English 240
RHETORIC & PUBLIC MEMORY
FALL 2018
TR 12:30-1:45  CRT 368
Prof. Shevaun E. Watson
Course Description

Public memories are constructed, crafted, even fabricated. How does this work? This course takes a rhetorical perspective on the contested nature of public memory in the United States. We will examine what public memory is, how it is created and perpetuated in societies, how it is configured to privilege some historical interpretations over others, and how it is revised over time. Ultimately, this course asks: How do our public memories shape us as American citizens? How do those memories shape our relationship to ourselves, to others, to the state, the nation, and the world? And how to public memories incline (or disincline) us and others to action?

Course Goals

- Understand the rhetorical processes of public memory creation, continuation and modification
- Connect public memory to rhetoric, history, politics and ideology
- Critically evaluate public monuments and other instantiations of public memories
- Consider how public memory contributes to American citizenship
Basic Requirements

- Daily readings (no textbook; all PDFs/online or D2L; hard copies will not be provided)
- Reading quizzes (10-15 unannounced) 25% of final grade
- One take-home exam (due around Sep 20) 25%
- One presentation (due around Oct 23) 25%
- One paper/project (due around Dec 15) 25%

Topics—general plan

Weeks 1-3: Introduction - rhetoric, memory, historiography, visual/material culture
Weeks 4-6: National memories & spaces
Weeks 7-9: Regional memories & spaces I - The Midwest
Weeks 10-12: Regional memories & spaces II - The South
Weeks 13-15: International memories & spaces