

HIST 2011-04 – Engaging Sources: Death and Memory in the Cemetery

Course Description:

Students will explore how death and memory are represented on the cemetery landscape. How do you read a cemetery? How do its architecture, art, symbolism, and epitaphs reflect the identities and beliefs of those who are remembered there? We'll examine burial practices across cultures and faiths through images and field trips. Students will identify, research, and present on a related topic of their choice.

SLOs:

SLO 9 Creativity - Engage in a creative process to produce artistic work.

SLO 10 Artistic Meaning - Interpret creative works and ideas as expressions of meaning and purpose.

Outline of Topics Covered:

Students will learn how to read a cemetery, the richest historic landscape in every community. The class introduces the architectural and sculptural styles commonly found there, and how they express an era's attitudes about death, beauty, and memory. We will explore the lost language of grave symbolism, the meaning of epitaphs, and the evolution of the cemetery landscape.

Required Textbooks:

Roger Luckhorst, *Graveyards: A History of Living With the Dead*

Hal Hassen & Dawn Cobb, *Cemeteries of Illinois: A Field Guide to Markers, Monuments, and Motifs*

Assessment types:

Students will present their original research about a thematic aspect of cemeteries. They will participate in creating a local cemetery tour for UNI's sesquicentennial. Finally, students will design a grave monument of their choice, and write a reflection paper placing its artistic, architectural, and symbolic elements in the context of contemporary design.