

Department of Anthropology
ANTHRO 2256B-001: Ruins and Ruination
BRIEF COURSE OUTLINE
Fall 2024

Date: July 26, 2024

Instructor and course information:

Instructor: Dr. Trish Markert

Method of delivery: In person

Credit value: 0.5

Antirequisites: None.

Prerequisites: None.

Course Description:

When you hear “ruin,” what comes to mind? This course examines ruins (material traces) and ruination (processes of decay) through an anthropological and archaeological lens. We will discuss themes of heritage, memory, haunting, nationalism, and abandonment, paying attention to the myriad and contested ways ruins exist in a meaningful present. We will also examine, and in some cases experiment with, methodological approaches to understanding ruins and ruination. How do we record a landscape? Preserve a structure? Trace the processes that lead to decay? Research the life history of a building? Understand how ruins are memorialized as monuments to the past, romanticized as places of intrigue, reused and reinvented, neglected or forgotten, or erased from view? Use digital approaches to map ruins for research or share findings with wide audiences? Through a combination of lecture, readings, and hands-on exercises, this course explores these themes/questions and asks how ruins, as material traces of time and change, bring both past and present into sharper focus.

A full course schedule including a week-by-week breakdown of topics and assigned readings will be available on the course’s OWL Brightspace site before the first day of class.

Course Materials:

No textbook. Required readings will be available through the Course Readings tool on the course site.

Evaluation:

Grades will be based on the following:

- In-class exercises (weekly hands-on exercises; will drop lowest 2 grades)
- 6 quizzes (5-6 questions biweekly on readings; multiple choice, matching, true-false questions)
- Landscape photo essay (due after Reading Week)
- Final Exam (multiple-choice, true-false, matching, and short answer questions; will take place during finals week)