

# Heritage in Poly crisis

**CDNS 5401**

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

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**Schedule:** Fridays, 14:35–17:25

## **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.