**Big(ger) Data: Public Monuments and Collective Memory**

In this course, we have read theoretical sources to explore why societies choose to remember (or forget) historical events as well as scholarly sources to examine how historical narratives, museum exhibitions, and public monuments represent the past. We have analyzed case studies, historical narratives, online exhibitions, and memorials, and we have conducted original research to learn about and represent historical episodes ourselves.

As we have discussed in class, although there is much to be learned from this qualitative approach, in which we closely analyze sources in order to explore the topic of historical memory, it also poses limitations; for example, it is difficult to draw conclusions about the significance of an individual case without placing it in a broader context, and it is difficult to assess the real-world impact of a particular “site of memory” (Nora qtd. in Young 2) without access to information on audience reception.

In this final unit of the course, we will ask how quantitative data and digital tools might help us further investigate why “sites of memory” are constructed, how they work, and what they tell us about the societies that create them? To explore these questions, we will focus on the specific topic of American memory of the Holocaust, and we will work together to build a robust data set on Holocaust memorials and museums, which you will analyze and visualize using digital methods.

Your assignment:

Write a 6 to 7 page essay that presents an argument about how our data on American Holocaust memorials and museums connects to what historians have written about American Holocaust memory as well as to theoretical readings on the topic of collective memory.

Your essay should not simply present a summary of the data; rather, your essay should enter the existing academic conversation by making an argument about *how* we should interpret the data and *why* thisinterpretation is significant.  How do your findings shed light on the issues at hand?

To present this argument, you will need to:

* Introduce the topic and why it matters, explain your analytical question, introduce the data set your essay will examine, and state your thesis
* Provide an overview of what historians have argued about American Holocaust memory
* Contextualize and guide readers through your analysis of the data, interpreting the evidence (data) as well as considering its limitations
* Explain how your findings affirm, extend, complicate, or challenge the existing scholarship American Holocaust memory
* Draw conclusions about how your findings connect to the theory we have read on collective memory and the new questions your findings raise

Additional details:

* Please use MLA in-text citation style for this essay.
* Please include at least four new data visualizations that you created from our data set. These visualizations should be embedded in your essay to guide your readers through your analysis of the data.
* If you conduct additional research to help you analyze our data set, please be sure you are using credible source of information and that you use sources responsibly by including correct citations and avoiding plagiarism.
* I will post the rubric I will use to assess your essay in this dropbox. I encourage you to review the rubric to understand the dual goals of this project, which seeks to develop your skills in digital inquiry and analysis as well as to assess your ability to present a persuasive, coherent, and well-substantiated academic argument.