

Iconic Landmarks of America: Washington D.C. and New York City
TENTATIVE SYLLABUS

Units: UWP 12 Visual Rhetoric - 4 units

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UWP 12

Course Description and Goals:

In this course, we will be traveling and studying in Washington D.C. and New York City. Our primary goal for the course will be to address the following question:

How do the iconic spaces, structures, and monuments of these two cities contribute to our abstract understanding of what the United States is as a nation? In order to address this question effectively, we will first begin by unpacking a position central to the course: visual elements, like words, can have a persuasive impact upon our understanding of the world. Our class discussions will introduce you to concepts of visual rhetoric and visual communication, which you will then apply to your own analysis of elements of the urban landscape that we explore together during course excursions.

This course will challenge you to:

- Consider how iconic buildings, spaces, and monuments have a persuasive impact upon our understanding of the nation.
- Learn visual rhetoric concepts and visual communication conventions.
- Understand how and why different visual communication conventions call for different kinds of readings and interpretations.
- Develop a vocabulary for thinking and writing about objects, spaces, images, and structures.
- Gain control of your ability to read, write, and think critically and reflectively about the rhetorical impact of objects, spaces, images, structures, and texts.
- Employ writing as a process, including drafting, revising, and editing.
- Develop an effective writing style.

Texts & Materials

Course Reader, including excerpts from the following:

1. *Visual Communication: A Writer's Guide* by Hiligros & Howard.
2. *Sticks and Stones: A Study of American Architecture and Civilization* by Lewis Mumford.

3. "Shaping Belief: The Role of Audience in Visual Communication" by Ann C. Tyler.
4. "Information Design in Informal Settings" by C.G. Screven.
5. *Assassination Vacation*, by Sarah Vowell.
6. *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials* by Dickinson, Blair & Ott.

Writing Assignments

Because this is a Writing Experience course, you are required to write at least 3000 words. Prior to the due date for each assignment, you will receive a full description of the requirements. Class meeting times will include discussion of effective writing strategies, including drafting, revising, editing, and polishing your writing style. You will work on your papers in drafts and submit some of the drafts for peer review. I'm also happy to consult with you one-on-one about your drafts before you turn them in for a grade.

Grade Distribution

Assignment 1: Reading response	(15%)
Assignment 2: Essay on the Visual Rhetoric of Public Spaces	(25%)
Assignment 3: Project Paper	(35%)
Course blog:	(10%)
Final Exam:	(10%)
Participation:	(5%)

TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE

Week	Topical Overview of Assignments & Excursions
1	<p>Introduction to Washington and to Visual Rhetoric</p> <p>Selected readings from course reader.</p> <p>Excursions: Capitol Mall and monuments; White House, Arlington Cemetery</p> <p>Assignment due: Reading response.</p>
2	<p>Visual Rhetoric of Memorials and Museums</p> <p>Selected readings from course reader.</p> <p>Excursions: Smithsonian museums; Holocaust museum</p>
	Mid-Week Move: Amtrak Train to New York
2	<p>Introduction to New York; Visual Rhetoric and Iconic Structures</p> <p>Selected readings from course reader.</p> <p>Excursions: Statue of Liberty; Ellis Island; Central Park.</p> <p>Assignment due: Essay on the Visual Rhetoric of Public Spaces.</p>
3	Visual Rhetoric and Cultural Spaces

	Selected readings from course reader.
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	Excursions: 9/11 Memorial; Greenwich Village; art museums.
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	Assignment due: Project paper.
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	Final exam.
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