

Fulfills

300-Levels

Field Study: Marking the Dead

UHON 301-025 W 1:00-3:30 SHC 16



A&S
Group 4

Social &
Behavioral
Science

This course is designed to get students out of the classroom and into the field to conduct first-hand, qualitative research into the practice of culture. Students will have seminar discussions about, and undertake readings into, the transmission of culture across time. But their primary activity will be to observe and participate in culture as it unfolds.

The past is fundamental to the formulation of culture. What people do, what they believe, and how they interact is often based on using the past to define the present and attempting to carry the present into the future. This is especially apparent in the ways in which people mark, commemorate, and actively remember the dead. Students in this course will study and become participant observers in the links made between generations of New Mexicans. They will study how New Mexicans mark the dead in a variety of circumstances, including: first-hand observations of roadside descansos and ghost bikes that commemorate pedestrians and bicyclists killed by motorists; analysis of the way we remember and forget the heroics of John Braden; examination of how the crash of TWA Flight 260 is marked in the Sandia Mountains; and study of, and participation in, the South Valley's Dia de Los Muertos Parade.

The course will culminate in a presentation of each student's research. Students will also be aided and encouraged to submit their findings for presentation at the New Mexico Historic Preservation Alliance's annual conference in the Spring of 2012.

Readings

Skulls to the Living, Bread to the Dead: The Day of the Dead in Mexico and Beyond by Stanley Brandes

Shadowed Ground: America's Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy by Kenneth E. Foote

Crash of TWA Flight 260 by Charles Williams

Required readings include a reader (available from UNM's eReserves) with selections about cemeteries, archaeology, qualitative research, and landscape.

Requirements

Students are required to be active in both seminar discussions and in-class field trips across the city. There will also be multiple out-of-class field trips (both guided and at the student's own leisure) to sites where students will participate and record the process of marking the dead. The course will culminate in a presentation of individual research. Students will also be aided and encouraged to submit their findings for presentation at the New Mexico Historic Preservation Alliance's annual conference in the Spring of 2012. There is a required \$45 course fee to cover the costs of field trips and supplies.

About the Instructor

Troy Lovata is a tenured, Associate Professor in the University Honors Program. His courses explore our cultural relationship with the world around us and examine our connections to the past. Dr. Lovata holds a Doctorate in anthropology, with a focus on archaeology, from the University of Texas.