

HISTORY 4218F
Cities of the Dead:
Cemeteries, Death, and Mourning in North America

Instructor: Michelle Hamilton

Email: mhamilt3@uwo.ca

This is a draft syllabus. Please see the course site on OWL for a final version.

Course Description: This seminar explores the history of death, cemeteries, and burials in North America beginning in 1812. Themes include mourning, memorialization, material culture, gender, spirituality, heritage, tourism, colonialism, repatriation, social justice, and treatment of human remains.



Stereoscope Slide of Mount Auburn Cemetery, Boston, Late Nineteenth Century

Prerequisite(s): 1.0 History course at the 2200 level or above

Unless you have either the prerequisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. The decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees if you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Syllabus:

Most classes will only be two hours. The third hour will be of use during our cemetery and archives

visits and in case there are multiple student presentations, and on our ‘conference day.’

This course assumes that students will bring an understanding of North American chronological and thematic history.

We also focus on the process of *doing* history, that is, how to: interpret 2-D and 3-D primary sources; form historical questions for original research; understand historiography; read a journal article and a monograph; present research coherently; write and structure historical research papers; prepare a conference paper and presentation.

By the end of this course, students will:

- be familiar with historiographical issues in the history of death
- be able to identify classic and current historians in this field
- have practised the methodology/interpretation of material culture and cultural landscapes as historical evidence
- have practised finding and interpreting primary and/or archival sources
- have attempted to conduct original historical research
- have practised life-long learning skills including: effective question formulation; research skills; critical thinking; written, visual, and oral communication

For history outcomes and expectations for 4th year students, see

http://www.history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_information/expectations_outcomes.html

Methods of Evaluation: Students must submit all course elements to pass the course.

Seminar Participation: 25%

Primary Source Analysis (written): 10%

Presentation of Source Analysis (oral): 10%

Cemetery Heritage Reflection Paper: 15%

Research Paper Outline: 10%

Research Paper: 20%

Conference Day Presentation: 10%

Due: Every week in class

Due: To be chosen by the student

Due: To be chosen by the student

Due: October 5, 2023

Due: October 19, 2023

Due: November 30, 2023

Due: December 7, 2023

Due Dates and Late Penalties:

Assignments are due in class. Penalty for late assignments is 2% each day (including Saturdays and Sundays). For all medical and non-medical issues that might warrant accommodation, including all assignments, exams, tests, presentations, and class attendance, please go to academic counselling.

Seminar Participation:

Students are expected to have fully read the assigned readings before discussion, and to contribute in a thoughtful and critical way each week. Students will be marked on the quality of their contributions. To have the best experience in a small upper year class, each must demonstrate understanding of the readings, extract the salient points or arguments of each, and verbally articulate these points by contributing qualitatively to the discussion. To help you prepare, I have included some questions for thought on the syllabus for each week.

Participation Marking Rubric: Participation will be marked each week on the following and then averaged at the end of the term. You may ask to see your weekly marks at any time throughout the term.

Preparation: Evidence shows preparation for the seminar.

Initiative: Questions asked focus, clarify, stimulate and/or summarize discussion.

Response: Quality of response reflects knowledge, comprehension and application of readings.

Discussion: Quality of response extends discussion, and reflects analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

Primary Source Analysis:

Each student will **summarize** and **analyze** one set of the designated weekly primary sources. Using a Powerpoint (or similar) presentation, students should summarize the sources/material culture, assess how the sources and material culture demonstrate, and relate to, the themes presented by the secondary source articles that same week; how the author's background (gender; class; race; beliefs etc.) affects the content of the sources; date of, and context for, publication; audience and how this audience affects the content. Students will prepare 3-5 questions to begin discussion that class. Students will hand in a **written version** of their presentation and the presentation slides **that same day** through OWL. Presentations should not exceed **15 minutes**.

Reflective Paper:

Students will visit a London cemetery on their own time in order to write this 5-6 page paper analyzing the links between death, cemeteries, cultural landscapes, and heritage. More details to come.

Research Paper:

Pick a subject of interest to you related to the history of death, cemeteries, human remains, and mourning in North America after 1812 and conduct the research required to write a 12-15 page paper.

Your submission should include a historiographical section, draw on primary and/or archival, and secondary source research, and present a tightly-argued thesis with specific supporting historical evidence. Students should aim for an original argument.

Historians start research with a set of related questions, not already decided-upon statements. Instead, they examine the historical evidence to find the answers to their questions, like a detective starts an investigation and answers questions by examining the evidence left behind. The answer to your question(s) is your thesis. Thesis arguments are not personal opinions or ethical judgements about what "should" be.

Encyclopedia articles or textbooks cannot be used. Good sources for research have arguments rather than being simply descriptive or exploratory. If you are unsure if a source is academic, please ask.

This research paper topic should be focused. Topics can be refined by narrowing down the time period, geographical area, themes, case studies, or policies.

Common essay writing mistakes: choosing too large of a topic for page length; writing in the passive voice not active voice; beginning with broad sweeping generalizations; and not following Chicago style manual. Quoting should be rare and only then from primary, not secondary, sources unless extremely eloquent. Always write in the past tense.

Structurally, the paper should include an introductory paragraph with a thesis argument (1 paragraph); a brief discussion of historiography (what other historians have said about your topic 1-2 paragraphs and where your research sits in comparison); background information that the reader needs to understand your research (max. 1 page); a detailed exploration of the historical evidence that supports your argument (10-12 pages); a conclusion which re-asserts your thesis (1 paragraph).

Papers can include photographs. However, pictures are additional; you still must write 12-15 pages of text for the essay.

Papers should be approximately 12-15 pages, double spaced, and use *Chicago Manual of Style* footnotes. This style guide may be found here: <https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>
See the marking rubric on OWL.

Students will prepare a **research paper outline** in advance, which will include a brief summary of the topic and historiography, the research question(s) being pursued, and a list of 10 primary and secondary sources that will be *useful* for the paper.

If plagiarism or AI use is suspected, the instructor will ask for research notes after the paper has been submitted; keep all notes until the paper is returned to you.

All work submitted in this course must be your own. You may not make use of generative AI tools like ChatGPT for any assignments in this course. You will submit the paper through Turn-it-in which now also checks for AI use.

‘Conference Day’ Presentation

Our last class will be a casual and celebratory mini-conference during which each student will present their research to the class with a PowerPoint or similar presentation. More details to come.

Course Schedule Fall 2023

Week	Date	Topic	Due Dates
1	Sept 7	Introduction	Sign up primary sources
2	Sept 14	Cemeteries: Cultural Landscapes & Heritage	Sign up primary sources
3	Sept 21	Death in the Archives	Western Archives
4	Sept 28	Mourning & Material Culture	Mount Pleasant Cemetery
5	Oct 5	Battlefields, Cemeteries & Dark Tourism	Reflection paper due
6	Oct 12	Spiritualism, Ghosts & the Afterlife	
7	Oct 19	War & Memorialization	Research Paper Outline due
8	Oct 26	Anatomy, Dissection & Medical Science	
9	Study Break		
10	Nov 9	Ossuaries, Tombs & Mummies	
11	Nov 16	Indigenous Ancestors	
12	Nov 23	Skulls, Slave Bodies & Burial	

13	Nov 30	Cemeteries & Social Justice	Final paper due
14	Dec 7	Conference Day	Presentations

Please review the Department of History's shared policies and statements for all undergraduate courses at: https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html for important information regarding accessibility options, make-up exams, medical accommodations, health and wellness, academic integrity, plagiarism, and more.

DRAFT