**DEPARTMENT OF ART HISTORY & ART CONSERVATION**

**ARTH 860/3.0 Cultural Heritage Preservation I:**

*Global Case Studies* (Fall Term 2024)



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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

As a subject of inquiry, “cultural heritage preservation” involves the damage and destruction of cultural heritage as a result of wars, natural disasters, and other circumstances, and human attempts to protect and conserve artistic and creative works. The topic also encompasses the critical issue of the theft and restitution of artistic, cultural and ethnographic materials. In this seminar, we will focus on several major case studies from different parts of the globe in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Three of the cases to be explored are: the salvage of the Abu Simbel temples in Egypt when the Nile was deliberately flooded (1960s-70s); the destruction and looting of ancient Khmer temples in Cambodia during the terrorist rule of the Khmer Rouge (1969-79) and the later restoration of temples and restitution of temple sculptures; the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas by the Taliban government in Afghanistan in 2001 and some gestures to recreate the missing figures. We will move fairly slowly through each example, and begin by reading about the contextual environment, before turning to the more specific heritage circumstances. It is important to understand the context – for instance, the reason why the banks of the Nile in Egypt and Sudan were deliberately flooded – before embarking on a consideration of the heritage events. In addition, current and close-by examples may be included. For instance, I am thinking that it would be important to investigate how parts of Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris were recently destroyed by fire, before turning to explore the fire in June in Toronto that devastated St. Anne’s Church and its irreplacable mural paintings.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

In this seminar, clusters of readings pertinent to general themes or individual case studies will spark discussion. Students will present readings and lead some discussions. In addition, each student will pursue a research project, which will involve an annotated bibliography, a presentation in class and a formal essay.