Course description

This seminar explores collective memory and constructions of the past as human and as cultural phenomena, and in relation to religious identities, experiences and practices. Throughout the course we bear in mind the confusing dynamic interchanges of collective memory with personal memory; and the equally unresolved, overarching question of how to think about memories in relation to histories. Other focal themes include the ways memories are embodied, consumed, memorialized, and woven through ever-changing landscapes. Readings are interdisciplinary, drawing from diverse fields including anthropology, history, philosophy, religious studies and sociology. We are concerned with memory at work in ordinary lives, in the everyday, in oral traditions, culinary arts, ritual performances. We also follow a powerful current in recent scholarship by examining remembering, forgetting and commemoration in the aftermath of prolonged oppression and sudden catastrophe including colonialism and war.

Readings

9 required books should be available at the Orange Bookstore. They have also been placed on 3-day reserve in Bird. It is of course worth checking comparative prices on the web.

In addition, a number of articles and book sections will be accessible through a mixture of Blackboard course reserves and course documents. Note our course site is ANT/REL.689.Merged.FALL09.Memory, Culture, Religion

books at Orange


Also on 3-day reserve are two additional recommended books useful as introductions / background resources for the broader field of memory studies:


**Articles, chapters, excerpts**


Connerton, Paul. 2008. Seven types of forgetting. *Memory Studies* 1: pp. 59 - 71. download free pdf : [http://mss.sagepub.com/cgi/content/short/1/1/59](http://mss.sagepub.com/cgi/content/short/1/1/59)


Nora, Pierre. 1994. "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire" in *History and Memory in African-American Culture*, ed. Genevieve Fabre and Robert O'Meally, 284-300. New York: Oxford University Press. [this is the same essay that appears as the
introduction to the English edition of *Realms of Memory*, although with a different translator, and more compact typesetting]


Srinivas, Smriti. 2008. "Producing Space in Bangalore" (chapter 6) and "Sites of Sociality in Atlanta" (chapter 8), from *In the Presence of Sai Baba: Body, City, and Memory in a Global Religious Movement*. Leiden: Brill.


**Responsibilities**

*seminar process*  All participants should be committed to faithful attendance and diligent reading of all required materials. Responsibility for commenting and raising questions on each week's syllabus readings, and posting your "talking points" to blackboard -- *no later than Tuesday evening* -- is shared by all seminar members. Normally everyone will circulate brief points (about one page) on the entire week's readings; sometimes readings will be parceled out in advance with designated students providing slightly more detailed commentary (about two pages) on their specified portions. In class you will have a chance to recapitulate your thoughts as discussion starters.

*writing*  Students may choose between two alternative routes to fulfill writing requirements. You may produce two shorter papers: about 10 pages due at the end of Week 7 and about 15 pages due at the end of the semester. These will expand on issues and readings originating in the syllabus, although the second piece should incorporate at least one additional perspective or case study. Alternatively, you may pursue a sustained research project on any topic that engages in some fashion with memory, culture and religion. On the long paper route, the project will build, under the instructor's supervision, through stages of abstract (week 6), outline or preliminary draft with bibliography (week 10), oral presentation (weeks 10-15), and final product: about 25 pages due at the end of the semester.

*speaking*  Beyond regular participation -- that is, raising points and responding in our weekly conversations -- each seminar member should plan to give one more substantial, coherent and succinct (about 15-minute) oral presentation during the semester -- based on their individual writing and moving beyond syllabus preoccupations. Whether you are taking the longer or shorter paper route, this will allow you to discuss your ideas while they are still developing, and benefit from group feedback.
For memory provides a counterweight to the blind power of the actual (Gross, 2000: 152)

I'm everything you lost. You won't forgive me. / My memory keeps getting in the way of your history (Agha Shahid Ali, from the poem, "Farewell" in The country without a post office, 1997).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week/Date</th>
<th>Topic/Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 W 9/2</td>
<td>organizational and introductory session</td>
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<td>memory boom: origins and influences materialities, sensualities, localities</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 W 9/16</td>
<td>French Sociology theorizes collective memory stepping back: foundational vision from the early 20th century Halbwachs, On Collective Memory, try to read the whole book but focus your talking points on 1-119 and 167-235; Whitehead, selections</td>
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<td>4 W 9/23</td>
<td>Brain, body, society, ritual: some hows of memory work Connerton, How Societies Remember, all; Connerton, &quot;Seven Types of Forgetting&quot;; Lambert et al, &quot;How does Collective Memory . . . &quot;; Rose, &quot;How Brains Make Memories&quot;; Zerubavel, &quot;Historical Continuity&quot; hand-out on writing tasks posted</td>
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<td>5 W 9/30</td>
<td>mostly place: cityscape and memoryscape Srinivas, selections from In the Presence of Sai Baba: Body, City and Memory . . . ; Nora, &quot;Between Memory and History&quot;; Casey, &quot;Body Memory&quot; &amp; &quot;Place Memory&quot;</td>
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Recommended event: Place / No Place: Spatial Aspects of Urban Asian Religiosity
Schedule of events at [http://mellonplaceconf.syr.edu/index.htm](http://mellonplaceconf.syr.edu/index.htm) Note that participants DeBernardi and Srinivas have both published significant work on memory and religion.
everyday and extraordinary experience in memory
loss, flavor, testimony

The study of social memory is a study that can ask -- with some subtlety -- about the weight of history and its lightness . . . (Paxson, p. 25).

6  W 10/7  memory between self and society
abstracts due for longer paper writers

7  W 10/14  memory's recipes
Sutton, Remembrance of Repasts, all; Proust, the madeleine episode; Seremetakis, "Memory of the Senses"
recommended: Holtzman, "Food and Memory" (review article)
paper 1 due for shorter paper writers

8  W 10/21  the verdant, oppressive past and other rural Rajasthani narratives
Gold and Gujar, In the Time . . . , all

9  W 10/28  the radiant, miraculous past and other rural Russian narratives
Paxson, Solovyovo, all

aftermaths: remembering, forgetting, commemorating
in the wake of catastrophic events

Perhaps the question that I was most frequently faced with was about the very nature of the exercise: a question that had to do, in the main, with remembering. Why rake all this up again? (Butalia, 282)

Too much memory, like too much forgetting, leads to death (Cole, 121).

"I do not know how many were killed / I do not count how many incense sticks I ought to burn" (Kwon, 126).

10 W 11/4  where there are no memorials: recovering silenced memories
in South Asia
Butalia, Other Side of Silence, all
detailed outline or rough draft due for longer-paper writers

oral presentations to be scheduled for all students during weeks 11, 12 & 15

11 W 11/11  taboo and sacrifice as memory work in Madagascar
Cole, Forget Colonialism, all
12  W 11/18  ghosts of war in Viet Nam
       Kwon, all

13  W 11/25  Thanksgiving Break no class!

14  W 12/2  Instructor absent; no class!
       Due to a commitment to a panel that was unhappily assigned a Wednesday
       slot at the American Anthropological Association meetings in
       Philadelphia, I am unable to meet class this week. The bright side is: you
       have extra time to work on your final papers!

15  W 12/9  presentations and wrap-up discussion

*final written work due for all students is due on Wednesday, December 16
Please deliver a paper copy to HL 501 before 3 pm (or prearrange alternative).*