HIST 500.02 Memory and History
Professor Kathleen Franz

Course Description: What is the relationship between memory and history? How are these two practices/ways of knowing different from each other? How does memory make history relevant? How does it disrupt and remake history? What methods should historians use to study memory as part of their own historical investigations? How have memories shaped personal identities, popular understandings of the past, communities, and even a sense of nationalism? In the past two decades, historians have become intensely interested in the power of memory in shaping public interpretation and knowledge about the past, but also how memories and counter-memories shape individual’s relationship to that past. During the culture wars of the mid-1990s, there was an outpouring of scholarship on memory and history, in an effort to better understand the first and its relationship to professional study and production of the later. This graduate seminar explores the historiography and cultural theory on memory, and asks some broad questions about the importance of studying collective or social memory. Although memories can be intensely personal and part of the cognitive processes that make us human, this class will not delve into the new scientific studies on memory (although there are many). In addition, this class will not engage film, literature, poetry, or visual arts, all of which have made their own contributions to a broader field of memory studies. Frankly, there is such a wealth of scholarly production on memory that it would take us several semesters to read everything. Since this is a history class, we will be concerned, principally, with historical writing on the topic.

Although our central question of the relationship between memory and history will tie the course together, a focus on the historiography related to this question is our only limitation. We will investigate the above through historical studies that cross the boundaries of nation/geographical area and time periods. The project at hand is not to learn more about the United States in the twentieth century, or France in the eighteenth, but to engage approaches, concepts, and methods that help us explore the cultural production of memory and weigh its use in historical scholarship. We will read how individual and collective memories have been forged through life stories (oral history and narrative), the landscape (memorials), institutions (museums), and popular culture (reenactment and festivals). We will also engage some of the central debates among historians about how to approach and integrate memory into our own work.
Assignments

Class participation 30%

As you can see from how heavily this category is weighted, class discussion is extremely important, not only for your success in the course, but also for the success of the class as a whole. This is a graduate seminar and our task is to discuss the reading and to share perspectives on the topics at hand in a collegial environment. To do this successfully, everyone must prepare for class. This means reading and taking careful notes on the book, flagging passages and ideas that you want to raise in class, understanding the central argument and organization of the book (which we will not rehash in class because it’s really boring to do that) and drafting a few questions for discussion. In addition, if something in the news, at a museum, or on the web catches your eye and helps broaden or deepen our understanding of the topic, or will help evoke lively discussion without taking us too far afield, please make copies and bring it to class. (But remember to run it by me first so that I can integrate it into the class.)

How will your participation be evaluated? The first way is through the quality of your comments and questions in class and how you engage with not just the professor but the group. Remember this is not a recitation, but a group discussion. Everyone should work together to bring life to the discussion.

The second form of participation/evaluation will be decided (by majority) in class on January 15. You can either submit weekly discussion questions and summary statements prior to class, or work in teams to lead discussion. We’ll determine this on the first night of class and then begin on January 29.

Review Essay 25% (Due: February 19)

12-15 pages. A review essay takes three or more books and combines them into a review that both summarizes individual arguments and shared themes, and comments on how they contribute to the field of inquiry. You should use one book from the course and two or three additional monographs of your choice. You may also use seminal articles, if they contribute to your topic and have truly influenced the field. Remember the books should relate to each other and address dominant paradigms at work in the larger body of scholarship represented in the course. For examples of review essays, you may want to consult the journals in your field of specialization, the Journal of American History or American Quarterly. In order to choose the additional books, you can consult the bibliography for this class on Blackboard, mine the footnotes in books we’re reading this semester, and read through the book review sections of major journals.

Historical Analysis 25% (Due: April 1)

10-15 page historical analysis of a novel, film, monument, performance, or museum or exhibit using the ideas, frameworks and concepts we’ve discussed in class. Detailed Guidelines to be handed out in class.

Final Exam 20%

Exams are exercises in memory, so it seems appropriate to include one at the end of this course. This will be an in-class, essay exam that will ask you to synthesize and analyze the readings from this semester.

Guidelines and things to keep in mind:

Attendance is not optional. Missing more than two classes will lower your grade by one letter. Absences are excused when accompanied by a doctor’s note.
Grades are earned not given. I am happy to meet with you and review drafts of the written assignments and discuss your participation in class. However, students who have questions about their performance should come see me prior to turning in assignments and must take responsibility for the final quality of their work and for turning in assignments on time.

Academic Integrity
Cheating will not be tolerated in this class. All students must be familiar with American University’s policies on academic integrity. Dishonesty includes: plagiarism, inappropriate collaboration, dishonesty in examinations, dishonesty in papers, work done for one course and submitted for another, deliberate falsification of data, interference with other students’ work, and copyright violations. For a full explanation of the rules and procedures related to academic integrity violations, visit the Academic Integrity link on the AU website. For this history class, please consult the Chicago Manual of Style for the proper citation rules when using ideas, quotes, and a variety of outside sources in your written work.

Required Reading
John Philip Santos, Places Left Unfinished at the Time of Creation (Viking, 1999).
Daniel James, Dona Maria’s Story: Life History, Memory and Political Identity (Duke, 2000).
Susan Crane, ed. Museums and Memory (Stanford University Press, 2000).
James Young, The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning (Yale University Press, 1993).
George Lipsitz, Time Passages (University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

Course Schedule

Prologue

January 15 Introduction

January 22 Memory and Forgetting
John Philip Santos, Places Left Unfinished at the Time of Creation (Viking, 1999).


**Theoretical and Methodological Foundations**

**January 29 Frameworks**


**February 5 Collective Memory**

**February 12 Mapping**

**Memory and Identity**

**February 19 Life History**
Daniel James, *Dona Maria’s Story: Life History, Memory and Political Identity* (Duke, 2000).


→ *Review Essay Due*

**February 26 Tradition**

**March 4 Commemoration** (Cut down and Mini Reports)

**March 11 Spring Break!**

**Landscapes, Museums, Monuments**
March 18 The Power of Place (Cognitive Mapping, slides)

March 25 Museums

April 1 Monuments

→ Historical Analysis Paper Due
→ Short presentations in class

April 8 Holocaust Memory

Popular Culture
April 15 Performance

Conclusions
April 22 Reflections and Conclusions

Final Exam: May 6, 5:30 - 8:00PM