

## What Does Archaeology Bring to Anthropology?

### What Does Archaeology Bring to Anthropology? Insights from Memoryscapes of Mass Repression

We invite you to an open seminar of the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Warsaw, at which dr. Margaret Comer will speak.

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Useful information **Event website:** [Facebook](#) [1]

**Place:** Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Warsaw, ?urawia 4, room 108

**Start date:** 27-05-2026

**Time:** 10:30

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Stones brought from different gulag camps and installed at the Wall of Grief Memorial, Moscow

How can archaeology contribute to anthropological research? This presentation draws from a “four-fields” anthropological perspective, in which archaeology and cultural anthropology are considered complementary and equal branches of anthropology. Tangible and intangible, present and past, and material and sociocultural phenomena can be explored together to provide a holistic, diachronic, and multi-perspectival analysis. This is especially salient in dealing with sites of violence related to mass repression: careful, archaeology-derived research of the landscape/memoryscape/heritagescape and associated material culture dovetails with sociocultural

anthropological methods, like participant-observer ethnography and emic lenses, utilized among stakeholders. In situations in which living witnesses to the actual violence may be rare or missing and/or where original buildings and objects have been destroyed, using approaches that mix archaeology and anthropology fill in evidentiary and analytical gaps, allowing for a broader understanding of past violence and how its memory is processed, used, and/or instrumentalized today. I will present several case studies of my research at sites of Holocaust and/or Soviet mass violence for which I used such mixed approaches to obtain deeper and more sensitive understandings of the memory and heritage of mass repression.

Dr **Margaret Comer** works at the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Warsaw. Her research focuses on the heritage of mass repression, Soviet and post-Soviet memorialization and heritagization, Holocaust memorialization and heritagization, grievability and memory, and contested memory. She is specifically interested in how post-repression societies variously portray violence, suffering, perpetration, bystanding and victimhood at sites associated with mass violence. The overarching goal is to analyse how the heritage of past violence can be instrumentalized in order to avoid reckoning with past violence and, further, how this heritage can be weaponized in order to further contemporary violence.

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[1] <https://fb.me/e/9tIWhNcT3>