1 (Text): Due Sunday, March 1, 11:59 PM (25 points)
2. Assignment #2 (Stone): Due Sunday, March 22, 11:59 PM (25 points)
3. Assignment #3 (Space): Due Sunday, April 12, 11:59 PM (25 points)
4. Assignment #4 (Voice): Due Wednesday April 22, 11:59 PM (25 points)

Grading Policy

| Total points | Requirement |
|--------------|--|
| 100 | Individual assignments (20 points) and engagement (5 points) for each module |

| Grade | Point range | Description |
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| A+ | 98-100 | Exemplary work that exceeds expectations |
| A | 94-97 | Impressive work that meets expectations |
| A- | 90-93 | Great work with only minor areas for improvement |
| B+ | 87-89 | Strong work with at least one area for improvement |
| B | 84-86 | Work meets expectations with more than one area for improvement |
| B- | 80-83 | Work meets expectations but with ample room for improvement |
| C+ | 77-79 | Below-expectations work that requires various improvements |
| C | 74-76 | Inadequate work that requires extensive improvements |
| C- | 70-73 | Unsatisfactory work that requires substantial improvements |
| D+ | 67-69 | Work significantly below expectations with major deficiencies |
| D | 64-66 | Work significantly below expectations with major deficiencies |
| D- | 60-63 | Work significantly below expectations with major deficiencies |
| F | 59 and below | Work largely or entirely incomplete |

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

Note: UT System campuses vary in their use of the +/- grading scale. Grades for students enrolled at campuses that do not follow this system will be reported as follows: A (90-100), B (80-89), C (70-79), D (60-69), F (59 or lower).

Course Policies

Attendance

We expect you to arrive on time and ready to participate fully in class. If you are unable to attend class or may be delayed due to personal or professional circumstances beyond your control, please inform Dr. O'Leary and your lecturer as soon as possible prior to class. Voluntary attendance at professional events or personal travel are not excused absences.

Unexcused absences or lateness will diminish your grade. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to promptly contact your Neighborhood Group lecturer and ask how you can catch up.

Classroom Citizenship

All students and faculty must adhere to the Guiding Principles for Archer Fellows.

1. Archer Fellows represent not only themselves, but their home institutions, the Archer Center, the UT System, and the State of Texas.
2. The Archer Center expects all Archer Fellows to abide by the highest standards of conduct, demonstrating the utmost integrity, character, respect, and professionalism.
3. The Archer Center is committed to ensuring an enriching cohort and learning environment by selecting students with varying interests, fields of study, and political perspectives.
4. The Archer Center is committed to bringing together students who value constructive and respectful dialogue among individuals and groups with varying ideas.
5. Archer Fellows are expected to respect varying political, personal, and religious beliefs within the cohort and throughout the program.
6. As an educational program, the Archer Center sees all aspects of the Archer Fellowship experience as an opportunity for learning, from the application and internship search process to the academic, networking, professional, and fellowship opportunities provided throughout the semester.
7. The Archer Center and Archer Fellows have a shared commitment to open, honest, and timely communication.

Class Recordings

Unless the AccessAbility Resource Center has approved the student to record the instruction, students are expressly prohibited from recording any part of this course. Recordings may not be published, reproduced, or shared with those not in the class, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved AccessAbility Resource Center accommodation. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Reporting Sexual Misconduct and Sharing Confidential Information

Students considering sharing personal information in email or in person should be aware that all University staff, faculty, teaching assistants/associates, and graduate/research assistants are required by UT Dallas policy to report information

about sexual misconduct to the UT Dallas Title IX Coordinator. Per university policy, Sexual Misconduct Policy - [UTDBP3102](#), faculty have been informed that they must identify the student to the UT Dallas Title IX Coordinator. Students who wish to have confidential discussions of incidents related to sexual harassment or sexual misconduct should contact the following confidential resources, including, but not limited to:

1. the Student Counseling Center (972-883-2575 or the 24/7 Crisis Hotline at 972-UTD-TALK or 972-883-8255),
2. a health care provider in the Student Health Center (972-883-2747),
3. a clergyperson (or other legally recognized religious advisor) of their choice, or
4. an off-campus resource (e.g., a rape crisis center, doctor, psychologist).

Students who are sexually assaulted, harassed, or are victims of sexual misconduct, domestic violence, or stalking, are encouraged to directly report these incidents to the Title IX Coordinator by making a [report](#) online or by calling the Title IX Coordinator at 972-883-2306. Students may also contact the [UTD Police Department \(UTDPD\)](#) for emergency assistance; criminal reporting and investigation; information or assistance regarding protective orders or forensic sexual assault exams; or to request a police escort. In case of emergency, call 911. For non-emergency situations, students can reach the UT Dallas Police Department by calling 972-883-2222. For more information about available support and resources, students can visit the [Office of Institutional Compliance \(Support Services & Resources\)](#) webpage.

Pregnancy and Parenting

UT Dallas is committed to providing support and resources for pregnant and parenting students, faculty, and staff in accordance with Title IX, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Texas Education Code Section 51.982, and other applicable federal and state laws. Pregnant and parenting students are encouraged to complete the [Pregnant and Parenting Self-Identification Form](#) located on the [Office of Institutional Compliance's website](#). Submitting this form allows for a coordinated University effort to help facilitate support for pregnant and parenting students, such as early registration for parenting students and accommodations for pregnant students. For more information about the services and resources available to pregnant and parenting students, visit the [Pregnant & Parenting Resources page](#) and the [Student Pregnancy and Parenting Nondiscrimination Policy](#).

Nondiscrimination

UT Dallas prohibits all forms of discrimination (including harassment) based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, national origin, disability, genetic information, or veteran status. UT Dallas further prohibits all forms of sex-based discrimination (including sex-based harassment). Students who believe they have been discriminated against or harassed in violation of University policy, or who believe that someone else has been discriminated against or harassed, are encouraged to directly report these incidents to the Office of Institution Compliance by making a [report](#) online or by calling the Office of Institution Compliance at 972-883-2306. For more information, see the University's [Nondiscrimination Policy](#) and [Sexual Misconduct Policy](#). For additional information about available support and resources, see the Office of [Institutional Compliance \(Support Services & Resources\)](#) webpage.

Technical Support

If you experience any issues with your UT Dallas account, contact the UT Dallas [Office of Information Technology Help Desk](#) or call 972-883-2911.

UT Dallas provides eLearning technical support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week through [UTD eLearning Helpdesk](#). The services include a toll-free telephone number, 1-866-588-3192, for immediate assistance, Educational Technology Services (eLearning) is available by [email](#) to request services. They also have an online chat service.

Student Conduct and Discipline

The University of Texas System [Regents' Rule 50101](#) and UT Dallas have rules and regulations for the orderly and efficient conduct of their business. It is the responsibility of each student and each student organization to be knowledgeable about the rules and regulations which govern student conduct and activities. General information on student conduct and discipline is contained in the Student Complaints Resources within the online [UT Dallas Undergraduate Catalog](#), and the [Graduate Catalog](#).

UT Dallas administers student discipline within the procedures of recognized and established due process. Procedures are defined and described in the ([Student Code of Conduct, UTDSP5003](#)). Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of Community Standards and Conduct, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations (SSB 4.400, 972-883-6330) and online at [their webpage](#).

A student at the University neither loses their rights nor escapes the responsibilities of citizenship. He or she is expected to obey federal, state, and local laws as well as the Regents' Rules, university regulations, and administrative rules. Students are subject to discipline for violating its standards of conduct whether such conduct takes place on or off campus, or whether civil or criminal penalties are also imposed for such conduct.

Social Media Use

The [Student Code of Conduct](#) includes behaviors conducted via any digital platform. Students may not use any digital platform to seek or provide unauthorized assistance for any assignment done for academic credit. Students may not use any digital platform to impersonate or represent any person other than themselves. Please consult with your instructor regarding authorized assistance.

Academic Integrity

The faculty expects from its students a high-level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student demonstrates a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work. Additional information is provided within their website.

Academic Dishonesty: Academic dishonesty can occur in relation to any type of work submitted for academic credit or as a requirement for a class. It can include individual work or a group project. Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, and collaboration/collusion. In order to avoid academic dishonesty, it is important for students to fully understand the expectations of their professors. This is best accomplished through asking clarifying questions if an individual does not completely understand the requirements of an assignment.

Additional information related to academic dishonesty and tips on how to avoid dishonesty may be found [on their website](#).

Military-Affiliated Students

At the University of Texas at Dallas, we are committed to supporting our military and veteran students and their spouses and dependents as they pursue their academic goals. Recognizing the unique challenges faced by those who have served, we strive to create a welcoming and supportive environment. Please contact your instructor if you are on active duty, called to serve, or if any aspect of your current or past military service, or your family situation, makes it challenging to meet the course requirements

or affects your academic progress. Your instructor is committed to supporting you and will work with you to address any complications.

The Military and Veteran Center ([MVC](#)) offers a range of resources and referrals to campus and community partners, ensuring that our military and veteran students can access the assistance they need. Whether it is academic advising, financial aid, or personal support, the MVC is dedicated to helping our students succeed and thrive in their educational journey.

Student Grievance Procedures

Procedures for student grievances are found in the university policy [UTDSP5005](#). In attempting to resolve any student grievance regarding disputes over grades, application of degree plan, graduation/degree program requirements, and thesis/and dissertation committee, adviser actions and/or decisions, evaluations, and/or other fulfillments of academic responsibility, it is the obligation of the student first to make a serious effort to resolve the matter with the instructor, supervisor, administrator, or committee with whom the grievance originated.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The University of Texas at Dallas is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. The syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. If you are seeking classroom accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (2008), you are required to register with the [AccessAbility Resource Center \(ARC\)](#), located in the Administration Building, Suite 2.224. They can be reached by [email](#), calling 972-883-2098, or at their [website](#). To receive academic accommodations for this class, please register and request services by completing the Request for Services form with the proper documentation and meeting with the Director of ARC at the beginning of the semester.

Religious Holy Days

UT Dallas will excuse a student from class or other required activities, including examinations and travel time, for the observance of a religious holy day for a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property tax under Section 11.20, of the *Texas Tax Code*.

Students are encouraged to notify the instructor or activity sponsor as soon as possible regarding the absence, preferably in advance of the assignment.

Excused students will be allowed to take missed exams or complete assignments within a reasonable time after the absence: a period equal to the length of the absence, up to a maximum of one week. A student who notifies the instructor and completes any missed exam or assignment may not be penalized for the absence. A student who fails to complete the exam or assignment within the prescribed period may receive a failing grade for that exam or assignment.

If a student or an instructor disagrees about the nature of the absence [i.e., for the purpose of observing a religious holy day] or if there is similar disagreement about whether the student has been given a reasonable time to complete any missed assignments or examinations, either the student or the instructor may request a ruling from the school's vice or associate dean, who serve as the President's designees for these rules. The vice or associate deans must take into account the legislative intent of *Texas Education Code* 51.911(b), and the student and instructor will abide by the decision of the vice or associate dean.

This information is also included in the online UT Dallas [Undergraduate Catalog](#), and the [Graduate Catalog](#).