

# Humanities Seminar Fall 2021

## Histories of Memories in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

Prof. Susan A. Crane

Contact: [scrane@arizona.edu](mailto:scrane@arizona.edu)

Website: <https://scrane.web.arizona.edu/>

The past is what happened. History is what we write about it.

“Histories of memories” offers an interdisciplinary, scholarly approach to the study of the past. Written histories are always informed by memories, since memory of the past is alive in individuals’ minds, as are memories of learning about the past. Memories exist in individual brains, but they would not persist without social and collective memory frameworks. The histories we learned in school are only one type of those frameworks.

This course will examine histories of memories during the “long” nineteenth century (1789-1918) through Western institutions and technologies that facilitate recall: museums, photography, print media and visual culture, as well as academic disciplines which emerged in western civilizations to study memory phenomena, such as history, psychology, archaeology, paleontology, anthropology and more – many of which were formalized in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The emergence of modern notions of time and its rapid pace of change will be considered alongside practices of preservation, conservation and the creation of memorials and monuments. Topics include: the human body as a site of memory (tattoos, funerary practices, wax museums, postmortem photography); Napoleonic and Civil War commemorative sites; theories of extinction; the creation of public history museums; the emergence of mass tourism and the mass market for antiques and souvenirs.

A pair of curated book chapters and/or articles is assigned for each class meeting; digitized copies will be provided. We will discuss the assigned texts during that class, as well as material presented by the instructor. Each chapter is from a book highly recommended for those interested in further reading.

- Week 1      Defining the Century: Remembering Revolution  
Read: Jürgen Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century* (2014), Ch. 1; Peter Fritzsche, *Stranded in the Present* (2002), pp. 11-14, 42-46, 92-130
- Week 2      Teeth, Tattoos and Tourists: Collecting Historical Objects in and beyond Museums  
Read: “Reading the Tangible Past: British Tourism, Collecting, and Memory after Waterloo” Stuart Semmel, *Representations* No. 69 (Winter, 2000), pp. 9-30; Teresa Barnett, “History’s Remains” in her *Sacred Relics: Pieces of the Past in Nineteenth-Century America* (2013)

- Week 3      Bringing the Past Back to Life: From Wax Museums to Missions  
Read: Billie Melman, *The Culture of History: English Uses of the Past, 1800-1953* (2006), Ch.1; Phoebe Kropp, “The Road” in her *California Vieja: Culture and Memory in a Modern American Place* (2013)
- Week 4      Fearing/Preventing Oblivion: Civil War Commemoration, Postmortem Photography and Theories of Extinction  
Read: excerpts from Patrick Brantlinger, *Dark Vanishings: Discourse on the Extinction of Primitive Races, 1800-1930* (2003); David Blight, “Soldiers’ Faith” in his *Race and Reunion* (2001) OR Kirk Savage, preface to the second edition and “Slavery’s Memorial” in his *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth-Century America* (1997/2018).

Instructor: Susan A. Crane is Professor of Modern European History at the University of Arizona. She received her MA and PhD from the University of Chicago and taught at the University of Oregon for two years before coming to the University of Arizona in 1995. Her research interests revolve around historical consciousness, subjectivity and memory. Her most recent publications include *Nothing Happened. A History* (Stanford University Press, 2021) and *The Cultural History of Memory in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century* (Editor; Bloomsbury Publishers, 2020).