

# Getty Consortium Seminar (Winter 2019)

An accredited seminar at the Getty Research Institute for graduate students at the University of California, Irvine; the University of California, Los Angeles; the University of California, Riverside; the University of California, San Diego; the University of California, Santa Barbara; and the University of Southern California.

## Monumentality and Its Discontents

Offered by Edward Dimendberg  
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Getty Research Institute  
Fridays, 1:00 p.m.–6:00 p.m.  
Orientation: Friday, November 30, 2018  
Seminars: January 11, 18, 25, February 1, 8, 22, March 1, 8, 2019

Difficult as it may be to imagine human societies without art, it may be even harder to imagine one without monuments. If the connections among monumentality, empires, conquest, and national and collective identities are well established, the viability and potential gains of a world without monuments are much less certain. The aspiration to realize non-monumental forms and anti-monuments is well entrenched in modern consciousness. Yet the logic of monumentality remains obstinate, and escaping its force is easier to theorize than to accomplish.

Monumentality, which is often, if simplistically, understood to mean large-scale, cannot be easily defined. Responding to divergent political, religious, historical, cultural, architectural, urban, and aesthetic imperatives, monumentality adopts myriad guises, yet can be nonetheless studied across time periods and cultures. Consulting a range of examples, from antiquity to modernity and contemporary practice, this seminar will explore monumentality in visual art, architecture, urbanism, film, literature, and philosophy. It will consider the role of monuments in facilitating memory and commemoration.

The impetus to create overreaching monuments and to destroy them—encapsulated in the cautionary tale of the Tower of Babel—will be considered in diverse time periods and cultures. Highways, waterworks, or bridges will be approached as works of infrastructure whose functional character and engineering necessitate specific methodologies of analysis. We will ask if monuments can be temporary, immaterial, conceptual, or portable, and whether visual monuments can be supplemented or replaced by monuments that elicit other types of sensory experience.

Particular emphasis will be placed on cities—arguably, the largest and most complex monuments—and the relations between monumentality and urbanity. Several field trips to local sites of urban and architectural interest will enable Los Angeles to function as a laboratory for testing the theories and concepts presented in the seminar readings, which are selected from multiple fields. Drawing on the expertise of scholars at the Getty Research Institute and its rich collections, the seminar will provide students with an opportunity to challenge their preconceptions and advance their investigations.



Leonard Nadel (American, 1916–90), photograph of the Pueblo del Rio Administration Building, Los Angeles, 1947–48. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 2002.M.42. Image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program.

To apply to participate in this seminar, please submit the following:

- 1) Personal information**  
Name, home address and phone number, campus address and phone number, e-mail address
- 2) Graduate transcript**  
(not required for students in their first term)
- 3) Statement of interest**  
No longer than one page (double-spaced) about your reasons for wanting to participate in this seminar
- 4) Reference**  
A brief recommendation (a paragraph is sufficient) from a faculty member who is familiar with your work, sent by e-mail to the address below

All application materials should be sent to the Getty Research Institute by October 26, 2018.

E-mail materials to: Thisbe Gensler ([tgensler@getty.edu](mailto:tgensler@getty.edu))

Questions about course content may be directed to Edward Dimendberg at [Ed1@uci.edu](mailto:Ed1@uci.edu)