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.

Syracuse Symposium's theme for 2012 is Memory-Media-Archive. You can download both the Symposium brochure and the associated Human Rights Film Festival schedule as separate pdfs from this link:  http://www.syracusehumanities.org/symposium/

Also recommended for exploration / enactment of memory is the Syracuse Stage production of: Ping Chong’s Cry for Peace: Voices from the Congo

I have free tickets for any member of this seminar who wishes to attend on Tuesday, September 18, at 7:30 pm.

Readings

9 required books should be available at the University Bookstore. They have also been placed on 3-day reserve in Bird. It is of course always worth checking comparative prices on the web. In addition, a number of articles and book sections will be accessible as PDFs on our Blackboard course site: ANT/REL.689.Merged.FALL12.Memory, Culture, Religion

Books

Butalia, Urvashi. 2000. The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India.
Sturken, Marita. 2007. Tourists of History: Memory, Kitsch, and Consumerism from Oklahoma City to Ground Zero.
Also on 3-day reserve are four additional recommended books useful as introductions / background resources for broader fields of memory studies (these books cover more territory than the course; small, selected excerpts from two of them appear on the syllabus)


**Articles, chapters, excerpts**


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 Monday 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 parcelled 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 8 pages due in class, Week 7 and about 12 pages due Thursday, December 6. 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 longer-paper route, the project will build, under the instructor's supervision, through stages of abstract (week 6), outline or preliminary draft with bibliography (week 9), oral presentation (weeks 10-15), and final product: about 20 pages due Thursday, December 6.

**speaking** Beyond regular participation -- that is, raising points and responding in our weekly conversations -- each seminar member should plan to give one substantial, coherent and succinct (about 10-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 developing, and benefit from group feedback.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week/Date</th>
<th>Topic/Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Tu 8/28</td>
<td>organizational and introductory session</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|           | *memory boom: origins and influences*  
|           | *materialities, sensualities, localities* |

*I'm everything you lost. You won't forgive me. / My memory keeps getting in the way of your history*  

"Impetus for the current boom in memory studies comes, in part, from what has been called the crisis of memory, a crisis involving on the one hand enormous attention to memory, and on the other, disjunctures between contemporary life and the remembered past. . . . " (Cattell and Climo 2002: 6-7)

. . . memory is a source of meaning whose depths may be plumbed forever. . . . memory is a nearly impossible topic because the range of its considerations encompasses the entire field of epistemology  
(Hutton, 1993: xxv).

2 Tu 9/4 Religious Studies undertakes memory work on the ground plunging in: twenty-first century syntheses  
Stier & Landres, eds., *Religion, Violence, Memory, and Place*, all  
Blight, "The Memory Boom"
3 Tu 9/11 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

4 Tu 9/18 Brain, body, place, time (continuity, remembering) Casey, "Place Memory"; Nora, "Between Memory and History" Proust, the *madeleine* episode; Rose, "Memories Are Made Of This"; Seremetakis, "Memory of the Senses, Part I"; Zerubavel, "Historical Continuity" *hand-out on writing tasks posted*


*everyday and extraordinary experiences; interactions of individual and collective memories in contexts gardens, flavors, testimonies, returns, vanishing*

"For myself, growing old would be altogether a different thing if that little town was there still" (Shmuel in Myerhoff, p. 242)

"My father did not worry, as do the academic analysts of collective or social memory today, about the fragmentary outlines of personal memory, the silences, and the bending of memory by the present or by the mingling of the lived and the heard" (Abu-Lughod, p. 93).

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 Tu 10/2 Expressions of the remembering self Abu-Lughod, "Return to Half-Ruins"; Bacigalupo, "Life, Death, and Rebirth . . . "; Crumley, "Exploring Venues"; Kidron, "Embracing the Lived Memory"; Myerhoff, "Life History among the Elderly"; Nadel-Klein, "Gardening in Time" *abstracts due for longer-paper writers*

7 Tu 10/9 the radiant, miraculous past and other rural Russian narratives Paxson, *Solovyovo*, all *paper 1 due for shorter-paper writers*

8 Tu 10/16 the verdant, oppressive past and other North Indian narratives Gold and Gujar, *In the Time . . .*, all; Ibrahim, "Imagining a Region" *Guest: Anisha Saxena, Fulbright Student Research Scholar*

9 Tu 10/23 memory's recipes Holtzman, *Uncertain Tastes*, all *recommended*: Holtzman, "Food and Memory" (review article) *detailed outline or rough draft due for longer-paper writers*
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)

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

oral presentations to be scheduled for all students during weeks 10 - 15

10  Tu 10/30          where there are no memorials: recovering silenced memories in South Asia
                Butalia, Other Side of Silence, all

11  Tu 11/6          ghosts of war in Viet Nam
                Kwon, all

12  Tu 11/13         bringing it all back home: 9/11
                Sturkin, Tourists of History; Colwell-Chanthaphonh, "Power over the dead" and response, "Ethics and the 9/11 museum complex"

13  Tu 11/20        Thanksgiving Break week no class!

14  Tu 11/27         grass roots memorials etc.
                Margry and Sanchez-Carretero, eds, Grassroots Memorials, selections; Ramirez, "Memory and Mourning"

15  Tu 12/4          presentations and wrap-up discussion

final written work for all students is due on Thursday, December 6; please deliver a paper copy to HL 501 before 3 pm (or prearrange alternative).