



Commemoration, Mourning, and Race: The Stories of Mount Auburn Cemetery

SPRING 2022

AS.389.314, Thursdays, 1:30 pm – 4 pm

New Community-Based Learning Course

In partnership with Mount Auburn Cemetery in Baltimore, owned and operated by the Sharp Street Memorial United Methodist Church, this course will address the African American cemetery in general, and Mount Auburn Cemetery in particular, as a place of multiple meanings: a sacred site of private mourning, a public place of commemoration, a representation of racism, an historic accomplishment. This course will require on-site and archival research that contributes to the cemetery's interests. For more information: Dr. Gabrielle Dean, gnodean@jhu.edu.

You probably know something about how racial segregation and inequity have structured and controlled access to education, housing, employment, health care, and the legal system, among other life experiences, throughout U.S. history.

But did you know that even death is segregated?

African American cemeteries originated as a condition of slavery, but over time developed into sites of community identity and pride, connected to Black churches, funeral homes, mourning rituals, neighborhoods, and businesses.

These sacred grounds are vulnerable to erasure, however, when descendants relocate, lands are rezoned, caretaker communities shrink, or powerful interests press for redevelopment.

Coursework will involve hands-on research at and about Mount Auburn cemetery. Students will write biographies of notable people interred at the cemetery, help with the geo-location of gravesites, and practice listening to the stories that this place tells.