

**Looting and Loss**  
University of Washington

**Course:** NEAR E 312A / ARCHY 369A/512

**Instructor:** Stephanie Selover

**Term:** Spring 2019

**Office Hours:** Wednesdays, 3:30-5:20pm

**Room:** SAV 166

**Office:** Denny M220E

**Time:** M/W 1:30-3:20pm

**Email:** sselover@uw.edu

---

---

**Course Description:**

This course explores the history and context of the politicization, looting, and destruction of archaeological and cultural sites in the Middle East. We will also focus on the associated human toll of the current political conditions, with an emphasis on Syria, Iraq, Egypt and other parts of the Middle East, as well as numerous topics on the ethics and issues of archaeology, museums, and the antiquities market.

The course begins with a historical look at the ancient destruction of cultural material, from Mesopotamians to the Romans and beyond. We will cover the politics of archaeology in the Middle East from the First Gulf War to more recent times, including the rise and fall of Daesh (ISIS/IS/ISIL) and archaeological politics in the rest of the Middle East. The class will then highlight the various rationalizations for looting and destruction of archaeological sites, from subsistence looting by local communities, to the wholesale ideological destruction of past cultures, as well as the market for legal and illegal antiquities throughout the world. Finally, we will delve into what is being done by various countries and organizations to combat the problems of looting and destruction in our times.

Students are responsible for all readings, a weekly online discussion of class themes and readings, one in-class map quiz, a midterm exam covering the history section of the course, a short in-class presentation of a contemporary news source, a take-home exam, and a final research paper. Graduate students will also have two discussion classes over the course of the quarter outside of class time.

**Course Objectives:**

By the end of this course, students are expected to understand:

- The history of destruction of cultural heritage on the global scale and in the modern Middle East
- The history of the various wars and conflicts in the modern Middle East and their effect on the archaeology of these regions, as well as the modern, contemporary issues
- The politics of modern archaeology
- The politics of the legal and illegal antiquities trade
- The various reasons for and complications of the modern antiquity trade and how this relates to the looting of archaeological sites

**Course Format and Student Responsibilities:**

Class will meet twice a week. Each class is expected to be a discussion rather than a lecture by the instructor, so students are responsible for all readings before the start of

class and are expected to actively contribute. At times, students will be split into groups to further discuss the themes of the class. Each group will then present their collected ideas. We will also have individual student presentations during class time. As we will often discuss contemporary issues and themes, the class subject may change to reflect new developments in the region.

Each week, every student is required to consider and *thoughtfully* respond to one of two to three given discussion questions based on the weekly readings and lectures on the open discussion board on the class Canvas website, and then to interact with fellow students. Questions will be posted by Friday every week. This forum will allow students to contemplate the themes of the class and think of new questions of their own, while interacting with their fellow students. There are no wrong answers, but students are asked to give thought to their responses. Students may bring in their own experiences as they pertain to the subject or may pose a new question. Feel free to be creative, though please do write in complete sentences and use correct grammar. Discussions are to be submitted to Canvas site by noon each Wednesday. Late answers submitted before the start of class will be given half credit. No credit will be given to submissions after class.

Each student is responsible for *all* assigned readings before the start of class and must be prepared to discuss them. The discussion section of the course will utilize both a voluntary method of question and answers, as well as a Socratic one, where the instructor may choose who will answer the question.

In the second week of the quarter, on April 8, a short map and geography quiz will be given at the start of class. Understanding the geography of the Middle East is of great importance in order to follow the discussions in this course.

Students are required to find one contemporary reading on the subject of their choice, and present on the reading to the class. A sign-up sheet for presentations will be handed out during the first week of classes. Student must post the reading onto the course Canvas site at least two days before class, for other members of the class to see and discuss. The presentation will last between 5-10 minutes, and will be a critique of the reading, rather than just a simple summary. Students are expected to ask the class discussion questions during the presentation. If you like, you may make a small handout to give to the class.

In the 6<sup>th</sup> week of the quarter, on May 8, a midterm exam will be given in class, covering material from the first half of the quarter, focusing primarily on the historical aspects of the class.

A take-home essay exam will be given in the 9<sup>th</sup> week of the quarter. The exam will be handed out on May 29 and will be due by the start of class on Monday, June 3. Students will be given four short open-ended essay topics on various themes from the class and will be asked to choose three of the topics and write a short (~1 page) response to each.

Finally, students will be asked to write a final research paper, 5-7 pages in length for undergrads, and 10-15 pages for graduate students, on the topic of the student's choice. It must relate directly to the topics covered in class. All topics must be cleared by the instructor. Topics for the research paper will be due to the instructor by during Week 6, on May 6. Students are recommended to make an appointment with the instructor to go over their topic before then. The final paper is due by Friday June 7, at 11:59pm.

**Prerequisites:**

This course is open to all students interested in archaeology, cultural heritage, modern politics of the Middle East, or the trade of antiquities. No prior knowledge of these areas is necessary.

**Required Readings and Classes:**

Because the subject matter of this course is contemporary, few books are yet available. During the course of the quarter, we may change the topic of a class to discuss current events as they unfold. The readings from this course come therefore from a variety of journals, newspapers, and book chapters. All readings will be made available in .pdf form on the class Canvas website.

The assigned readings are to be completed by each student before the start of the class. Staying on top of the readings will maximize a student's learning experience and prepare them for our in-class discussions. It also allows the students to ask relevant questions during class. Readings are subject to change as determined by the instructor, with at least one week's notice.

Please arrive on time for class. It is rude and disrespectful to your fellow students as well as the instructor, to arrive after the start of class, interrupting lecture or discussion. Everyone here is an adult, so please be responsible for your own time management.

**Related/Useful Websites:**

- The ASOR Syrian Heritage Initiative:
  - <http://www.asor-syrianheritage.org/>
- Association for Protection of Syrian Archaeology:
  - <http://apsa2011.com/apsanew/>
- Saving Antiquities for Everyone:
  - <http://savingantiquities.org/>
- Syrian Heritage Archive Project
  - <http://www.smb.museum/en/museums-and-institutions/museum-fuer-islamische-kunst/research/erstellung-digitaler-kulturgueterregister-fuer-syrien.html>
- Trafficking Culture
  - <http://traffickingculture.org/>
- Endangered Archaeology of the Middle East and North Africa
  - <http://www.arch.ox.ac.uk/ea.html>
- Anonymous Swiss Collector
  - <http://anonymousswisscollector.com>
- UNESCO:
  - <http://en.unesco.org/>

**Respect and Expectations**

This course will cover a number of topics that may be of a difficult nature, as they relate to modern politics and suffering. It is essential to the success of this course for students and the instructor to be open and respectful of each one another. Disagreements

may arise, and discussion is both welcome and encouraged; however, disrespect will not be tolerated.

### Grading Policy

- Responses to Weekly Online Discussion 20%
- Map Quiz (April 8) 10%
- In-Class Midterm (May 6) 15%
- Individual In-Class Article Presentation 15%
- Take Home Final Exam (June 3) 20%
- Research Paper (June 7) 20%

### Grade Scale:

You can always track your grades throughout the quarter on the online grade book on Canvas. I encourage you to do so to gauge your progress in class. Please contact us as soon as possible if you suspect any errors.

| Letter | Number | Percentage | Letter | Number | Percentage | Letter | Number | Percentage |
|--------|--------|------------|--------|--------|------------|--------|--------|------------|
| A+     | 4.0    | >95%       | B-     | 2.8    | 83%        | C-     | 1.6    | 71%        |
| A      | 3.9    | 94%        | B-     | 2.7    | 82%        | C-     | 1.5    | 70%        |
| A-     | 3.8    | 93%        | B-     | 2.6    | 81%        | D+     | 1.4    | 69%        |
| A-     | 3.7    | 92%        | B-     | 2.5    | 80%        | D+     | 1.3    | 68%        |
| A-     | 3.6    | 91%        | C+     | 2.4    | 79%        | D+     | 1.2    | 67%        |
| A-     | 3.5    | 90%        | C+     | 2.3    | 78%        | D      | 1.1    | 66%        |
| B+     | 3.4    | 89%        | C+     | 2.2    | 77%        | D      | 1.0    | 65%        |
| B+     | 3.3    | 88%        | C      | 2.1    | 76%        | D      | 0.9    | 64%        |
| B+     | 3.2    | 87%        | C      | 2.0    | 75%        | D-     | 0.8    | 63%        |
| B      | 3.1    | 86%        | C      | 1.9    | 74%        | D-     | 0.7    | 60-62%     |
| B      | 3.0    | 85%        | C-     | 1.8    | 73%        | E      | 0.0    | <62 %      |
| B      | 2.9    | 84%        | C-     | 1.7    | 72%        |        |        |            |

### Technology in Class:

The use of laptops in class is allowed for note taking and for referencing class readings. Surfing the web, checking emails, checking Facebook, online shopping, etc. is prohibited. Such activity is disruptive to the individual, the instructor, and to the remainder of the class. However, I would highly encourage students to take notes in class by hand, as numerous studies have shown handwritten notes to be far more useful for students than typed notes.

If I do find a student using a laptop for any purpose other than note taking, the privilege of using the laptop in class will be revoked after one warning.

Please turn off your cellphones before coming to class; the use of cellphones is prohibited for any reason.

**Disability Resources for Students:**

If you need any type of accommodation, please contact the Office of Disability Resources for Students (<http://www.washington.edu/students/drs>). I am happy to work with Disability Resources to provide appropriate accommodation.

**Self-Care**

It is important that we take care of ourselves inside and outside of class by learning how to care for our body, mind, and spirit. Toward that end, there are many different kinds of support services on campus, including the Counseling Center, Hall Health, and the IMA. If you are concerned about yourself or a friend who is struggling, Safecampus, at [1-800-685-7233](tel:1-800-685-7233), is a very helpful resources to learn more about how to access campus-based support services. Also, if you ever need someone to talk to, I always make myself available to students as best I can. Please feel free to email me or come by my office.

**Make-Up Policies:**

Make-ups for the midterm, presentations or final paper will not be permitted except in the case of emergencies or medical reasons, unless previously cleared with the instructor. Please let me know if there is a problem ahead of time: it is far easier for me to grant extensions or make-ups if I am informed before the fact.

Please be on time to class, and if for any reason you must leave early, please leave quietly and do not disrupt the other students on your way out. No talking during class, except during discussion periods. However, always feel free to ask the instructor a question at any point during class. If you have a question, chances are five other students have a similar question, please speak up.

**Academic Honesty:**

Students are expected to treat their fellow classmates and instructors with honesty and respect throughout the course. All exam answers and posters must reflect original work. No form of cheating will be tolerated. The following link has information on academic honesty, plagiarism, and consequences:

<http://www.washington.edu/uaa/gateway/advising/help/academichonesty.php>

Student are expected to adhere to the University of Washington Code of Student Conduct which can be found at the following link:

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=478-120>

The University of Washington is committed to fostering an environment where the free exchange of ideas is an integral part of the academic learning environment. Disruption of classroom discussions can prohibit other students from fully engaging and participating. Any student causing disruption may be asked to leave any class session, and, depending on the severity and frequency of that behavior, an incident report may be filled with Community Standards and Student Conduct. As a condition of enrollment, all students assume responsibility to observe standards of conduct that will contribute to the pursuit of academic goals and to the welfare of the academic community. For more detailed information on these standards, please visit: <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=478-120>.

## Course Outline

### Week 1: Introduction to the Cultural Heritage Sites of the Middle East

#### April 1: Introduction to the Course and Themes; Geography

*Required Readings:*

None

#### April 3 A Short History of Archaeology in the Middle East

*Required Readings:*

- D.T. Potts, 2012 *A Companion to the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East Volume 1* (Wiley Blackwell) Chapter 2 “Antiquarianism, Copying, Collecting” and Chapter 3 “Early Excavations (pre-1914)” pages 27-69

### Week 2: A Global History of Destruction

#### April 8: Mesopotamia and the Destruction (and Adulation) of the Past

Map Quiz at Start of Class

*Required Readings:*

- Z. Bahrani 1995 “Assault and Abduction: The Fate of the Royal Image in the Ancient Near East” *Art History* 18:3, pages 363-382
- C. Nylander, 1998: “The Mutilated Image: “We” and “They” in History and Prehistory.” *Kingl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien Konferenser* 40 (Stockholm), pages 235-251

#### April 10: Empire and Erasure: Rome and Carthage, Rome and the Fall of Paganism

*Required Readings:*

- E. Sauer 2003, *The Archaeology of Religious Hatred in the Roman and Early Medieval World*, (Stroud & Charleston), “Preface” pages 8-22
- R. T. Ridley 1986 “To Be Taken with a Pinch of Salt: The Destruction of Carthage” *Classical Philology*, 81:2, pages 140-146

### Week 3: The Middle East in the Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century

#### April 15: The Destruction of Antiquities and Museums in the Gulf Wars (1991-2003)

*Required Readings:*

- L. Rothfield, 2009 *The Rape of Mesopotamia: Behind the Looting of the Iraq Museum*, (University of Chicago Press), Chapter 1: “Cultural Heritage Protection in Iraq Before 2003,” pages 4-20, and Chapter 5 “A Punctual Disaster: The Looting of the National Museum of Iraq” pages 81-100

### **April 17: Provenience and Museums: The Problems of Repatriation and Ownership**

Class Debate on Antiquity and Ownership. Individual Readings Will Be Assigned from the Two Books Below, Posted on Canvas

*Required Readings:*

- C. Renfrew 2000, *Loot, Legitimacy and Ownership* (London: Gerald Duckworth and Co., Ltd), Chapters 1-3, pages 15-51
- E. Robson, L. Treadwell, C. Gosden 2006 (Oxbow Books), *Who Owns Objects? The Ethics and Politics of Collecting Cultural Artefacts*

### **Week 4: The Ethics of the Global Antiquities Market**

#### **April 22: Museums and Modern Antiquity Laws in a Global Perspective**

*Required Readings:*

- T. Cornwell 2016 “Almost 70% of Smuggled Objects Seized in Syria and Lebanon are Fakes, Antiquities Chief Says” *The Art Newspaper*, August 24, 2016  
<http://theartnewspaper.com/news/almost-70-of-smuggled-objects-seized-in-syria-and-lebanon-are-fakes-antiquities-chief-says/>
- E. Thompson, 2016 “Why People Collect Art” *Aeon*, August 23, 2016:  
<https://aeon.co/essays/what-drives-art-collectors-to-buy-and-display-their-finds>
- A. Toodehfallah 2018 “A French Report on Repatriating African Cultural Heritage Stirs the Pot”  
<https://hyperallergic.com/474573/a-french-report-on-repatriating-african-cultural-heritage-stirs-the-pot/>

#### **April 24: Understanding the Legal and Illegal Antiquities Trade in the Middle East**

Guest Speaker: Professor Morag Kersel, DePaul University, Department of Anthropology

*Required Readings:*

- M. Kersel 2010 “The Changing Legal Landscape for Middle Eastern Archaeology in the Colonial Era, 1800-1930” *Pioneers to the Past: American archaeologists in the Middle East 1919-1920*, G. Embering, ed. (Chicago: The Oriental Institute Museum Publications), pages 85-90
- M. Kersel 2019 “Itinerant Objects: The Legal Lives of Levantine Artifacts”

### **Week 5: Syria, Iraq and the Rise of Daesh**

#### **April 29: Daesh and The Ideology of Destruction**

*Required Readings:*

- S. Shahab and B. Isakhan, 2018 “The Ritualization of Heritage Destruction Under the Islamic State” *Journal of Social Anthropology*, pages 1-22

- G. Wood, “What ISIS Really Wants, *The Atlantic*, March 2015  
<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/03/what-isis-really-wants/384980/>
- See also: <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2015/09/150901-isis-destruction-looting-ancient-sites-iraq-syria-archaeology/>

**May 1: Analyzing Conflict Damage to Cultural Heritage from Above**  
 Guest Speaker: Dr. Susan Penacho, American Society of Oriental Research  
*Required Readings:* TBD

## **Week 6: The State of Archaeology in Afghanistan**

**May 6 – Afghani Archaeology in the 21<sup>st</sup> century**  
 Paper Topics Due by the Start of Class  
 Guest Speaker: Anthony Lauricella, C.A.M.E.L., Oriental Institute, University of Chicago  
*Required Readings:*

- E. Hammer, R. Seifried, K. Franklin, and A. Lauricella. "Remote Assessments of the Archaeological Heritage Situation in Afghanistan." *Journal of Cultural Heritage* 33 (2018): 125-144.
- K. Franklin, and E. Hammer. "Untangling Palimpsest Landscapes in Conflict Zones: A “Remote Survey” in Spin Boldak, Southeast Afghanistan." *Journal of Field Archaeology* 43, no. 1 (2018): 58-73.

### **May 8: In-Class Midterm**

## **Week 7: Looting in the Post-Arab Spring Middle East**

**May 13: Why Loot? Local, Global and Destructive Looting Practices in a Post-Daesh World**  
*Required Readings:*

- C. Renfrew 2000 *Loot, Legitimacy and Ownership: The Ethical Crisis in Archaeology* (Duckworth), Chapter 5: Ineffective Safeguards and Evolving Moralities,” pages 65-80
- L.J. Borodkin 1995 “The Economics of Antiquities Looting and a Proposed Legal Alternative” *Columbia Law Review* 95:2, pages 377-417

**May 15: The Arab Spring and Its Effects on Egyptian Antiquities**  
*Required Readings:*

- M. Hanna 2013 “What Has Happened to Egyptian Heritage After the 2011 Unfinished Revolution?” *Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology & Heritage Studies* 1:4, pages 371-375
- S. Ikram 2013 “Cultural Heritage in Times of Crisis: The View from Egypt” *Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology & Heritage Studies* 1:4, pages 366-371

- S. Parcak 2015 “Archaeological Looting in Egypt: A Geospatial View” *Near Eastern Archaeology* 78:3, pages 196-203
- R. Galal “For a Good Time, Call Egypt’s Antiquities Ministry” *Al Monitor*, August 31, 2016  
<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/08/egypt-rent-archaeological-sites-weddings-parties-tourism.html>

## **Week 8: Global Perspectives on Preservation of the Past**

### **May 20: What is the Future for Museums?**

Guest Speaker: Laura Phillips, Burke Museum

*Required Readings:*

- A. Iyer 2018 “Alternative Museum Tours Explore Colonial Loot, Biased Narratives”  
<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/alternative-museum-tours-explore-colonial-loot-biased-narratives-180915213140176.html>
- J.A. Tucker 2017 “The Attack on Hobby Lobby is Incoherent and Unjust”  
<https://fee.org/articles/the-attack-on-hobby-lobby-is-incoherent-and-unjust/>
- M. Press 2018 “An Illegal Archaeological Dig in the West Bank Raises Questions About the Museum of the Bible”  
<https://hyperallergic.com/447909/an-illegal-archeological-dig-in-the-west-bank-raises-questions-about-the-museum-of-the-bible/>

### **May 22: State Sponsored Destruction: The Complicated Case of Archaeology in Saudi Arabia**

- K. Fahim 2018 “Unlocking a Kingdom’s Long-Hidden Treasures”  
[https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/world/wp/2019/01/14/feature/unlocking-a-kingdoms-long-hidden-treasures/?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.babdadfa9a2b](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/world/wp/2019/01/14/feature/unlocking-a-kingdoms-long-hidden-treasures/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.babdadfa9a2b)
- S. Schwartz 2016 “Saudis Announce A Turn Away from Wahhabi Cultural Vandalism” *Middle East Forum* July 19, 2016:  
<http://www.meforum.org/6120/saudis-turn-away-from-wahhabi-cultural-vandalism>

## **Week 9: Beyond the Middle East**

### **May 27: No Class- Memorial Day**

### **May 29: Destruction and Looting of Sites Outside of the Middle East**

Take Home Exam Handed Out

*Required Readings:*

- M. Weaver 2019 “Cadbury Pulls Ad Campaign that ‘Advocates Looting’”  
<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/mar/18/cadbury-vows-to-change-freddo-campaign-that-advocates-looting-metal->

[detectors?fbclid=IwAR3cPokIN0yIDIIGM4fK6xcns3tP5l28KVOLMczzBjyzBWcw\\_xWdrii29GE](https://www.facebook.com/IwAR3cPokIN0yIDIIGM4fK6xcns3tP5l28KVOLMczzBjyzBWcw_xWdrii29GE)

- S. Starr 2019 “Kathmandu Offers Front-Row Seat to History Being Rebuilt”  
[https://www.ozy.com/good-sht/kathmandu-offers-front-row-seat-to-history-being-rebuilt/91340?fbclid=IwAR1eG3cU2kds8\\_Lz1qLESZCvQxDQsjMmw\\_VysQIYTtT6kYZRdgaP8bBfqWw](https://www.ozy.com/good-sht/kathmandu-offers-front-row-seat-to-history-being-rebuilt/91340?fbclid=IwAR1eG3cU2kds8_Lz1qLESZCvQxDQsjMmw_VysQIYTtT6kYZRdgaP8bBfqWw)
- The Kennewick Man/Ancient One:  
<http://www.burkemuseum.org/blog/kennewick-man-ancient-one>

## **Week 10: Our Present and Our Future**

### **June 3: State of the Field: Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Issues of Representation in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Archaeology**

Take Home Exam Due

*Required Readings:*

- Clark and A. Grant 2015 “Sexuality and Danger in the Field: Starting an Uncomfortable Conversation” *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford: Special issue on Sexual Harassment in the Field*, vol. 7, no. 1, pages 1-14
- S. Krishnan 2015 “Dispatches from a ‘Rogue’ Ethnographer: Exploring Homophobia and Queer Visibility in the Field” *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford: Special issue on Sexual Harassment in the Field*, vol. 7, no. 1, pages 64-79
- D. Padilla Peralta 2019 “Some Thoughts on AIA-SCS 2019”  
<https://medium.com/@danelpadillaperalta/some-thoughts-on-aia-scs-2019-d6a480a1812a>

### **June 5: Where Do We Go from Here?**

*Required Readings:*

- N. A. Munawar 2017 “Reconstructing Cultural Heritage in Conflict Zones: Should Palmyra Be Rebuilt” *EX NOVO Journal of Archaeology* Vol. 2, pages 33-48
- S.E. Bond “Pseudoarchaeology and the Racism Behind Ancient Aliens”  
<https://hyperallergic.com/470795/pseudoarchaeology-and-the-racism-behind-ancient-aliens/?fbclid=IwAR0irK7dShyvU-Dt2X0pgDen2E6Abl5msVrU3l5tusllk8YjxcuXvo1QbA>

**Final Paper Due by Friday, June 7 by 11:59 pm.**