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## **Cultural Fortresses: Reconsidering Preservation and Memorial Architecture**

As architects, planners, designers, and historians, we are challenged to consider how the built environment might stay alive, and evolve not only through physical architectural changes, but through cultural influences. Cultural and architectural identity can come not only from how we use a space, but understanding how that use has evolved.

Memorial sites not only preserve, but also interpret and educate. The process of assigning cultural value is a complex one, charged by political and social considerations. What are the responsibilities of the architect working in memorial sites? What is the role of the built environment in interpreting history?

This seminar will discuss memorials, historic sites, or landscapes that challenge preconceived ideas about traditional architectural methods of memorialization. We will look beyond statues and triumphal arches and explore new forms of preservation in cities and spaces all over the world. We will consider buildings, places and infrastructure that intricately bind us to the past. Sites of historical and contemporary trauma will be examined as well as politically contested sites. Of particular interest is the re-animation of these sites, where contemporary functions and historic rituals collide.

*Cultural Fortresses* is designed as a series of five meetings, which will include brief lectures, reading discussions led by students, and case studies. Case studies featured in lectures and presented by students will include a variety of memorial landscapes, buildings, and preservation sites throughout America and Europe. We will discuss the transformation of historic sites that have adapted a cultural meaning beyond their original design. This course is less about memorial architecture per se, instead focusing on the role of preservation and memorialization in contemporary society.

Lectures will begin with a brief review of landmark modernist texts on memorial and preservation theory. Later sessions will be structured around a series of readings and case studies to be led by students. Reading and discussion participation by all students is required. In addition, students will be asked to prepare short case studies on contemporary memorial sites to be presented at the final class.

### **Seminar 1: Discovering the “Non-Memorial”**

Required Readings: “The Power of Place,” by Dolores Hayden. p. 1-43

“The Past in the Present,” by Kirk Savage.

“The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Essence and Its Development,” Alois Riegl.

Optional Readings: “Architecture of the Uncanny,” Anthony Vidler

### **Seminar 2: Modern Theories of Preservation**

Required Readings: “The Postmodern Cult of Monuments,” by Mario Carpo.

“Cronocaos,” by Rem Koolhaas. Log 21.

“Preservation is Overtaking Us,” Rem Koolhaas.

### **Seminar 3: Typology of Memorials and Interventions**

Required Readings: “To Trace the Shifting Sands: Community, Ritual, and the Memorial Landscape” by Judith Wasserman.

“Monument or Memorial? The Wall and the Politics of Memory,” by Robert K. Brigham.

“Expressions of Mass Grief and Mourning: The Material Culture of Makeshift Memorials,” by Jeffrey L. Durbin.

### **Seminar 4: War and Peace: Case Studies of Berlin, New York**

Required Readings: “In Defense of Places,” Paul Hirst.

### **Seminar 5: Case Studies of Preservation and Intervention**

Required Readings: “Old Buildings New Forms: New Directions in Architectural Transformations,” by Francoise Astorg Bollack.