



# Exchange programme Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam - Exchange programme Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam - 2024-2025

## Exchange

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam offers many English-taught courses in a variety of subjects, ranging from arts & culture and social sciences, neurosciences and computer science, to economics and business administration.

The International Office is responsible for course approval and course registration for exchange students. For details about course registration, requirements, credits, semesters and so on, please [visit the exchange programmes webpages](#).

# Reading American Monuments: From the Puritans to Black Lives Matter

Course Code	L_ELBAALG003
Credits	6
Period	P1
Course Level	100
Language Of Tuition	English
Faculty	Faculty of Humanities
Course Coordinator	prof. dr. D.M. Oostdijk
Examiner	prof. dr. D.M. Oostdijk
Teaching Staff	prof. dr. D.M. Oostdijk
Teaching method(s)	Lecture, Seminar

## Course Objective

In this course students learn to study the United States from multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary angles. This course is thematically organized, with a focus on monuments and memorialization in the city of Washington D.C., the capital of the United States, and beyond. Yet it also covers the development of American culture in a chronological way. Students learn how to close read a monument by paying attention to its physical features, but also how to read a monument symbolically, and how its meaning may shift over time.

## Course Content

American monuments reflect but also distort American history. In this course, we will study an array of historical and contemporary monuments that promote certain American myths, such as the Promised Land, the Self-Made Man, and the Myth of the West, but that also ignore other aspects, such as slavery and the oppression of minorities. Monuments are shaped by the times in which they were created, but their meanings are also affected by those who created them, and those who advocated or objected to them. Currently, many of the monuments that we will study are contested in the wake of the Black Lives Matter protests and counterprotests. Calls to either defend or deface or tear down statues and memorials have become increasingly politicized, making this theme highly relevant for the times in which we live. Students will also “adopt a monument” themselves, which will allow them to study why their chosen monument was created, what battles ensued before they were realized, and what contemporary value they still have.

## Additional Information Teaching Methods

-seminars

-presentations

## Method of Assessment

20%: Participation / Attendance / Canvas Questions

30%: Adopt a Monument / Presentation

50%: Exam

## Entry Requirements

None

## Literature

Kirk Savage, *Monument Wars: Washington D.C., the National Mall, and the Transformation*

*of the Memorial Landscape*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011, ISBN:9780520271333.

#### **Additional Information Target Audience**

Students with an interest in history and culture.

#### **Recommended background knowledge**

An interest in history and culture is highly recommended.