

## **Ruins & Reconstruction**

Instructor: Lynn Meskell

### **Location**

### **Meeting Time**

**Seminar:** 3hr, max enrolment 25

This class examines our enduring fascination with ruins coupled with our commitments to reconstruction from theoretical, ethical, socio-political and practical perspectives. This includes analyzing international conventions and principles, to the work of heritage agencies and NGOs, to the implications for specific local communities and development trajectories. We will explore global case studies featuring archaeological and monumental sites with an attention to context and communities, as well as the construction of expertise and implications of international intervention. Issues of conservation from the material to the digital will also be examined. Throughout the course we will be asking what a future in ruins holds for a variety of fields and disciplines, as well as those who have most to win or lose in the preservation of the past.

### **Requirements**

Assessment 1: Class presentation and oral participation (40%). This is a seminar, *not a lecture-course*, and consistent participation by all members is vital. Each of you will select specific readings the discussion of which you will commit to facilitate. Facilitation entails coming up with questions that will enable constructive and well-informed conversation based on presentations of the readings. It is expected that all students will attend all classes and participate in all discussions.

Assessment 2: Research paper to be handed in at the end of term on a topic developed in consultation with the instructor (60%). The paper should: (a) show that you have read and understood the texts at hand; and (b) provide an opportunity for you to think about the material in relation to your own writing and research. For undergraduates, the paper is to be double-spaced and approximately 15-20 pages in length. Papers submitted by graduate students are expected to be more detailed at 20-25 pages or longer, to be discussed with the instructor. **The paper is due on the last class of the semester.** Please email me an electronic copy of your essay. Late papers will not be accepted.

**Schedule of Meetings** The following lecture outlines and readings may be slightly modified in the course of the seminar.

### **Background Reading:**

Meskell, Lynn. 2018. *A Future in Ruins: UNESCO, World Heritage and the Dream of Peace*. New York: Oxford University Press.

**WEEK 1 Aug 27** No Class, please consult Background Reading

**WEEK 2 Sept 3 Introduction** to course, assessment and seminar designations

### **WEEK 3 Sept 10 The Cult of Monuments**

\* Allais, L. 2018. *Designs of Destruction: The Making of Monuments in the Twentieth Century*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. **Introduction**

\* Choay, F. 2001. *The Invention of the Historic Monument*. New York: Cambridge University Press. **Introduction** and **Chapter 4**

\* Huyssen, A. 1993. "Monument and memory in a postmodern age." *Yale Journal of Criticism* 6(2), 249-261.

\* Lamprakos, M. 2014. "Riegl's Modern Cult of Monuments and The Problem of Value." *Change Over Time* 4 (2):418-435.

\* Riegl, A. 1903 "The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Its Origin," in *Oppositions*, n. 25 (Fall 1982): 21-51.

### **WEEK 4 Sept 17 Theorizing Ruins**

\* DeSilvey, C., and T. Edensor. 2013. "Reckoning with Ruins." *Progress in Human Geography* 37 (4):465-485.

\* Hell, J, and A. Schonle. 2010. *Ruins of Modernity*. Durham: Duke University Press. **Introduction**

\* Simmel, G. **The Ruin**, in Two essays. *The Hudson Review* 11.3 (1958): 371-385.

\* Stewart, S. 2020. *The Ruins Lesson: Meaning and Material in Western Culture*. **Introduction**

\* Stoler, A. 2008. "Imperial Debris." *Cultural Anthropology* 23 (2):191-219.

\* Gonzalez-Ruibal, A., 2017. Ruins of the South, in: McAtackney, L., Ryzewski, K. (Eds.), *Contemporary Archaeology and the City: Creativity, Ruination, and Political Action*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, United Kingdom; New York, NY, pp. 149–167.

\*Zaiets, D. "Kharkiv's shattered landscapes: Observations from the front line of the war in Ukraine." *European Societies* 26.2 (2024): 178-202.

### **WEEK 5 Sept 24 No in-person class but please watch the UNESCO anniversary event for 1954 Hague Convention**

<https://www.youtube.com/live/61GjLRl0X08>

### **WEEK 6 Oct 1 Archaeological Ruins**

\* Byrne, D. 2019. *Counterheritage: Critical Perspectives on Heritage Conservation in Asia*. **Chapter 5**

\* Joyce, R. A. 2021. *The Future of Nuclear Waste: What Art and Archaeology Can Tell Us About Securing the World's Most Hazardous Material*. New York: Oxford University Press. **Introduction**

\*Meskell, L. 2018. *A Future in Ruins: UNESCO, World Heritage and the Dream of Peace*. New York: Oxford University Press. **Chapter 2**

\* Verdesio, G. 2010. "Invisible at a Glance: Indigenous Cultures of the Past, Ruins, Archaeological Sites, and Our Regimes of Visibility." In *Ruins of Modernity*, edited by J. Hell and A. Schonle. Durham: Duke University Press.

\* Moshenska, G., 2015. Curated ruins and the endurance of conflict heritage. *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites* 17, 77–90.

### **WEEK 7 Oct 8 Classical Ruinscapes**

\* Huysen, A. 2006. "Nostalgia for Ruins." *Grey Room*: 6-21.

\* Murray, S. D. 2020. *Performing Ruins*. **Chapter 3**

\* Stewart, S. 2020. *The Ruins Lesson: Meaning and Material in Western Culture*. **Chapter 1**

\* Porter, J. 2011. "Sublime monuments and sublime ruins in ancient aesthetics." *European Review of History: Revue Europeenne d'Histoire* 18 (5-6):685-696.

### **WEEK 8 Oct 15 Modern Ruination**

\* González-Ruibal, A. 2005. "The Need for a Decaying Past: An archaeology of Oblivion in Contemporary Galicia (NW Spain)." *Home Cultures* 2 (2):129-152.

\* Hudson, J. 2019. "The Affordances and Potentialities of Derelict Urban Spaces." In *Ruin Memories: Materialities, Aesthetics and the Archaeology of the Recent Past*, edited by P. Pétursdóttir and B. Olsen. London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

\* Mah, A. 2018. "Ruination and Post-industrial Urban Decline". In *The Sage Handbook of the 21st century City*, edited by S., Suzanne, and R. Burdett. Los Angeles: Sage.

\* Steinmetz, G. 2010. "Colonial Melancholy and Fordist Nostalgia: The Ruinscapes of Namibia and Detroit". In *Ruins of Modernity* edited by J. Hell and A. Schonle. Durham: Duke University Press.

### **Online Resource**

\*Equal Justice Initiative: <https://eji.org/reports/>

### **WEEK 9 Oct 22 Ruin Porn**

\* Clutter, M. "Notes on Ruin Porn." *The Avery Review* 18 (2016):1-9.

\* Day, I. "Ruin Porn and the Colonial Imaginary." *PMLA* 136.1 (2021): 125-131.

\* Wells, K. 2018. "Detroit was Always Made of Wheels: Confronting Ruin Porn in Its Hometown. In *Ruin Porn and the Obsession with Decay* edited by S. Lyons. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan: 13-30.

\* Nash J., Gibbs M. (2018) "Diachronic Fetishisation: Ruin Porn and Pitcairn Island Language, Archaeology, and Architecture." In *Ruin Porn and the Obsession with Decay* edited by S. Lyons. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan: 137-154.

\* Whitehouse, T. 2018. *How Ruins Acquire Aesthetic Value: Modern Ruins, Ruin Porn, and the Ruin Tradition*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan. **Chapter 1** and **Chapter 2**

\* Yoneyama, L. "Memories in Ruins: Hiroshima's Nuclear Annihilation and Beyond." *Cities into Battlefields*. Routledge, 2017. 199-216.

### **Online resources**

\*<https://paulmullins.wordpress.com/2012/08/19/the-politics-and-archaeology-of-ruin-porn/>

\*<https://www.theguardian.com/housing-network/2016/feb/15/ruin-porn-detroit-photography-city-homes>

\*<https://archinect.com/news/tag/76809/ruin-porn>

\*<https://www.newstatesman.com/culture/art-design/2016/08/ruin-porn-art-world-s-awkward-obsession-abandoned-soviet-architecture>

### **WEEK 10 Oct 29 Destruction and Reconstruction**

\* Adams, D, and P. J. Larkham. 2019. *The Everyday Experiences of Reconstruction and Regeneration: From Vision to Reality in Birmingham and Coventry*. Abingdon: Oxon. **Chapters 1.**

\* Allais, L. 2018. *Designs of Destruction: The Making of Monuments in the Twentieth Century*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. **Chapter 2** and **3**

\* Gordillo, G. 2014. *Rubble: The Afterlife of Destruction*. Durham: Duke University Press.

### **Conclusions**

\* Le Blanc A. 2020. "The Conservation of Traumatic Ruins: A Piece of Memorabilia to Perform Urban Resilience." In *Places of Memory and Legacies in an Age of Insecurities and Globalization*, edited by G. O'Reilly. EUROGEO Book Series.

### **Online Resources**

\*Coventry: A collage of the past and the present  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QXBc5LhOwb8>

### **WEEK 11 Nov 5 Authenticity — Post Authenticity**

\* Rico, T. 2018. "Reclaiming Post-disaster Narratives of Loss in Indonesia." *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 26.1: 8-18.

\* Petti, P., C. Trillo, M. Di Mauro. 2018. Heritage and Reconstruction: Different Perspectives. In *Heritage and Reconstruction: Different Perspectives* edited by U.E. Dorka. Cham: Springer: 101-116.

\*Lowenthal, D. 1999. "Authenticity: Rock of Faith or Quicksand Quagmire?" *Conservation: Getty Conservation Institute Newsletter* 14 no. 3: 5-8

\* Labadi, S. 2010. "World Heritage, Authenticity and Post-authenticity: International and National perspectives." In *Heritage and Globalisation*, edited by S. Labadi, and C. Long. Abingdon: Routledge: 66-84.

\* Lennon, J. 2014. "The Venice Charter Down Under: Its Legacy in Landscape Preservation." *Change Over Time*, 4/2: 322-336.

\* Karlström, A., 2015. Authenticity: rhetorics of preservation and the experience of the original, in: Lafrenz Samuels, K., Rico, T. (Eds.), *Heritage Keywords: Rhetoric and Redescription in Cultural Heritage*. University Press of Colorado, Boulder, CO, pp. 29–46.

### **Online Resources**

\*ICOMOS. 1994. The Nara Document on Authenticity

[https://www.iccom.org/sites/default/files/publications/2020-05/convern8\\_06\\_thenaradocu\\_ing.pdf](https://www.iccom.org/sites/default/files/publications/2020-05/convern8_06_thenaradocu_ing.pdf)

\*ICOMOS Australia. The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance. <https://australia.icomos.org/wp-content/uploads/The-Burra-Charter-2013-Adopted-31.10.2013.pdf>

\*NARA + 20: ON HERITAGE PRACTICES, CULTURAL VALUES, AND THE CONCEPT OF AUTHENTICITY

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/2159032X.2015.1126115#d1e78>

\*BURRA CHARTER & PRACTICE NOTES: <https://australia.icomos.org/publications/burra-charter-practice-notes/>

### **WEEK 12 Nov 12 After Islamic State: Destruction and Reconstruction**

\* Azzouz, A (2020) "Re-imagining Syria, Destructive Reconstruction and the Exclusive Rebuilding of Cities". *City*, 24(5-6): 721-740.

\*De Cesari, C. 2015. "Post-Colonial Ruins: Archaeologies of Political Violence and IS." *Anthropology Today* 31 (6):22-26.

\* Harmanşah, Ö. 2015. "Isis, Heritage, and the Spectacles of Destruction in the Global Media." *Near Eastern Archaeology*, 78 (3):170-177.

\* Isakhan, B and L. Meskell, 2024 "Rebuilding Mosul: public opinion on foreign-led heritage reconstruction", **Cooperation and Conflict**. 1-26.

\* Munawar, N. A. (2017). "Reconstructing Cultural Heritage in Conflict Zones: Should Palmyra be Rebuilt?" *Ex Novo: Journal of Archaeology*, 2: 33-48.

\* Neglia, Giulia Annalinda. 2020. *Cultural Meaning of Aleppo: A Landscape Recovery for the Ancient City*. Univ of Chicago Press, 2020. **Introduction, Chapter 1 and Chapter 3.**

## Online Resources

\*Unite4Heritage

<https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/unite4heritage-brings-cultural-heritage-heart-unesco-general-conference>

\*UNESCO 2018. Warsaw Recommendation on the Recovery and Reconstruction of Cultural Heritage Warsaw, 8 May 2018. <https://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1826>

\*UNESCO 2015 The Bonn Declaration on World Heritage  
<https://whc.unesco.org/document/147735>

## WEEK 13 Nov 19 Ethics of Digital Reconstruction

\* Allais, L. 2018. *Designs of Destruction: The Making of Monuments in the Twentieth Century*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. **Coda Viscosities**

\* Harrer, A. 2017. "The Legacy of Alois Riegl: Material Authenticity of the Monument in the Digital Age." *Built Heritage* 1 (2):29-40.

\* Khunti, R. 2018. "The Problem with Printing Palmyra: Exploring the Ethics of Using 3D Printing Technology to Reconstruct Heritage." *Studies in Digital Heritage*, 2, 1: 1-12

\* Stobiecka, M. (2020). "Archaeological Heritage in the Age of Digital Colonialism." with responses by L. Meskell. ("Hijacking ISIS. Digital imperialism and salvage politics.") and Trinidad Rico ("The Second Coming of Palmyra. A Technological Prison.") *Archaeological Dialogues*, 27(2): 113-134.

\* Bülow, W and J. Lewis Thomas (2020). "On the Ethics of Reconstructing Destroyed Cultural Heritage Monuments." *Journal of the American Philosophical Association*, 6(4) pp. 483–501

\* Thompson, E. L. 2017. "Legal and Ethical Considerations for Digital Recreations of Cultural Heritage." *Chapman Law Review* 20 (1): 153-76.

## Online Resources

\*California Preservation Foundation: Documenting Sites of Justice in 3D. Speakers: Avidan Fernandez, Kacey Hadick, and Whitney Peterson (CyArk). June 29, 2020.

## WEEK 14 Dec 3 No in person class, final papers due

### Further Online Resources

\***University of Missouri Online exhibition** [https://maa.missouri.edu/sites/default/files/exhibit/online\\_romance\\_of\\_ruins\\_complete\\_reduced.pdf](https://maa.missouri.edu/sites/default/files/exhibit/online_romance_of_ruins_complete_reduced.pdf)

\*WJT Mitchell "**What Do Monuments Want?**" and Michael Taussig "**Monuments Must Do Better**" from "Monuments, Monumentality, Monumentalization" : <https://youtu.be/caGhHQT9WYY>

\*Monument Lab: <https://monumentlab.com/>

\*Center for the Preservation of Civil Right Sites <https://www.design.upenn.edu/cpcrs/about>

\***Southern Poverty Law Center** [“Whose Heritage? Public Symbols of the Confederacy.”](#)

\*<https://savingplaces.org/african-american-cultural-heritage#YHylDS1h2fU>

\*Odewale, A, K. Slocum, M. James, and N. Ike. [#TulsaSyllabus: The Rise, Destruction, and Rebuilding of Tulsa’s Greenwood District](#). June 2020.