

**Memory, Culture, Religion**  
**Religion 689 / Anthropology 689**  
fall 2012 Tu 3:30 PM - 6:15 PM 504 HL

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Office hrs.: Th 12:30-1:30 or by appointment

**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*

[http://www.syracusestage.org/ticketoffice/eventdetail.aspx?page\\_id=2&event\\_id=39](http://www.syracusestage.org/ticketoffice/eventdetail.aspx?page_id=2&event_id=39)

*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*.

Connerton, Paul. 2011. *The spirit of mourning: history, memory and the body*.

Gold, Ann G. and Bhoju Ram Gujar. 2002. *In the Time of Trees and Sorrows: Nature, Power, and Memory in Rajasthan*.

Halbwachs, Maurice. 1992. *On Collective Memory*.

Holtzman, Jon. 2009. *Uncertain Tastes: Memory, Ambivalence, and the Politics of Eating in Samburu, Northern Kenya*

Kwon, Heonik. 2006. *After the Massacre: Commemoration and Consolation in Ha My and My Lai*.

Paxson, Margaret. 2005. *Solovyovo: The Story of Memory in a Russian Village*.

Stier, Oren Baruch and J. Shawn Landres, eds. 2006. *Religion, Violence, Memory, And Place*.

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)

Olick, Jeffrey K., Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi and Daniel Levy, eds. 2011. *The Collective Memory Reader*. Oxford University Press.

Radstone, Susannah and Bill Schwarz, eds. 2010. *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates*. New York : Fordham University Press.

Rossington, Michael, and Anne Whitehead, eds. 2007. *Theories of Memory: A Reader*. Johns Hopkins University Press.

Whitehead, Anne. 2009. *Memory*. Routledge.

#### **Articles, chapters, excerpts**

Abu-Lughod, Lila. "Return to Half-Ruins: Memory, Postmemory, and Living History in Palestine." In *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the Claims of Memory*, edited by Ahmad H. Sa'di and Lila Abu-Lughod, 77-104. New York: Columbia University Press.

Bacigalupo, Ana Mariella. 2010. "The Life, Death, and Rebirth of a Mapuche Shaman: Remembering, Forgetting and the Willful Transformation of Memory." *Journal of Anthropological Research*. 66(1):97-119.

Blight, David. W. 2009 "The Memory Boom: Why and Why Now?" in Boyer, Pascal and James V. Wertsch, eds. *Memory in Mind and Culture*, 238-251. Cambridge University Press.

Casey, Edward S. 1987. "Place Memory" from *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study*, pp. 181-215. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Colwell- Chanthaphonh, Chip. 2011. "The Disappeared': Power over the dead in the aftermath of 9/11" *Anthropology Today* 27 (3) and "Ethics and the 9/11 Museum Complex: A response to Colwell-Chanthaphonh" *Anthropology Today* 27 (4).

Crumley, Carole L. 2002. "Exploring Venues of Social Memory," in *Social Memory and History: Anthropological Perspectives*, 39-52. AltaMira Press.

Ibrahim, Farhana. 2008. "Imagining a Region," from *Settlers, saints, and sovereigns: an ethnography of state formation in western India*. New Delhi: Routledge.

Kidron, Carol A. 2010. Embracing the lived memory of genocide: Holocaust survivor and descendant renegade memory work at the House of Being. *American Ethnologist* 37 (3): 429-451.

Margry, Peter Jan and Cristina Sanchez-Carretero, eds. 2011. *Grassroots memorials: the politics of memorializing traumatic death*. Cambridge University Press. (selections TBA)

Myerhoff, Barbara. 1992. "Life History among the Elderly: Performance, Visibility, and Re-membering" from *Remembered Lives: The Work of Ritual, Storytelling, and Growing Older*, pp. 231-247. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Nadel-Klein, Jane. 2010. "Gardening in Time: Happiness and Memory in American Horticulture" in *The Ethnographic Self as Resource*, 165-181. Berghahn.

Nora, Pierre. 1994. "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire" introduction to the English edition of *Realms of Memory*.

Proust, Marcel 1981 (1913) the famous "madeleine" episode from "overture" to *Remembrance of Things Past*, volume I, pp. 46-51. New York: Vintage Books

Ramirez, Horacio N. Roque. 2008. "Memory and Mourning: Living Oral History with Queer Latinos and Latinas in San Francisco" in *Oral History and Public Memories*, eds. Paula Hamilton and Linda Shopes. Temple University Press.

Rose, Steven. 2010 "Memories are made of this." In *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates*, edited by Susannah Radstone and Bill Schwarz, 198-208. New York: Fordham University Press.

Seremetakis, C. N. 1996. "Memory of the Senses, Part I" from *The Senses Still: Perception and Memory as Material Culture in Modernity*, 1-18. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

Zerubavel, Eviatar. 2003. "Historical Continuity" from *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past*, pp. 37-54. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

## 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 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 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.

Week/Date                      Topic/Readings

*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).

1            Tu 8/28            organizational and introductory session

***memory boom: origins and influences***  
***materialities, sensualities, localities***

*"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, disjunctions 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*
- 5 Tu 9/25 Body, self, society, history, loss (rupture, forgetting)  
Connerton, *Spirit of Mourning*, all

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

*"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*

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|-----------|-----------------|--|
| 10        | Tu 10/30        | where there are no memorials: recovering silenced memories<br>in South Asia<br>Butalia, <i>Other Side of Silence</i> , all   |
| 11        | Tu 11/6         | ghosts of war in Viet Nam<br>Kwon, all   |
| 12        | Tu 11/13        | bringing it all back home: 9/11<br>Sturkin, <i>Tourists of History</i> ; Colwell-Chanthaphonh, "Power over the dead" and<br>response, "Ethics and the 9/11 museum complex" |
| <b>13</b> | <b>Tu 11/20</b> | <b><i>Thanksgiving Break week no class!</i></b>  |
| 14        | Tu 11/27        | grass roots memorials etc.<br>Margry and Sanchez-Carretero, eds, <i>Grassroots Memorials</i> , selections; Ramirez,<br>"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).*