

Memory, Culture, Religion
Religion 689 / Anthropology 689
fall 2017 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, politicized, and woven through ever-changing landscapes. The syllabus reflects a dominant current in recent scholarship by examining remembering, forgetting and memorialization in the aftermath of prolonged oppression and sudden catastrophe. Readings are interdisciplinary, drawing from diverse sources including anthropology, history, philosophy, religious studies, sociology and literature. We are concerned with memory at work in commemorative projects, ritual performances, oral traditions, culinary arts, and everyday lives.

Readings

Seven required books should be available at the University Bookstore. It is 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.FALL17.Memory, Culture, Religion (20399.1181c); or via links. Required books have been placed on 3-day reserve at Bird.

Books

- Bacigalupo, Ana Mariella. 2016. *Thunder Shaman: Making History with Mapuche Spirits in Chile and Patagonia*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Butalia, Urvashi. 2000. *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*. Duke University Press
- Gold, Ann G. and Bhoju Ram Gujar. 2002. *In the Time of Trees and Sorrows: Nature, Power, and Memory in Rajasthan*. Duke University Press.
- Kwon, Heonik. 2006. *After the Massacre: Commemoration and Consolation in Ha My and My Lai*. University of California Press.
- Mookherjee, Nayanika. 2015. *The Spectral Wound: Sexual Violence, Public Memories, and the Bangladesh War of 1971*. Duke University Press.
- Paxson, Margaret. 2005. *Solovyovo: The Story of Memory in a Russian Village*. Indiana University Press.
- Sutton, David E. 2001. *Remembrance of Repasts: An Anthropology of Food and Memory*. Berg Publishers.

A number of compendiums offer useful introductions / background resources for broader fields of memory studies, including the following which are also placed on 3-day reserve:

- 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.

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.
- 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.
- Caswell, Michelle. 2014. "The Making of Records," from *Archiving the Unspeakable: Silence, Memory, and the Photographic Record in Cambodia*, 26-60. University of Wisconsin Press.
- Connerton, Paul. 1989. Selections from *How Societies Remember*. Cambridge University Press.
- Connerton, Paul. 2008. Seven Types of Forgetting. *Memory Studies* Vol 1(1): 59-71
- Crumley, Carole L. 2002. "Exploring Venues of Social Memory," in *Social Memory and History: Anthropological Perspectives*, 39-52. AltaMira Press.
- Dobler, Robert. 2011. "Ghost Bikes," in Margry, Peter Jan and Cristina Sanchez-Carretero, eds. *Grassroots memorials: the politics of memorializing traumatic death*. Cambridge University Press.
- Doss, Erika. 2010. selections TBA from *Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America*. University of Chicago Press.
- French, Briggittine M. 2012. The Semiotics of Collective Memories. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 41:337-353.
- Good, Jennifer. 2015. "Spectacle and Collective Memory," from *Photography and September 11th: Spectacle, Memory, Trauma*, 15-45. Bloomsbury.
- Halbwachs, Maurice. 1992. "Religious Collective Memory" (84-119) and "The Legendary Topography of the Gospels in the Holy Land" (193-235) from *On Collective Memory*. University of Chicago Press.
- 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
- 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.
- Rubin, Jonah S. et al. 2013. "Field Notes: The Politics of Memory." Correspondences, Cultural Anthropology website, September 4, 2013. <https://culanth.org/fieldsights/375-field-notes-the-politics-of-memory>
- 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.
- Viet Thanh Nguyen. 2016. "On the Inhumanities," from *Nothing Ever Dies: Vietnam and the Memory of War*, 71-100. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Young, James E. 2016. "The Stages of Memory at Ground Zero: The National 9/11 Memorial Process," from *The Stages of Memory: Reflections on Memorial Art, Loss, and the Spaces Between*, 19-77. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Whitehead, Anne. 2009. "Introduction" and "Collective Memory," from *Memory*, 1-14 and 123-152. Routledge.
- Zelizer, Barbie. 2008. "The Voice of the Visual in Memory," in *Framing Public Memory*, ed. Kendall R. Phillips, 157-186. University of Alabama 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. Some weeks, everyone will circulate brief points (about one page) on the entire week's readings; other weeks, 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 Monday, December 11. 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 Monday, December 11.

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 8/29 organizational and introductory session

memory boom: origins, influences, analyses

... 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 9/5 memory boom! twenty-first century syntheses, critiques and provocations
Blight, "The Memory Boom"; French, "Semiotics . . ."; Rubin, *et al.* "Field Notes"; Viet Thanh, "Inhumanities" [*Note: for Rubin, et al. click the link; the others are in Blackboard content*]

3 Tu 9/12 sociology theorizes collective memory: foundational visions from the 20th century
Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, selections (84-119 & 167-235 in 2 pdfs); Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, Chs.1, 2&3 (in 2 pdfs); and "Seven Types of Forgetting"; Nora, "Between Memory and History"; *recommended*: Whitehead, selections
[We will break at 6 so I can catch my breath before the department dinner and workshop where I am presenting!]

- 4 Tu 9/19 brain, body, sites, sights
Rose, "Memories Are Made of This"; Proust, the *madeleine* episode; Casey, "Place Memory"[pdf includes "Body Memory" which is optional]; Zelizer, "Voice of the Visual"; Caswell, "Making of Records"; Good, "Spectacle and Collective Memory"
hand-out on writing tasks posted & distributed
- 5 Tu 9/26 silence and voice; stories and pictures; where once there were no memorials; South Asia's partition after 70 years
Guest in the Classroom: Annu Palakunnathu Matthew, Professor of Art and Art History, University of Rhode Island
Read: Butalia, *Other Side of Silence*, all
Look: "Open Wound – Stories of Partition"
<http://www.annumatthew.com/gallery/open-wound-stories-of-partition/>
- everyday and extraordinary experiences
how individual and collective memories interact in diverse contexts*
- "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).*
- . . . for Mapuche, memory is a complex, heterogeneous process conditioned by local political circumstances, cosmic events, and shamanic transformations of personhood through death and rebirth (Bacigalupo, p. 16).*
- 6 Tu 10/3 the verdant, oppressive past and other North Indian narratives
Gold and Gujar, *In the Time* . . .
abstracts due for longer-paper writers
- 7 Tu 10/10 the radiant, miraculous past and other rural Russian narratives
Paxson, *Solovyovo*, all
paper 1 due for shorter-paper writers
- 8 Tu 10/17 expressions of the remembering self
Abu-Lughod, "Return to Half-Ruins"; Crumley, "Exploring Venues"; Nadel-Klein, "Gardening in Time"; Seremetakis, "Memory of the Senses, Part I"; Myerhoff, "Life History among the Elderly"
- 9 Tu 10/24 memory's recipes
Sutton, All
recommended: Holtzman, "Food and Memory" (review article)
detailed outline or rough draft due for longer-paper writers

- 10 Tu 10/31 shamanism, and the politics of memory
Guest in the Classroom: Ana Mariella Bacigalupo, *Professor of Anthropology, SUNY Buffalo*
Bacigalupo, all

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

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

How can I bear this? / How my heart burns / What did I see with my own eyes? / I carry so many thoughts in my heart / Come and listen to my pain (Bengali boat song translated in Mookherjee, p. 262)

- 11 Tu 11/7 ghosts of war in Viet Nam
Kwon, all

oral presentations to be scheduled for all students weeks 12, 14 & 15

- 12 Tu 11/14 violence, rape, heroines and victims
Mookherjee, all

13 Tu 11/21 *Thanksgiving Break week: no class!*

- 14 Tu 11/28 American memorials, ground zero to street corners
Doss, selections TBA; Young, "Stages"; Dobler, "Ghost Bikes"

- 15 Tu 12/5 presentations and wrap-up discussion

*final written work for **all** students is due on **Monday, December 11** as an electronic document to submit via email.*