Archaeological sites and landscapes have long been considered places of historical and cultural significance and symbols of national and ethnic identity. More recently they have offered new opportunities for economic and touristic development in both urban and rural settings. With a unique set of physical conditions including fragmentation, illegibility, extreme environmental exposure and material deterioration, as well as contested ownership and control, their conservation, management, and interpretation as heritage places require special knowledge and methodologies for both heritage specialists and archaeologists.

This seminar will address the history, theories, principles, and practices of the preservation and interpretation of archaeological sites and landscapes. The course will draw from a wide range of published material and experiences representing both national and international contexts. Topics will include site and landscape documentation and recording; site formation and degradation; intervention strategies including interpretation and display, legislation, policy, and contemporary issues of descendant community ownership and the politics and economics of global heritage.

The course will be organized as a seminar incorporating readings, lectures and discussions on major themes defining the subject of ruins and archaeological site conservation. Readings have been selected to provide exposure to seminal works in the development of theory and method as well as current expressions of contemporary practice. This will set the background for the selected case study site which will provide students the opportunity to work with primary and secondary materials related to archaeological and ruin sites: excavation reports, stabilization work, conservation and interpretation plans, etc. Students will study specific issues leading toward the critique and development of a conservation and management program in accordance with guidelines established by UNESCO/ICOMOS/ICAHM and other organizations.

This year the course site will be FORT UNION NATIONAL MONUMENT, NM.

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