

Wed. 1:15-4:00
Trotter 215
Spring 2015

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Office Hours: T. & W 11:30-12:30

HISTORY 1R

FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR: REMEMBERING HISTORY [A Writing Course]

"The past is what you remember, imagine what you remember, convince yourself you remember, or pretend to remember."

Harold Pinter, *Old Times* (1970)

"Remembering is not the negative of forgetting. remembering is a form of forgetting."

Milan Kundera, *Testaments Betrayed* (1993)

"the twilight zone that lies between living memory and written history is one of the favorite breeding places of mythology."

C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (1955).

"who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past."

George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1954)

Memory is essential to our humanity, and an inextricable part of our own personal, social, or communal identity. Memory is also vitally important to all human history. History would be impossible, and inconceivable, without memory. Nearly every scrap of evidence we have to reconstruct the past is composed of memories and filtered through memories. And the compelling human desire for history derives from a wish to frame, preserve, enshrine, control, and especially to tell and retell, memories. Yet, despite memory's necessity for history, historians frequently maintain that memory and history can be antagonistic, even contrary, impulses in any given society and culture. The very act of constructing a memory, especially the collective memory of a group of people, often involves the intentional erasure or exclusion of someone's story or history at the moment that history is supposedly preserved. Memory is all too frequently built on intentional acts of forgetting. Understanding this complex interrelationship of memory and history is the principal goal of this seminar.

This course explores the relationship between the creation of personal and collective memory and the production of history. The seminar will examine the tensions between memory and history in U.S. history, using some of the most acclaimed recent history books. Students will think critically about memoirs and autobiographies, oral histories and personal reminiscences, festivities and holidays of commemoration, historical memory in popular culture, and family lore and stories. What receives the privilege of being remembered and what gets deliberately forgotten constitutes the essence of what we know as history.

REQUIRED READINGS

The following required readings are available at the College Bookstore:

Alfred F. Young, *The Shoemaker and the Tea Party*.

David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*.

Tony Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic*.

Edward T. Linenthal and Tom Englehardt, eds., *History Wars: The Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past*.

Additional required readings each week are available on Moodle.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Class participation: Students are expected to attend all class meetings, complete all readings, and be prepared for discussion of the assigned reading each week. Thoughtful preparation on the part of all students is essential for a seminar to be a positive learning environment for everyone. Hence, a student's participation in the seminar will be an important part of the final assessment by the professor.

Analytical Essay: Students will write an analytical essay on the theme of history and memory surrounding the defining events of early U.S. history -- the American Revolution, slavery, and the Civil War. The analytical essay will be approximately 5-6 double-spaced pages (i.e., 1500 words). A description of the paper assignment will be posted on Moodle. This paper is designed to be an analytical essay, based on the course readings. No additional research is expected.

Research Project: Students will research and write a semester-long project on memory and history in the United States. The objective of the project is to develop an original interpretation of the relationship of memory to some aspect of American history and culture. Students can choose their own projects, but projects must be designed with the assistance and approval of the professor. Suggestions of possible research topics will be available on the course Moodle site. For the sake of coherence, projects will usually address an event in U.S. history between 1940 and 2000 (although exceptions can be made for compelling and feasible projects in earlier U.S. history). Typically, the final paper will be at least a 12-14 double-spaced page paper (i.e., 3500-4000 words). There are as many creative ways to present these projects as there are creative students. Students are not limited to the traditional research paper format. Still, all projects must be the equivalent of at least a 12-14 page paper. A well-written and engaging work of historical analysis (i.e., a good paper), however, will always be preferred to less engaging work in a different format.

Each student will make an oral presentation of her/his project during the last two weeks of the semester. Four preliminary assignments will help each student make progress on his or her research project:

- 1) A prospectus & bibliography, due week 8
- 2) An analysis of a primary source, due week 11
- 3) A draft of research paper, due week 13
- 4) An oral presentation, either week 13 or 14.

Note: *Students must complete all of the writing assignments and oral presentations to pass the course.*

CLASS SCHEDULE:

Note: I may make minor changes in this syllabus during the semester. Check the Moodle syllabus as the final authority for the schedule & reading assignments.

Week 1 - Jan. 21: INTRODUCTION

Readings (in class):

Friedrich Nietzsche, "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life," in *The Collective Memory Reader* (2011), 73-79.

Week 2 - Jan. 28: MEMORY OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Readings:

Young, *The Shoemaker and the Tea Party*. [Skip or skim pp. 58-70; 121-142]
 Jill Lepore, *The Whites of Their Eyes: The Tea Party's Revolution and the Battle over American History* (2010), pp. 14-25, 43-47, 60-69, 94-97.
 Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," *Representations* 26 (1989), 7-24.

Week 3 - Feb. 4: WHOSE NAT TURNER? & WHICH SOJOURNER TRUTH?

Readings:

Painter, *Sojourner Truth, A Life, A Symbol*, ch. 1, 12-15, 17-18, 20, 26 & Coda.
Nat Turner: A Troublesome Property (2002). DVD on reserve at McCabe Library.
Ghosts of Amistad (2014). DVD [New film; if it arrives in time.]

Week 4 - Feb. 11: "THE QUARREL FORGOTTEN": THE CIVIL WAR & MEMORY

Readings:

Blight, *Race and Reunion*, Prologue-ch. 5, ch. 8-9, & Epilogue.

Week 5 - Feb. 18: REENACTING: STILL FIGHTING THE CIVIL WAR AT THE END OF THE 20TH CENTURY

Readings:

Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic*, ch. 1-4, 6, 8, 10-11, 14.

Week 6 - Feb. 25: RESEARCHING & WRITING THE HISTORY OF MEMORY

Workshop on Research & Library Skills: Sarah Elichko, Social Sciences LibrarianReadings:

Maurice Halbwachs, "Historical Memory and Collective Memory" in Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* (1950; reprint, New York, 1980).
 Gavriel D. Rosenfeld, "A Looming Crash or a Soft Landing? Forecasting the Future of the Memory 'Industry'," *Journal of Modern History* 81 (2009), 122-58.
 Kerwin Lee Klein, "On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse," *Representations* 69 (2000), 127-50.

Analytical essay due. [Feb. 27 by 5pm]

Week 7 - Mar. 4: FAMILY LORE: STORIES AND MEMORIES

Readings:

Jonathan Scott Holloway, *Jim Crow Wisdom: Memory & Identity in Black America since 1940* (Chapel Hill, 2013), selected chapters.

Beryl Satter, "On Family Properties: Race, Real Estate, and the Exploitation of Black Urban America," *Reviews in American History* 41.1 (2013), 174-80.

This American Life (NPR), episode 204, "81 Words".

Meetings with the professor in office hours to discuss research project (Mar. 2-4).

Mar. 11 - SPRING BREAK

Week 8 - Mar. 18: THE MEMOIR & PERSONAL MEMORY

Readings:

Ben Yagoda, *Memoir: A History* (2009), ch. 1 & 5.

Excerpts from two memoirs.

Jill Lepore, "Just the Facts, Ma'am," *The New Yorker*, March 24, 2008.

Prospectus and bibliography for research project due.

Week 9 - Mar. 25: WHY NOT FORGET? ENOLA GAY AND THE HISTORY WARS

Readings:

Linenthal & Englehardt, *History Wars: The Enola Gay & Other Battles for the American Past*.

Week 10 - Apr. 1 NO CLASS - WORK ON RESEARCH PROJECTS

Week 11 - Apr. 8: SITES & PLACES OF MEMORY / INTERPRETING SOURCES

Readings:

Ari Kelman, *A Misplaced Massacre: Struggling over the Memory of Sand Creek* (2013), selections.

James Loewen, *Lies Across America: What Our Historic Sites Get Wrong* (1999), selections.

Primary source analysis (in class).

Week 12 - Apr. 15: MYTH-MAKING & HISTORICAL MEMORY IN POPULAR CULTURE

Readings:

[Readings or films -- to be announced.]

Week 13 - Apr. 22 STUDENT PRESENTATIONS OF RESEARCH PROJECTS

Draft of research project due. [April 24 by 5pm]

Week 14 - Apr. 29 STUDENT PRESENTATIONS OF RESEARCH PROJECTS

Research Project Due: Friday, May. 15.

No Final Examination.

POLICIES:Evaluation/Grading:

Class participation: 20%
 Analytical Paper: 30%
 Research Paper 50%

Note: Students must complete all writing assignments to pass this course.

Attendance & Communication: The following is the History Department policy on attendance & communication: *“Students are required to attend all classes. Unexcused absences will result in a lower grade for the course. If you are having a medical or personal emergency, please contact the Dean’s Office as well as the instructor of the course. It is your responsibility to inform your instructor as soon as possible. It is essential that you check your email on a regular basis since History professors will contact you via email. We also expect you to use email to contact History professors.”*

Laptops & Electronic Devices: Electronic devices are a distraction from the careful listening and engaging conversation that are essential for a good seminar. Since we will use some ebooks and scanned pdfs for course readings, it’s okay to bring a laptop or tablet to class, but such devices should be closed whenever we are discussing other readings or course materials. Please silence and put away your mobile phone before class.

Accommodations for disability: If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact Leslie Hempling in the Office of Student Disability Services (Parrish 113) or email lhempli1@swarthmore.edu to arrange an appointment to discuss your needs. As appropriate, she will issue students with documented disabilities a formal Accommodations Letter. Since accommodations require early planning and are not retroactive, please contact her as soon as possible. For details about the accommodations process, visit the Student Disability Service website at <http://www.swarthmore.edu/student-life/academic-advising-and-support/student-disability-service.xml> . You are also welcome to contact me privately to discuss your academic needs. However, all disability-related accommodations must be arranged through Leslie Hempling in the Office of Student Disability Services.