

Fall 2022

TR 3:30-4:50 pm



Rebecca Zorach

101-6 First-Year Seminar

Problematic Monuments

Over the centuries, individuals and societies have often made the decision to tear down monuments to past historical figures who committed reprehensible acts or who symbolize great injustices. When, in recent years, people cast critical attention on statues of Confederate generals, they participated in a long history of conflict over monuments. In this course we study general issues around monuments but focus specifically on monuments in Chicago: those that arguably represent historical violence and injustice; those that attempt to redress wrongs; those that do not yet exist but should. We also look at how contemporary artists have intervened in the very definition of what a monument is or can be, using different tactics (not necessarily always statues) to assert their claims. How can contemporary art represent history? How can we engage in debate about the ethical and political issues involved? By engaging with readings and multiple site visits, we will explore how to research, write about, discuss, and present the history, politics, and visual and material characteristics of works of art situated in public space. We will also explore the visual traces of African American, Native American, and women's history (and their intersections) in the city.

Required Textbooks: NA

Assessments: attendance, participation, group projects, group work, final project, papers, readings, writing assignments

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