

STSC 1761-301: Nature and the City: Place, Memory, and Environment

Tuesdays, 3:30-6:30 pm

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What does place have to do with which events are memorialized and which are forgotten? In this course we'll explore the relationships among cities, environments, and ideas about the past in the United States. From problems of drinking water to climate change, we'll investigate how place and collective memory impact decisions and possibilities in facing environmental issues. Drawing on science and technology studies, anthropology, sociology, and history, this course offers students new ways to think about how people in the United States have understood their relationships to the places they live in and depend on. Using a combination of scholarly readings, primary sources, and field trips, this CWiC critical speaking seminar will focus on helping students develop observation, critical reading, and public speaking skills to understand how stories about the past impact their lives.

Course Themes

- Urban environments, relationships between cities and their surroundings
- Environmental history in the United States
- Public memory and storytelling
- Understandings of place

Course Objectives

- Develop skills and techniques for effective oral communication
- Build confidence in public speaking and communication
- Develop strong critical reading and analysis skills
- Critically think about urban spaces as social, ecological environments
- Understand links between urban and non-urban environments
- Understand and contextualize contemporary events in historical context

Out-of-class Activities

- Three self-scheduled field trips
- Weekly reading journal
- Reading 2-3 articles or chapters before each class meeting

Assignments & Assessments

- Written assignments (20%)
 - Weekly reading journal
 - One short written assignment
- In-class speaking assignments (55%)
 - Two short oral presentations
 - One 15 minute oral talk, presenting student's semester-long research project
 - One group assignment, presented orally, in class
- Attendance & Participation (25%)