

Analysis of a Museum Exhibit or Monument

November 2: Bring to class a one page denotative description of your exhibit or monument. Be prepared to share in class, both describing your choice and why it works for this assignment.

November 5, by noon: Email to me an early draft of your paper.

November 7: No regular class; Instead, individual, scheduled meetings with me in my office.

Nov. 14: Second draft of your paper due in class; bring 2 copies.

November 16: Final Draft Due

For your final assignment, I'm asking you to write a 6-8 page analysis of a museum exhibit or monument of your choice. The overarching question your paper should answer is: "What cultural work is this exhibit or monument doing?"

You may write about any exhibit, but you must first clear the topic with me. You must also choose an exhibit or monument that a. you can see at least a couple times and b. that lends itself to this assignment.

In this paper, I want you to analyze what Henrietta Lidchi calls both the "poetics" and the "politics" of the exhibit or monument, the story it tells and the power it creates or maintains. How does your museum exhibit or monument work to produce a particular myth, a particular story? How does that story relate to issues of power? If there has been controversy surrounding this exhibit or monument, how does this relate to the questions we have been discussing in this class? How are the concepts of "history" and "memory" relevant to your analysis? How do the analyses of other monuments and exhibits that we have read in class help us to understand the monument or exhibit that you have chosen?

Be sure to draw extensively from all the readings we have done in this unit and the previous one. Lidchi, Bonner, Blight, and Hall all provide conceptual tools and concepts that should help you with your analysis. The other essays we have read provide points of comparison and contrast.

As always, I will be looking for a clearly written paper, with a strong thesis, articulate arguments, sufficient details from the exhibit or monument to support your points, and evidence that you have understood and can draw on the materials we have read for class. Be sure that part of your paper compares and contrasts your monument or exhibit to other(s) we have read about in class. You must cite all material correctly, using Chicago style internal documentation.

GOOD LUCK! Enjoy your project!