Heritage in Poly crisis

CDNS 5401

Heritage Conservation: History, Principles and Concepts (Winter 2026)

Instructor: Jerzy (Jurek) Elżanowski

Email: jerzy.elzanowski@carleton.ca

Schedule: Fridays, 14:35–17:25; office hours by appointment

Course Description:

Conservationists in Canada are questioning the relevance of the term "heritage." Some want to embrace "adaptive reuse" as a new model, while others argue that the field is stuck in a colonial paradigm out of step with reality. Connected in recent years to right-wing populist groups such as the Washington-based Heritage Foundation, the term describes with decreasing precision the complex, stewardship-driven approaches that often guide contemporary heritage planning and architectural conservation. In a world overwhelmed by a network of crises—climate change, mass migration, war, the polarization of wealth, and rising authoritarianism—what role can heritage conservation play in sustaining human and more-than-human lives, practices, and places? In this course, we will critically examine the historical and philosophical roots of values-based conservation. Together, we will look for a path forward—if not for "heritage," then at least for an ethical practice that nurtures change.

Texts and Course Materials: I'll be posting course materials throughout the term on Brightspace or in the form of ARES, Google Drive, YouTube, Dropbox, and other internet links at least two weeks in advance. This includes course readings, videos, assignment descriptions, schedules and updates. I'll activate the Brightspace page and post the final outline by December 31, 2025.

Cost of Educational Materials: I strongly encourage you to print all course readings and organize them in a binder to form a course journal that you bring to class each week. The cost should be around $50. Part of your participation grade will be based on your consistent use of course materials and notes to back up statements made in class. Students with accommodations, and those who truly feel that they learn better in digital space, are welcome to keep a digital journal. At the end of term, you'll submit a short participation statement that summarizes journal notes and reflections. In addition to printing, you will spend $30 on Matthes' *What to Save and Why* (2024).

Course Schedule
Classes held on Fridays 14:35–17:25 unless otherwise noted in Brightspace. *This DRAFT schedule may change to accommodate class needs, guest speakers, field trips, etc. In addition, up to four readings may be added throughout the term as the discussion unfolds. Changes to the schedule and additional readings will be posted two weeks in advance.*

Week 1
09/01/26 – Introduction to the course outline and assignments

Week 2
16/01/26 – The scope of heritage studies
- Erich Hatala Matthes, *What to Save and Why: Identity, Authenticity, and the Ethics of Conservation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024).

Week 3:
23/01/26 – Overview of course literature
- Please read abstracts from all assigned course readings. If no abstract is available, please read the first one or two paragraphs of the introduction. Prepare detailed notes for discussion, focussing on connections between readings.

Week 4
30/01/26 – Workshops: Reading and research methods / Productive AI use
- Focused 'investigative' reading: Laurajane Smith, "Considering Nostalgia: The Affective Practices of Heritage and the Politics of Populism," in *Claiming the People's Past: Populist Politics of History in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Berber Bevernage, Eline Mestdagh, et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2024), 229-247.
- Look up authors and unfamiliar terms as a way to emplace the reading in the literature cited. Consider disciplinary shifts in the meaning and application of terms and concepts.

Assignment: *Encyclopedia entry proposal (10%) due before midnight 30/01/26 (flexible deadline, see table below)*

Week 5

06/02/26 – Heritage in Polycrisis

- Kisha Supernant, "Truth before Transition: Reimagining Anthropology as Restorative Justice," *American Anthropologist* 126, no. 3 (2024): 396–407.
- Excerpts from: Achille Mbembe, "Planetary Entanglemnet," in *Out of the Dark Night: Essays on Decolonization, trans.* Daniela Ginsburg (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019), 7-41.
- Excerpts from: Judith J. Rakowski, Linn N. Schaan, Roel van Klink, Iryna Herzon, Adina Arth, Gregor Hagedorn, Julian Rode, Felix Creutzig, Guy Pe'er, "Characterizing the Global Polycrisis: A Systematic Review of Recent Literature," *Annual Review Environment and Resources* 50 (2025):159-183.
- Additional resource: Achille Mbembe, "The Holberg Lecture by Achille Mbembe: *The Earthly Community*," YouTube video, 1:10:51, June 5, 2024, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=omx5NuYBxIk.

Week 6

13/02/26 – Discussion of term paper proposals and peer review

Week 7

20/02/26 – Winter break, no class

Week 8

27/02/26 – Heritage values and antiquity

- Miles Glendinning, "Harbingers of Heritage: Antiquity, Christendom, Renaissance," in *The Conservation Movement: A History of Architectural Preservation: Antiquity to Modernity* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 9–34.
- Peleggi, Maurizio. "When Shrines and Images Grow Tired: Toward a Theory of Devotional Conservation." *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 77–78 (2022): 157–66.

Assignment: *Encyclopedia entry – complete draft submission (20%) due before midnight 27/02/26 (moderate deadline, see table below)*

Week 9

06/03/26 – Heritage values and modernity

- Miles Glendinning, "The Life-Force of Age: Restoration and Anti-Scrape, 1850-1890," and "Militant Monuments: Nationalist Conservation Rivalries, 1890-1914," in *The Conservation Movement: A History of Architectural Preservation: Antiquity to Modernity* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 116-184.
- Alois Riegl, "The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Its Origin," in *Historical and Philosophical Issues in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage*, ed. Nicholas Stanley-Price, Mansfield Kirby Talley Jr., and Alessandra Melucco Vaccaro (Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute, 1996), 69–83.

Week 10

13/03/26 – Discussion of complete draft submissions (with guest feedback)

Week 11

20/03/26 – Values, culture and social frameworks I

- Patrycja Kaszynska, "Cultural Value as Meaning-Making." *Cultural Trends* 34, no. 4 (2025): 463–77.
- Excerpts from: Max Weber, *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*, trans. Edward A. Shils and Henry A. Finch (New York: Free Press, 1949).
- Excerpts from: Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, ed. and trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).
- Excerpts from: Bruno Latour, *Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).

Week 12

27/03/26 – Values, culture and social frameworks II

- Marta de la Torre, "Values and Heritage Conservation." *Heritage & Society* 6, no. 2 (2013): 155–66.
- Hilary Grant, "Incompatible: Modern Built Heritage Conservation versus Value-Based Addition Design at Canada's Capital Historic Sites," *The Historic Environment: Policy & Practice* 13, no. 3 (July 3, 2022): 293–317.
- Excerpts from: Parks Canada, *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada: A Federal, Provincial and Territorial Collaboration* (Ottawa: Parks Canada, 2010).

Week 13

03/04/26 – Summary of key themes in course readings (review)

Assignment: *Encyclopedia final edit and website upload (25%) due before midnight 03/04/26 (moderate deadline, see table below)*

Week 14

08/04/26 – Course wrap-up and celebration!

Assignment: *Participation statement (5%) due before midnight 08/04/26 (moderate deadline, see table below)*

Course Evaluation

Assignment	Component	Deadlines/Dates	Grade Percentage	Notes
"Heritage in Polycrisis" encyclopedia entry	Proposal	30/01/26 (F)	10%	Post-peer-review resubmission possible with permission
	Complete draft submission	27/02/26 (M)	20%	
	Final edit and website upload	03/04/26 (M)	25% + 2–5% extra credit for leadership roles	Scheduled as take-home exam

Assignment	Component	Deadlines/Dates	Grade Percentage	Notes
Participation	**Reading-based** contributions to class and group discussions and workshops, including micro-prompts and weekly questions	All term	30%	Quality of contributions is as important as frequency. Please situate contributions in assigned readings.
	Discussant contribution	Once per term	10%	Responsible for animating discussion (no presentations!)
	Participation statement	08/04/26 (S)	5%	

Assignments and Policies

Unless otherwise specified, please submit all assignments in Brightspace before midnight on the due date. Since this is a graduate seminar, I try to build in some flexibility around deadlines. The deadlines listed above fall into three categories: Strict (S), Moderate (M), and Flexible (F).

- Strict deadlines can't be missed. Late work won't be accepted unless there's a serious reason, such as illness or an approved accommodation.
- Moderate deadlines come with a 48-hour grace period. After that, I'll deduct 5% per day.
- Flexible deadlines can be negotiated with me, but the work must still be submitted within 6 days of the original date. No further extensions are possible.

Please aim to submit on time and use the grace periods only when you really need them. To use either the 48-hour or 6-day grace period, you must email me at least two days in advance to request an extension and receive permission.

"Heritage in Polycrisis" contribution (55%–cumulative): You'll write an accessible, wiki-style contribution towards a shared "Encyclopedia of Heritage in Polycrisis," based on the questions posed in the course description. Entries will be concise, well-edited, cross-referenced, and hyperlinked. I expect critical academic contributions. These may be written in the first person where appropriate. Please steer away from case studies and instead focus on foundational theoretical questions supported by examples. Matthes' *What to Save and Why* (2024) is a helpful model. The contributions will be based on templates developed collectively in class.

Class Participation (45%–cumulative): Participating in class means: a) coming to class regularly and on time; b) being prepared to discuss readings in a way that also addresses the broader literature cited in each article; c) actively participating in workshops and activities; c) regularly preparing questions and responding to discussant questions; d) keeping a reading

binder/journal, either in print or (by arrangement) in digital form. I'll discuss details of all participation components in class.

Extra Credit (2–5%): Students who take a leadership role in designing and implementing the online "Encyclopedia of Heritage in Polycrisis" can apply for extra credit by writing a short, one or two paragraph justification at the end of term. Please contact me for details on how to work towards this credit. Extra credit is entirely discretionary and not subject to grade appeal.

Cellphones and Laptops: All cellphones must be silenced and put away before class, unless needed as an assistive tool. I also encourage students to put away laptops and tablets, and focus on on printed texts, handwritten notes, and full participation. As someone with a cognitive disability, I understand that laptops and phones are essential tools for some learners. If you need or want to use your laptop or cellphone in class, please let me know at the start of term. Naturally we'll be pulling out laptops for certain class exercises and workshops, and discussants will sometimes be using one to present their screens during workshops.

Formatting requirements: We are preparing a public facing, online encyclopedia, so proper formatting will be key. We will come up with the formatting requirements, including the encyclopedia template, collaboratively.

Citations: All citations need to be formatted in Chicago Style, 17th ed. The manual is available electronically through the Carleton library webpage: https://www-chicagomanualofstyle-org.proxy.library.carleton.ca/book/ed17/frontmatter/toc.html

Generative AI Policy and Disclosure: We'll be learning about — and using — generative AI creatively in this course. A detailed AI-use policy will be posted on Brightspace after class discussions. **All AI use must be documented.** I include my own statement on AI use as an example: *I used ChatGPT (versions 5.1 and 5.2, Plus licence) as an assistive tool: to help integrate information (such as aligning the course schedule, academic calendar, and assignment deadlines); to shorten, clarify, or lightly edit policies and descriptions I had already drafted; and to think through appropriate readings and connections between authors' bodies of work. ChatGPT was also a sounding board for refining assignments and participation expectations. Apart from the idea of the "participation statement," I didn't use AI to generate original course content. I'm happy to share relevant ChatGPT conversations.*

Course Communications: Please email me using your Carleton accounts *only*. I'll do my best to respond to your emails within 48 hours and ask that you follow the same rule when responding to my queries. I won't be responding to messages on the weekends or in the evenings. Emails received on Friday will likely be answered the following Monday afternoon.

Copyright, Intellectual Property, and Recordings: All course materials—lectures, discussions, slides, assignments, exams, and anything else shared in this class—are copyright

protected and belong to their creator. You may use these materials for your own learning, but you may not copy, post, record, or distribute them in any form without written permission from the copyright holder. Audio or video recording of classes is not permitted unless I've approved it in advance. Posting, sharing, or selling course materials without permission violates Carleton's Academic Integrity Policy and may also carry legal consequences.

Grade Appeals and Previous Work: For grades appeals processes, please see Carleton's Academic Integrity Policy as well as the registrar's website. You may not re-use previous work without written permission from the instructor.

The following texts are excerpts from Carleton's academic integrity, accommodations, and equity policies.

Academic Integrity: The University Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as "presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one's own." This includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include but are not limited to: books, articles, papers, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, artworks, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, material on the internet and/or conversations.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:
- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else, including the unauthorized use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT);
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another's data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement;
- submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one's own; and
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's work and/or failing to use quotation marks.

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course's instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty follows a rigorous process for academic integrity and allegations, including reviewing documents and interviewing the student, when an instructor suspects a violation has been committed. Penalties for violations may include a final grade of "F" for the course.

Final Grades: Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

Requests for Academic Accommodations: Carleton is committed to providing academic accessibility for all individuals. You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. The accommodation request processes, including information about the Academic Consideration Policy for Students in Medical and Other Extenuating Circumstances, are outlined on the Academic Accommodations website (http://students.carleton.ca/course-outline).

Scheduling and Examination Support: Scheduling and Examination Services provides various supports for both in-term and end-of-term tests and exams. Details can be found on the Exam Support website.

Statement on Student Mental Health: As a University student you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you. For more information please visit Carleton University's Mental Health and Wellness web pages.

Emergency Resources (on and off campus)
https://carleton.ca/health/emergencies-and-crisis/emergency-numbers/