BIG: MONUMENTAL BUILDINGS AND SCULPTURES IN THE PAST AND PRESENT

The building of sculpted monuments and monumental architecture seems to be a universal human trait in all parts of the world, from the pyramids of ancient Egypt to the inuksuit cairns of the Arctic Inuit. What explains our urge to create monumental things? Why are monuments built, and how do we experience them? This course explores various answers to these questions through the disciplines that most frequently address monuments: archaeology, architecture, and art history. In the process, we will encounter a number of the major trends that have characterized the humanities and social sciences in the past century. This course examines humankind’s monumental record through a series of famous case studies from around the world to investigate the social significance of monuments in their original ancient or modern contexts. We will also determine whether lessons learned from the past can be applied to the study of monuments today, and whether studying modern monuments – including those from our immediate surroundings in Chicago – can help us understand those of the past.

Grading:
Paper 1: Analysis of a public monument or monumental building in the Chicago area. 4-5 pp. 25 %

Paper 2: In-depth study of a monument or monumental building or city of your choice from the past or present. 10-12 pp. 50 %

Attendance and participation in discussion sections: 25 %
WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introduction

Monuments of the week: Lee/Jackson statue, Baltimore; the Neo-Assyrian lamassu statue in the Oriental Institute Museum; Triumphal Quadriga, Venice

Readings:
Riegl, Alois

Wu, Hung

Week 2: Monumental Architecture from Beaux Arts to the Modern Movement

Monuments of the week: Chicago World Fair of 1893; Chicago’s Tribune Tower and Saarinen’s Tower (unbuilt)

Readings:
Hugo, Victor.
1831 The Hunchback of Notre Dame. Book V, Chapter 2: This Will Kill That.

Kahn, Louis I.

Sert, J. L., F. Leger, and S. Giedion

Week 3: Monumentality and Scale

Monuments of the week: the Guennol Lioness; the Great Pyramids; the ziggurats of Ur and Choga Zanbil; Göbekli Tepe

Readings:
Porada, Edith
1950 A Leonine Figure of the Protoliterate Period of Mesopotamia. Journal of the American Oriental Society 70(4):223-226.

Trigger, Bruce G.

Banning, E. B.
Week 4: Monuments and Urban Planning

Monuments of the week: Baron Haussmann’s Paris; Pruitt-Igoe housing project, St. Louis

Readings:
Child, V. Gordon

Agnew, John

Smith, Michael E.

Week 5: Urban Symbology

Monuments of the week: Great Pyramid of Tenochtitlan, Mexico; Syro-Anatolian cities of the Iron Age

Readings:
Ashmore, Wendy, and Jeremy A. Sabloff

Smith, Michael E.
2003 Can We Read Cosmology from Maya City Plans? Comment on Ashmore and Sabloff. Latin American Antiquity 14:221-228.

Ashmore, Wendy, and Jeremy A. Sabloff

Week 6: Monuments, Structure, and Agency

Monuments of the week: Monks Mound, Cahokia

Readings:
Joyce, Rosemary A.

Pauketat, Timothy R.
Week 7: Power, the State, and Resistance

Monuments of the week: Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Readings:
Moore, Jerry D.

Leone, Mark P.

Week 8: Monumentality in, and of, the Landscape

Monuments of the week: Stonehenge; Hittite landscape monuments of Anatolia

Readings:
Tilley, Christopher

Bradley, Richard

Ingold, Tim

Week 9: Monumentality, Memory, and Cultural Heritage

Monuments of the week: Waste Isolation Pilot Plate, New Mexico; Ayodhya and the Babri Mosque; ISIS’ destruction of antiquities

Readings:
Young, James E.

Alcock, Susan E.

Bryan-Wilson, Julia
Week 10: Plazas, Courtyards, and Open Spaces

Monuments of the week: Tiananmen Square; Nazi rallying grounds of Nuremberg; 9/11 Memorial, NY

Readings:
Wu, Hung

Arad, Michael