Outer space is a completely unnatural environment for humans: people can only reach it and survive there through the use of specialized objects and spacecraft. Often those items are made specifically for living beyond the earth’s atmosphere, but even within the very brief time in which humans have been traveling to space there have been significant changes in the things that we have made for space travel. Items that were once considered very advanced, such as the space shuttle, have already become obsolete, and places that were once considered very important, like the lunar landing site, have never been visited again. In this course we will read about the human use of space as a kind of “archaeology of the present” including the study of extra-rapid technological changes as well as how we can preserve features of historical importance such as the footprints on the moon. Students will also be encouraged to take an optional field trip to the space shuttle housed at the California Science Center in Los Angeles.

Grading: The grading structure of Fiat Lux classes is on a P/NP basis. This seminar will meet each week and participants will be graded on the basis of reading and discussion of the material. Students must attend at least 7 of the 9 course meetings to achieve a passing grade in the course. Fiat Lux classes are designed for group interaction and discussion. No use of electronics in the classroom please! Bring notes or a paper printout of the weekly readings so that you can participate without an electronic device, and to ensure that you retain full credit for the course.

Required readings are posted at: https://moodle2.sscnet.ucla.edu/course/view/18S-ANTHRO19-2

April 2  Introduction to the course


May 28  Memorial Day holiday: no class. Optional field trip to the California Science Center to visit the space shuttle Endeavour.


Image Credit: https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/19/opinion/space-race-regulation.html