

Brief Course Outline

Course Title: **Treasure: Objects of Desire in Global History**

Course Number and Section:

HISTORY

1818F 550

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Disclaimer: Information in the brief course outline is subject to change. The syllabus posted on OWL is the official and authoritative source of information for the course.

Course Description:

This course explores how precious objects such as religious relics, ancient artifacts, luxury goods, and commodities have shaped global history. The possession and pursuit of scarce and precious commodities, or objects that confer political power, cultural legitimacy, or sacred meaning, are recurring sources of conflict throughout history. Using a variety of global case studies, students will investigate how diverse cultures have interpreted, competed over, and used objects of desire in religion, diplomacy, trade, war, imperialism, and migration.

Learning Outcomes:

- have a working understanding of the methods of material cultural analysis and be able to apply theory to a wide range of historical topics.
- understand how the competition over commodities and precious objects has shaped global history.
- appreciate the various ways cultures embody the sacred in objects.
- understand how objects and conspicuous consumption can confer power, prestige, and authority.
- appreciate the trauma of losing precious national, cultural, or religious artifacts.
- develop sensitivity and respect for different cultural understandings of objects.
- understand the issues at stake in current artifact repatriation debates.
- refine their ability to analyze primary source texts, images, and artifacts.
- refine their research skills and solve research problems to determine the essential components of the argument, organize the parts of their essay, and draw conclusions.

Textbooks and Course Materials:

No textbook.

Methods Of Evaluation:

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
Participation		15
Quiz	09/17/2025	5
Material Culture Analysis	09/26/2025	10
Research Proposal	10/24/2025	10
Essay	11/24/2025	30
Final Exam	December Exam Period	30

In solidarity with the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton peoples on whose traditional treaty and unceded territories this course is shared.

Friday, July 25, 2025