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**Virginia Cemeteries & Gravestones**

**NCSS 123 - 501**

**Course Syllabus – Spring 2015**

**Non-credit/face-to-face format**

**Instructor:**Dr. Lynn Rainville, lr9t@virginia.edu

**Instructor Bio:**  Lynn Rainville holds a PhD in near eastern anthropology and archaeology from the University of Michigan. In addition to a decade of research into Mesopotamian households, she has studied African American cemeteries and mortuary traditions in Virginia since 2002 and historic New England cemeteries since 1991. This work has been supported by numerous grants from the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Science Foundation, and several other organizations.

**Dates/Times:** Tuesdays, 7 - 9pm, March 24 - April 28

**Location:** room 40 at the Darden School

**Course Description:**

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|  | Surveys three hundred years of local mortuary practices, from Native American burial mounds to modern memorial parks.  Examines gravestone iconography, changing mortuary rituals, and historic cemetery landscapes in Albemarle County to reconstruct the lives of the dead as well as the beliefs of those who buried them. Explores the ways in which death is understood, experienced, and given meaning in America.  |

**Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes:**

1. To gain an understanding of the ways in which death is understood, experienced, and given meaning America.

2. To explore ritual practices surrounding death and death-related religious beliefs

3. To gain an awareness of theoretical approaches to the study of ritual by focusing on rites of passage related to death.

**Required/Recommended Texts:**

Gary Laderman. *The Sacred Remains: American Attitudes Towards Death, 1799-1883* (Yale U Press). ISBN-10: 0300078684.

* Lynn Rainville. *Hidden History: African American Cemeteries in Central Virginia* (UVA Press). 2014. ISBN-10: 0813935342

**Suggested texts, materials, helpful websites, etc.:**

David Sloane, *The Last Great Necessity: Cemeteries in American History* (Johns Hopkins Press).

Tim Matson, *Round-Trip to Deadsville: A Year in the Funeral Underground* (Chelsea Green Publishing Company).

*Website:* African American Cemeteries in Central Virginia, *http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/cem/*

*Website*: For locating famous or familial graves, "Find a Grave:" http://www.findagrave.com/

**Required Technical Resources or Technical Components:**  *N/A*

**SCPS Inclement Weather/Emergency Hotline: 434-924-4364**

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