

Department of Anthropology, SIUE

Dr. Cory Willmott

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Office Hours: Wed. 3:30-5:00 pm, and Thurs. 1:30-3:00 pm, or by appointment

## ANTH 435 American Material Culture

### COURSE CONTENT:

This course examines the ways in which Americans employ artifacts and enact narratives in the built environment in order to foster American national identity. The course is divided into three parts. Part One introduces students to theoretical frameworks for understanding how artifacts and built environments can narrate the relationships among the past, memory, myth, and social identities. Subsequent sections apply these foundations to issues of representation in the ways that groups within American society use material culture to construct mythic pasts that promote desirable contemporary identities. Part Two examines the social construction and interpretation of place, race and gender in the context of historic house museums. Part Three focuses on American “origin stories” featuring Native American enactors in living history museums.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- 1) To learn anthropological and museological methods of observation, description and communication.
- 2) To gain insight into the roles and functions that objects, places and people play in the enactments of American beliefs, values and master narratives.
- 3) To gain an appreciation and greater respect for the multicultural traditions within American society.

### REQUIRED TEXTS (SELECTED CHAPTERS):

- 1) “D”: Donnelly, Jessica Foy, ed. 2002. *Interpreting Historic House Museums*. New York: AltaMira Press.
- 2) “P”: Peers, Laura. 2007. *Playing Ourselves: Interpreting Native Histories at Historic Reconstructions*. New York: Alta Mira Press.
- 3) “BB”: Selected readings on Blackboard – see bibliography at end of Course Outline

### EVALUATION:

#### Undergraduate Students:

100 points	20%	Two term tests (20 MC questions each)
75 points	15%	Final Exam (30 MC questions – 10 cumulative)
175 points	35%	One test per section of the course, including non-cumulative final exam

#### Graduate Students:

100 points	20%	Two Current Events Oral Presentations
75 points	15%	Moment-in-Time Component and Activity or Scenario Component
175 points	35%	

### Undergraduate and Graduate Students:

75 points      15%    Textbook Homework (15 @ 1 point each)

### Project Components: Undergraduate and Graduate Students:

25 points	5%	Title and Abstract
75 points	15%	Project Proposal
50 points	10%	Museum Observation Report (with full visual documentation)
75 points	15%	Final Essay (undergrad: 10 p; grad: 15 p; plus References and Figures)
25 points	5%	Oral presentation (Final Exam)
<u>250 points</u>	<u>50%</u>	
500 points	100%	Total

### **COURSE FORMAT and EXPECTATIONS:**

The course will employ a combination of lectures and seminar format class discussions. Students are expected to:

- 1) **be able to conduct independent research;**
- 2) **read the syllabus in full** and consult it regularly for directions on scheduling, readings, assignments and policies;
- 3) **come prepared to class** by having read the assigned readings (always bring the assigned reading to class even if you haven't read it) and/or by bringing a print out of the day's lecture on which to take notes;
- 4) **take notes during class** on lectures and discussions; and
- 5) **regularly utilize the resources provided on Blackboard.** Success in the course depends upon meeting these expectations - failure to do so will result in inadequate preparation for assignments and exams, and hence lower grades.
- 6) **You will be tested on ALL of the assigned readings and videos.**

### **Blackboard Resources:**

- **Announcements:** All important information will be posted on the "Announcement" page of this site. All email messages will be sent through this site. **Check announcements and messages at least once a week!**
- **Grades** will be posted on this site as soon as they are available. You can access your own grades through My Grades at any time.
- Weekly folders under the "Coursework" button:**
- **Lectures:** All powerpoints will be posted in the weekly folders.
- **Textbook Homework (TH),** which is worth 15% of your grade, is posted on Blackboard. You must complete these quizzes online ***before the class for which they are assigned*** in order to receive points.
- **Self-study quizzes** will be posted in the weekly folders as aids to studying for the tests and exams. These are valuable study tools that you should make use of!

### **POLICIES:**

#### Grading:

The evaluative scale to be used in this course is as follows:

90-100 = A; 80-89 = B; 70-79 = C; 60-69 = D; 0 - 59 = F

A = excellent; B = good to very good; C = satisfactory; D = less than satisfactory; F = failing.

### Late Assignments:

Except under exceptional circumstances, assignments submitted after the due date will be docked 20% no matter how many days late. There will be no makeup exams. **Do not slip assignments under my office door! Late assignments should be submitted online only.**

### ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

**Academic misconduct, including plagiarism and cheating, is described on p. 1 of the SIUE Student Academic Code (3c2). Academic Misconduct on an assignment, paper, test or exam will result in an F in the course. Please also familiarize yourself with the University policy on penalties outlined in the Code by following the link on “plagiarism.” The Faculty reserves the right to submit student work that is suspected of being plagiarized to internet sites designed to detect plagiarism.**

### Classroom Behavior:

- 1) Turn cell phone ringers OFF before entering class.
- 2) Arrive on time. Do not leave before the end of class without prior permission.
- 3) Do not hold private conversations (either oral or text). Do not speak during lectures unless called upon; listen and speak respectfully to your fellow students.
- 4) Do not read extraneous materials during lectures.
- 5) Do not fall asleep in class.
- 6) Food and drinks are forbidden in the classrooms according to SIUE policy.

**Failure to obey the above rules will result in deductions from your participation grade.**

### Disability Support Services:

Students with disabilities are welcome in this course. Academic accommodations you may require must be arranged through the SIUE Disability Support Services office in MUC (650-3726) and brought to my attention at the beginning of the term.

### Contacting me:

I welcome all your comments and questions via telephone, e-mail, text message and in person during my office hours or by appointment at (almost) any time. I cannot ensure my full or lasting attention to queries in conversations before or after class. Email and text are the best ways to contact me; that is, the most likely ways to reach me, have my full attention and make sure I get your appointment in my calendar! Please do not assume that I have received your message(s) unless you receive a reply.

### COURSE OUTLINE:

Week	Date	Theme	Activities	Readings	Assignments
		<b>PART ONE</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION: MATERIAL CULTURE &amp; NARRATIVE</b>		
One	1/14	Nationalism & museums	<u>Lecture:</u> What is American Material Culture?	BB: Trofanenko	<b>TH-1</b>

Week	Date	Theme	Activities	Readings	Assignments
Two	1/21	Narratives & museums	<u>Exercise</u> : Museum websites & narratives	BB: Frykmann	<b>TH-2</b>
Three	1/28	Memory & Museums	<u>Website</u> : Route 66	BB: Zerubavel	<b>TH-3; Title and Abstract</b>
Four	2/4	Nationalist Narratives	Lecture: Authenticity at Living History Sites	BB: Bruner	<b>TH-4</b>
Five	2/11	Master Narratives	<u>Lecture</u> : American Master Narratives	BB: Luke	<b>TH-5</b>
		<b>PART TWO</b>	<b>LIVING HISTORY: SCALES OF DIFFERENCE</b>		
Six	2/18	Historic House Museums	<b>Test</b> <u>Lecture</u> : Historic Houses <u>Lecture</u> : Campbell House Museum	D1: Butler	<b>TH-6; TT-1</b>
Seven	2/25	Living History Sites	VIDEO: <i>Plimoth Plantation</i>	BB: Anderson compilation	<b>TH-7</b>
Eight	3/4	Gender	<u>Lecture</u> : Gender and House Museums <u>Exercise</u> : Website visual analysis	D4: Reid	<b>TH-8; Proposal</b>
<b>SPRING BREAK!</b>					
Nine	3/18	Race	<u>Lecture</u> : NCRMM Exhibit YouTube VIDEOS: Colonial Williamsburg	D3: Ellis	<b>TH-9; Museum Report</b>
Ten	3/25	Other Nationalisms	<u>Guest Lecture</u> : Dr. Pan Shouyong <i>Class meets in ADW 1402</i>	BB: Kang	<b>TH-10</b>
		<b>PART THREE</b>	<b>ORIGIN STORIES: NATIVE AMERICA</b>		
Eleven	4/1	Interpretation Strategies	<b>Test</b> <u>Lecture</u> : Exhibit Strategies	D10: Lloyd	<b>TH-11; TT-2</b>
Twelve	4/8	Historic Reconstructions	<u>Lecture</u> : From Noonday to Wedding Day YouTube Videos	P: Ch.1	<b>TH-12</b>
Thirteen	4/15	Materiality	<u>Lecture</u> : Archaeology Site Narratives	P: Ch.4	<b>TH-13; Essay</b>

Week	Date	Theme	Activities	Readings	Assignments
Fourteen	4/22	Encounters	<u>Lecture:</u> Frozen in Time VIDEO: Pueblo Heritage (1950; 19 m.)	P: Ch.6	<b>TH-14; Oral (PP &amp; Script)</b>
Fifteen	4/29	Past in the Present	<u>Student Presentations</u>	P: Ch.7	<b>TH-15</b>
<b>FINAL</b>	5/6		<b>Final Exam</b>		<b>6:30 - 8:10</b>

Blackboard Reading List:

Week 1: Trofanenko, Brenda. 2008. Dare we know the nation? Considering the nexus of discursive leveraging and identity. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 29(2):257-72.

Week 2: Frykman, Sue Glover. 2008. Stories to tell? Narrative tools in museum education texts. *Educational Research* 51(3):299-319.

Week 3: Zerubavel, Eviatar. 2003. "Calendars and History: A Comparative Study of the Social Organization of National Memory." In *States of Memory: Continuities, Conflicts and Transformations in National Retrospection*. Jeffrey K. Olick, ed. Pp. 315-37. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Week 4: Bruner, Edward. 1994. Abraham Lincoln as Authentic Reproduction: A Critique of Postmodernism. *American Anthropologist* 96(2):397-415.

Week 5: Luke, Timothy W. 2002. "Chapter Ten: Strange Attractor: The Tech Museum of Innovation." In *Museum Politics: Power Plays at the Exhibition*. Pp. 186-202. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Week 7: Anderson compilation (pp.101-23): Anderson, Jay, ed. 1991. *A Living History Reader: Volume One: Museums*. Nashville, TN: American Association for State and Local History.

1. Deetz, James. "The Reality of the Pilgrim Fathers"
2. Baker, Andrew H., and Warren Leon. "Old Sturbridge Village Introduces Social Conflict into Its Interpretive Story"
3. Patterson, John. "Connor Prairie Refocuses Its Interpretive Message to Include Controversial Subjects"
4. Deetz, James. "A Sense of Another World: History Museums and Cultural Change"

Week 10: Kang, Xiaofei. 2009. Two Temples, Three Religions, and a Tourist Attraction: Contesting Sacred Space on China's Ethnic Frontier. *Modern China* 35(3):227-255.