



MANAGING HERITAGE DISSONANCE IN CONFLICT ZONES: PAST & PRESENT IN SARAJEVO, BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA

Course ID: HIS 489

July 5-July 19, 2026

Academic Credits: 4 Semester Credit Units (Equivalent to 6 Quarter Units)

School of Record: Culver Stockton College

DIRECTORS:

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This program engages students with heritage of modern ethnic conflict and ethnic cleansing – not an easy subject. The program critically examines narratives produced by the different ethnic groups in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as they memorialized the outcome of the 1990's Yugoslav wars. Emotions are still strong, and the Dayton Peace Agreement that ended the fighting failed to eliminate ethnic tensions. This program is not for the faint of heart. While fascinating and challenging, please carefully consider if this program is a good fit for you – we do not have grief counselors on site or post program.

This program provides accommodation and breakfast only. Students are responsible for their own lunch and dinners.

INTRODUCTION

As the Soviet Union collapsed, the former Yugoslav Federal Republic descended into vicious ethnic wars. The worst, with the largest number of casualties and atrocities, was the Bosnian war (1992-1995). Three ethnic groups – Croats, Serbs and Bosniaks (Bosnians from Muslim heritage) – fought each other on multiple fronts. After NATO bombing & direct intervention began in mid-1995, all parties to the conflict attended and signed the Dayton Peace Agreement. The agreement ended the fighting and active killings but not ethnic grievances. This program explores how societies confront difficult histories through heritage, using Bosnia and Herzegovina as a relevant case study.

Set in Sarajevo and Mostar, this program focuses on post-conflict memory, museum work, and public history in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Students will engage directly with local communities, curators, and heritage professionals to better understand how narratives of war, loss, and recovery are shaped, challenged, and remembered.

In Sarajevo, the focus is on the siege and its lasting imprint on the city. Students will visit relevant sites across the city, visit relevant museums and engage in deep discussions about memorialization and its tangible and intangible symbols. In Mostar, students will examine the destruction and reconstruction of the Old Bridge, exploring questions related to symbolism, authenticity, and international involvement in heritage preservation.

The program includes lectures, site visits, group work, and reflective discussion. It encourages students to think critically about the ethics of interpretation and representation—skills essential for careers in archaeology, curation, public history, or cultural policy anywhere in the world. Rather than offering simple answers, this program asks students to listen closely, think carefully, and consider heritage as both a professional challenge and a human responsibility.

Through hands-on learning and close collaboration with local partners, the program creates space for thoughtful, respectful, and globally relevant conversations about the past. Ethnic conflicts are not unique to Bosnia and heritage management must always take into account the different views, interests and memories of different stakeholders whenever and however narratives of the past are presented to the public.

IMPORTANT DISCLAIMER

The Anthropocene Research Center was established to support field training in a range of sciences at sites within the U.S. & across the world. Traveling and conducting field work involves risk. Students interested in participating in any ARC program must weigh the potential risk against the value of education provided by the program of their choosing.

Risk is inherent in everything we do, and the ARC takes risks seriously. A committee of leading scholars review each field school location prior to approval. Once a program is accepted, the ARC continually monitors conditions at the program's site and so we can provide an experience that is as safe as possible.

The ARC does not provide trip or travel cancellation insurance. Students are encouraged to explore such insurance policies on their own. Post Covid 19, most basic policies do not cover trip cancellation due to pandemics. If you wish to purchase an insurance policy that covers such contingencies, explore Cancel for Any Reason (CFAR) plans. [Insuremytrip.com](https://www.insuremytrip.com), [Squaremouth.com](https://www.squaremouth.com) or [Travelguard.com](https://www.travelguard.com) are possible websites where students may explore different insurance policies.

Students should be aware that conditions in the field are different than those experienced at home, dorms or college towns. Students will be exposed to the elements, live in rustic accommodation, and expect to engage in daily physical activity.

We do our best to follow schedule and activities as outlined in this syllabus. Yet local permitting agencies, political, environmental, personal, and/or weather conditions may force changes. This syllabus, therefore, is only a general commitment. Students should allow flexibility and adaptability as research work is frequently subject to modification.

All students must consult medical professionals to ensure they are fit to participate in an ARC field program. ARC is not qualified to provide medical advice. For all other concerns, please consult with ARC staff members or program director(s) – as appropriate.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The objective of this program is to equip students with critical tools to understand how dissonant heritage is interpreted, curated, and contested in post-conflict societies. The course emphasizes ethical engagement with difficult histories, fosters interdisciplinary thinking, and encourages students to reflect on their own roles as future heritage professionals, curators, or scholars. Students will explore the relationship between memory, space, and narrative through immersive, site-based learning in Sarajevo and Mostar.

To achieve these objectives, the course has three primary goals:

1. Introduce students to practical methods of heritage interpretation and analysis, including site observation, exhibition critique, and creative curatorial design.
2. Engage students with the intellectual and ethical challenges of dissonant heritage, including the politics of memorialization, the framing of trauma, and the tensions between local narratives and international frameworks; and
3. Provide students with a global and comparative perspective, encouraging them to apply what they learn in Bosnia and Herzegovina to heritage contexts in their own countries.

The course will take place across two key sites in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Sarajevo and Mostar, both of which offer powerful case studies in how societies navigate the aftermath of conflict through heritage and public history.

Students will participate in the following learning and research activities:

- **Site Interpretation:** Students will conduct guided and independent observation of memorial landscapes, such as Sniper Alley, the Sarajevo Tunnel, and the reconstructed Old Bridge in Mostar.
- **Museum Work:** Students will collaborate with curators at the History Museum of Bosnia and the Museum of the Old Bridge to critically analyze exhibitions, interpret objects, and propose alternative narrative strategies.
- **Workshops & Discussion:** Structured discussions and workshops will introduce students to key theoretical frameworks and challenge them to engage with local voices, ethical dilemmas, and contested histories.
- **Creative Project Development:** Students will design original curatorial concepts or interpretive materials (e.g., exhibition panels or installations) as a form of applied learning and critical reflection.
- **Reflection & Synthesis:** Students will participate in reflection sessions to synthesize their learning, compare global cases, and develop professional strategies for working with difficult heritage in the future.

LEARNT SKILLS

We are aware and strongly support students who seek employment in the Cultural Resource Management sector – whether with private CRM companies or in government compliance agencies. CRM employers seek to understand the skills students learn at the field school, so listing (and ranking) those should help students secure CRM employment. To that end, we are listing all the skills students will learn during this program. At the end of the field school, students will get a Certificate of Completion, where each skill will be ranked at one of three levels:

- ✓ **Basic:** Can perform the skill/task with some supervision.
- ✓ **Competent:** Can perform the skill/task without any supervision.
- ✓ **Advanced:** Can perform the skill/task and teach others how to do it.

Students will be trained in the following skills:

Skill	Skill Definition
Heritage Site Observation	Ability to conduct structured, analytical observation of memorial landscapes and heritage sites, attending to physical layout, symbolism, and context.
Ethical Heritage Engagement	Ability to recognize and navigate ethical dilemmas in post-conflict memory work, including respectful engagement with trauma, community narratives, and silences.
Exhibition Design	Ability to critically analyze museum exhibitions, identifying curatorial choices, interpretive strategies, and representational biases.
Exhibition Design	Ability to design and present creative interpretive materials (e.g., panels, posters, digital displays) that communicate heritage themes ethically and effectively.
Creative Interpretation	Ability to apply creative methods (e.g., speculative curation, role-based design) to represent difficult histories in museum or site-based contexts.
Field Documentation	Ability to document research through photography, note-taking, and mapping while maintaining respect for site significance and visitor protocols.
Policy Application	Ability to apply international heritage frameworks (e.g., UNESCO, ICOM, ICCROM) to specific case studies and assess their local relevance and limitations.
Academic & Public Presentation	Ability to communicate research findings and creative interpretations clearly to academic peers and heritage professionals, adapting tone and format to the audience.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1

Time	Activity	Readings
Sunday 4:00-6:00pm	Arrival Dinner	
Monday 9:00-12:30am	Welcome & Introduction to the summer school Lecture: <i>"What is Dissonant Heritage?"</i>	
Monday 2:00-6:00pm	Lecture: <i>Global Authorized Heritage Discourse vs Heritage Dissonance</i> Discussion: How do international legal frameworks silence heritage dissonance?	
Tuesday 9:00-12:30am	Guided walk with local expert: Sniper Alley, Markale Market, Sarajevo Roses Observation task: Students take notes/photos of the memorial	
Tuesday 2:00-6:00pm	Lecture: Postwar reconstruction – Choices and challenges Discussion with local expert	
Wednesday 9:00-12:30am	Guided tour: <i>Besieged Sarajevo exhibition</i> Talk with the museum director/curator on curatorial choices	

Wednesday 2:00-6:00pm	Group work with museum curator: Analyze one object/section from the exhibition - interpret the narrative Assignment: Group presentation prep for Day 5	
Thursday 9:00-12:30am	Lecture: " <i>Sarajevo and the World - Dissonant Heritage Across Contexts</i> " Discussion: "Is Dissonance Universal?"	
Thursday 2:00-6:00pm	Workshop: <i>Museums in Post-Conflict Societies</i> Open discussion with invited guest: memory scholar or local activist	
Friday 9:00-12:30am	Group presentations: <i>Interpreting the Exhibition</i> — critique and alternatives Feedback from faculty and museum professionals	
Friday 2:00-6:00pm	Wrap-up Reflection (<i>What has Sarajevo taught you about the challenges of memory-making worldwide?</i>)	
Saturday 9:00-11am	Visit to Tunnel of Salvation Travel prep and logistics briefing	
Sunday	Transfer to Mostar	

Week 2

Time	Activity	Readings
Monday 9:00-12:30am	Introductory lecture: " <i>Mostar, the Old Bridge, and UNESCO Narratives</i> " Walk across and around Old Bridge and Old Town - unstructured observation	
Monday 2:00-6:00pm	Talk with the local expert about the reconstruction project Group discussion: symbolism, materiality, authenticity	
Tuesday 9:00-12:30am	Lecture: " <i>Rebuilding Heritage: UNESCO, ICCROM, and International Memory Politics</i> " Document workshop: analyze UNESCO reports and guidelines	
Tuesday 2:00-6:00pm	Meeting and discussion with local stakeholders: Municipal heritage officer, NGO worker, local students	
Wednesday 9:00-12:30am	Guided tour around the museum with the curator Reflective discussion on the museum and its exhibition	
Wednesday 2:00-6:00pm	Assignment: Group presentation prep for Day 5	
Thursday 9:00-12:30am	Workshop: " <i>If You Were the Curator...</i> " — Students design their part of the museum exhibition	

Thursday 2:00-6:00pm	Project development: groups work on a poster/panel/installation concept Faculty & peer feedback sessions	
Friday 9:00-12:30am	Final group presentations: <i>Interpreting the Bridge - New Narratives</i> Feedback and discussion with invited local and international professionals	
Friday 2:00-6:00pm	Program reflection circle Certificate ceremony and closing remarks	
Saturday 9:00-11am	Visit to Počitelj – example of postwar reconstruction Transfer to Sarajevo	
Sunday:	Departure day	

** Course schedule may be subject to change at the director's discretion based on weather conditions or other limiting factors*

TYPICAL WORKDAY*

Time	Activity
9:00 am	Start of the session
10:30 am-10:45	Coffee break
10:45 am-12:30 pm	Second part of the session
12:30-2.00 pm	Lunch break
2:00-3.30 pm	Third part of the session
3:30-3:45 pm	Afternoon break
3:45-6:00 pm	Fourth part of the session

** Schedule might vary on the days when visits to the sites or guests' lectures and discussions are planned*

ACADEMIC GRADING MATRIX

Students will be graded based on their work as follows.

- Attendance and participation - 10%
- Engagement and attitude - 30 %
- Group work 1 – 30%
- Group work 2 – 30%

PREREQUISITES

None. There are no prerequisites for this field school, which makes it accessible to all interested students and heritage professionals. This interdisciplinary program is designed to integrate knowledge from various aspects of heritage studies and management, allowing students from diverse backgrounds to find valuable insights and applications. Whether you come from an archaeological, architectural, legal or social science background, the program offers opportunities to enrich your understanding and skills across complex heritage management practices.

PROGRAM ETIQUETTE

No smoking or vaping is permitted in the lecturing room. Cell phone use is not allowed during lectures but is welcomed for site visits as a tool for site recording, taking notes and photos. Students are expected to attend lectures and site visits on time. Students are invited to respect local culture and customs.

TRAVEL & MEETING POINT/TIME

We suggest you hold purchasing your airline ticket until six (6) weeks prior to the departure date. Natural disasters, political changes, weather conditions and a range of other factors may require the cancellation of a program. The ARC typically takes a close look at local conditions 6-7 weeks prior to the beginning of the program and makes a Go/No Go decision by then. Such a time frame still allows for the purchase of deeply discounted airline tickets while protecting students from potential loss of airline ticket costs if ARC is forced to cancel a program.

Students will be met on the first day of the program by the Tourist Info Center, at the arrivals area of Terminal B of Sarajevo airport (SJJ) at 5:00 pm on Sunday. From that meeting point, staff will take students to the program's accommodation.



Figure 1: Exterior of Sarajevo international airport.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The required attendance for the successful completion of the field school is 85% of the course hours. Absences for medical or other serious personal reasons will be excused, and students who miss hours for these reasons will be given an opportunity to catch up on the field school study plan through additional readings, homework, or tutorials with program staff members.

EQUIPMENT LIST

Students should come equipped with:

- Laptop
- Notebook and pen
- Sturdy shoes (for site visits)
- Wide-brim hat (for sun)
- Sunglasses
- Backpack
- A converter to EU-type electricity wall plug
- All medication needed for the 2 weeks

MEALS & ACCOMMODATIONS

In Sarajevo, students will be housed in the Hotel Holiday in twin rooms (<https://www.hoteleuropegroup.ba/en/holiday>). Breakfast is included in the hotel accommodation.

In Mostar, students will be accommodated in the Student Centre Mostar (page only in local language: <https://www.scm.ba/>) in twin rooms with breakfast included.

This program does not provide lunch or dinner for students. Sarajevo and Mostar are major cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and there are restaurants and street food stalls for every budget. Grocery stores are plentiful, and students can store their food in a fridge in their room (only for Mostar accommodation).

VISA REQUIREMENTS

Citizens of the United States of America are exempted from the visa requirements when entering, exiting or travelling through Bosnia and Herzegovina for up to 90 days.

Citizens of other countries are asked to check the Bosnia & Herzegovina embassy website page at their home country for specific visa requirements.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

International dialing code: Bosnia and Herzegovina's international phone code is +387

Money/Banks/Credit Cards: The monetary unit of Bosnia and Herzegovina is the “convertible mark” (KM). Convertible mark is divided into a hundred of “fenings” (F). Even though credit and debit cards are accepted in hotels, restaurants and shops, cash payments still make up most transactions (especially in taxis, cafes and bars). We advise students to always have some cash with them.

Measure units: degree Celsius (°C), meter (m.), gram (gr.), liter (l).

ACADEMIC CREDITS & TRANSCRIPT

Attending students will be awarded 4 semester credit units (equivalent to 6 quarter credit units). Students will receive a letter grade for attending this field school based on the assessment matrix (above). This program provides a minimum of 80 direct instructional hours. Students are encouraged to discuss the transferability of credit units with faculty and the registrar at their home institutions prior to attending this program.

Students will be able to access their transcripts through our School of Record – Culver-Stockton College. C-SC has authorized the National Student Clearinghouse to provide enrollment and degree verification (at <https://tsorder.studentclearinghouse.org/school/select>). Upon completion of a program, students will get an email from C-SC with a student ID that may be used to retrieve transcripts. The first set of transcripts will be provided at no cost; additional transcripts may require payment. If you have questions about ordering a transcript, contact the C-SC office of the registrar at registrar@culver.edu.

REQUIRED READINGS

Nora, P. (1989). Between memory and history: Les lieux de mémoire. *representations*, 7-24.

Kamber, Marija, Theofanis Karafotias & Theodora Tsitoura. (2016). Dark heritage tourism and the Sarajevo siege. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 4(3), 255–269.

Kisić, V. (2016). Governing heritage dissonance. *Promises and realities of selected cultural policies*. (Chapter 2)

Hadžimuhamedović, A. (2018). Culture-based urban resilience: post-war recovery of Sarajevo. *The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science of the Netherlands, through the UNESCO Funds-in-Trust Project to harness reconciliation through the recovery of cultural heritage*

Armaly, M., Blasi, C., & Hannah, L. (2004). Stari Most: rebuilding more than a historic bridge in Mostar. *Museum International*, 56(4), 6–17.

RECOMMENDED READINGS

Smith, L. (2006). *Uses of heritage*. Routledge

Harrison, R. (2010). *Understanding the Politics of Heritage*. Manchester University Press in Association with the Open University.