

Anthropology 380
Trauma, Memory, Loss
 (Culture, Memory, History)

Department of Anthropology, Rutgers University

Instructor: Parvis Ghassem-Fachandi

Class time: Mo/Thurs 10:55-12:15

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Office Hours: Friday 11:00 - 12:00 (zoom)

Phone: 848 932 4104/480 815 04 17

Location of course: *synchronic remote (zoom)*

Credits: 3

Semester: Spring 2021

This course explores theoretical approaches to memory while retaining an emphasis on empirical knowledge of memory in relation to culture and society. A particularly strong emphasis will be laid on the close reading of foundational authors and their primary texts. In detailed discussions we will situate these authors both in time and place and with respect to one another. The course focuses on memory and its failure: the contortions, transformations, inscriptions, and shifting genres that precede, follow, or accompany the universal experience of loss. How do individuals and collectivities confront, deal with, and absolve themselves from loss? The course takes up three major approaches to memory: psychoanalysis (S. Freud), social organization of memory (P. Nora), and associative temporalities (W.G. Sebald). It examines various genres in which the memory of loss is retained, overwritten, distorted, or displaced: memoirs, graphic novel, films, memorials, reflexive ethnography, commemorative ritual, historical investigation, and various other forms of inscription. Memory—the process of recalling something of the past—frequently employs narrative form to organize experience into events. Hence part of the course will inquire into the structure of narrative. How is the past experienced and construed as meaningful story in the present? A better understanding of the memory of loss, and the social forms in which it remains active in the present, has the potential to heighten ethnographic sensibility during fieldwork in observing, interpreting, and analyzing various modes of expression by identifying communicative forms in practice and by comparing culturally specific forms of accounting for the past.

General Reference Works in English:

International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, David L. Sills, editor.

(as far as I know this classic reference work has not been digitalized)

Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology, edited by Alan Barnard and Jonathan Spencer, Routledge. (Call number: GN307.E53 1996)

Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory, David Herman, Manfred Jahn and Marie-Laure Ryan (eds.). (Call number: PN212.R68 2005)

The Edinburgh International Encyclopedia of Psychoanalysis, Ross M. Skelton (editor), Edinburgh : Edinburgh Univ. Press, 2006

The Language of Psycho-Analysis, J. Laplanche and J.B. Pontalis (eds.). Translated by Nicholson-Smith. (Call number: RC437.L313 1974)

Books for Purchase

Books are available at the Rutgers University Bookstore:

1. **W.G. Sebald.** 1996. *The Emigrants*. N.Y.: New Directions (Dr. Henry Selwyn, Paul Bereyter, Max Ferber). ISBN 978-0811213660
2. **Art Spiegelman.** 1986. *Maus: A Survivor's Tale: My Father Bleeds History*. NY: Pantheon. ISBN 0-394-74723-2
3. **Roland Barthes.** 2010. *Camera Lucida: Reflections of Photography*. Hill & Wang. ISBN-10 : 0374532338

MOVING IMAGES:

11'09"01 September 11 (2002). The selection directed by Sean Penn (with subtitles).

RU Digital Video Discs 10-817

In Treatment (2008-2010). HBO Series-Director: Paris Barclay, Rodrigo Garcia

[orig. *BeTipul* by Hagai Levi, Ori Sivan, and Nir Bergman]. *N/A at Rutgers Library at this time*

Caché [Hidden] (2005). Director: Michael Haneke (French with subtitles). *Call number: 10-744*

Waltz with Bashir (2008). Director: Ari Folman, director. *Call number: 10-1724*

Mother (2009). Director: Bong Jung-Ho [orig. 마더, Korean with subtitles]. *N/A at Rutgers Library*

A German Life (2017) [orig. *Ein Deutsches Leben*]. Director: Christian Krönes, Olaf S. Müller,

Roland Schrotthofer, Florian Weigensamer (German with subtitles). *RU Academic Video Online:*

Premium United States

The Act of Killing (2012). Director: Joshua Oppenheimer. *RU Video Online*

The Look of Silence (2014). Director: Joshua Oppenheimer. *RU Video Online*

READING LOAD: Variable, but maximally 150 pages/week. Most required readings are on **Sakai**. Three books have to be purchased (see above). Please inform me immediately if movies cannot be watched, the books are not available for purchase or articles are not accessible for reading on Sakai.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING CRITERIA:

The course will be discussion driven, so it is vitally important that you come to class having read and screened all class materials (this includes both, static and moving material). **Midterm**

Take-Home Exam (30%), max. 4-5 pages. **Final Take-Home Exam** (30%), max. 4-5 pages, due by May 11. **Class Participation** (40%).

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

To provide undergraduate-level competency in narrative theory, social construction of memory, psychoanalysis, associative temporalities, the symbolic/imaginary/real distinction, competency in diverse theoretical approaches to history and historiography, society and culture. They will also learn to critically discuss, argue, and appraise, modern and classic anthropological and other texts with and among their peers. Fore-grounded are classic texts that deal with individual and collective forms of memory, rituals of commemoration, structure and function of myth, the configuration of plot structures, individual and national narrative expression, the difference between meaning and sense, representation and identification, explanation and interpretation, construction and deconstruction.

To help advanced students gain proficiency in the use of critical thinking skills in their assessment of analytical texts on history, society and culture, social theory, anthropological and ethnographic narrativization, writing, media representation, and psychoanalysis.

To provide students with the training of reading and presentation skills, the use of central concepts, and a comparative approach to historical depth, as well as cultural and social difference.

To provide students with the academic tools for specialized work through the use of professional dictionaries and encyclopedias.

Week 1. What is Memory? (Thurs January 21st)

1. **Sigmund Freud.** 1963[1925] A Note Upon the Mystic Writing-Pad. *In* General Psychological Theory, Chapter XIII, pp. 227-232 [5 pages]
2. **Jorge Luis Borges.** 1962. Funes the Memorious. *Labyrinths*, N.Y.: A New Directions Book, pp. 59-66 [7 pages]
3. **James Baldwin.** 1955. Notes of a Native Son. *In* Baldwin: Collected Essays, pp. 63-84 [21 pages]

Recommended: Aleida Assmann. 2008. Transformations between History and Memory. *Social Research*, Vol. 75, No. 1, *Collective Memory and Collective Identity*, pp. 49-72 [23 pages]; View: *In Treatment* (2008 HBO Series), Season 3, "Sunil" (2011). Watch the first four or all of the episodes (of overall 7). Each episode is ca. ½ hour long. For a reflection on the therapist "Paul Weston" you can add "Adele," Season 3, episode 7.

Week 2. Symptom & Fixation (Mo 25th January and Thurs January 28th)

1. **Sigmund Freud.** 1960[1920]. The Meaning of Symptoms. *In* A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis. New York: Washington Square Press, pp. 268-283 [15 pages]
2. **Sigmund Freud.** 1960[1920]. Fixation upon Traumas: The Unconscious. *In* A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis. N.Y.: Washington Square Press, pp. 284-296 [12 pages]
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3. **Alexandra Fuller.** 2004. The Soldier. *The New Yorker*, March 1, pp. 54-67 [13 pages]

Week 3. Mourning, Forgetting, Melancholia (Mo February 1st and Thurs February 4th)

1. **Sigmund Freud.** 1963[1917]. Mourning and Melancholia. *In* General Psychological Theory, 164-179. N.Y: Collier Books [15 pages]
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2. **Elena Lappin.** 1999. The Man With Two Heads. *Granta: The Magazine of Writing*, 66, pp. 9-65 [56 pages]
3. **Paul Connerton.** 2008. Seven Types of Forgetting. *Memory Studies* 1(1): 59-71 [12 pages]

Week 4. The Social Organization of Memory (Mo February 8th and Thurs February 11th)

1. **Maurice Halbwachs.** 1980[1950]. Historical Memory and Collective Memory. *In* The Collective Memory. New York: Harper and Row, pp. 50-87 [37 pages]
2. **Pierre Nora.** 1996[1992]. General Introduction: Between Memory and History. *In* Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past. Vol. 1: Conflicts and Divisions. N.Y.: Columbia University Press, pp. 1-23 [23 pages]
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3. **Antoine Prost.** Monuments to the Dead. *In* *Realms of Memory* (ed. by Nora), Vol. 1, 307-32. [25 pages]
4. **Antoine Prost.** 1999. The Algerian War in French Collective Memory, Chapter 8, 161-176. *In* *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan, Cambridge: CUP [15 pages]

View:

Caché, Michael Haneke, director, 2005 (French with English subtitles)

Week 5. Memory and Accountability (Mo February 15th and Thurs February 18th)

1. **John Borneman.** 2011. Modes of Accountability: Events of Closure, Rites of Repetition. *In* *Political Crime and the Memory of Loss.* Bloomington: Indiana University, pp. 3-33 [30 pages]
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2. **Elizabeth Kolbert.** 2015. The Last Trial: A Great grandmother, Auschwitz, and the arc of justice. *The New Yorker*, February 16 [9 pages]
3. **Linde Apel.** 2014. Stumbling blocks in Germany. *Rethinking History* 18(2): 181-194 [13 pages]

Recommended: Aleida Assman and Anja Schwartz. 2013. Memory, Migration, and Guilt. *Crossings: Journal of Migration and Culture* 4 (1): 51-65; Veena Das. 2003. Trauma and Testimony: Implications for Political Community. *Anthropological Theory*, Vol. 3 (3): 293-307 [14 pages]

Week 6. *Mémoire* and Memory (Mo February 22nd and Thurs February 25th)

1. **W.G. Sebald.** 2002. A Natural History of Destruction. *The New Yorker*, Nov. 4 [11 pages]
2. **W.G. Sebald.** 1996. The Emigrants. N.Y.: New Directions, (Dr. Henry Selwyn, Paul Bereyter, Ambros Adelwarth, Max Ferber). *Selections*, pp. 3-63 [60 pages]

Midterm Take-Home Exam.

Due on Thursday March 4th in class. Maximum 4-5 pages, double-spaced.

Week. 7. Narrativity and History (Mo March 1st and Thurs March 4th)

1. **Jonathan Culler.** 1983. Story and Discourse in the Analysis of Narrative. *In* *The Pursuit of Signs.* Ithaca: Cornell U P, pp. 169-187 [18 pages]
2. **Vivian Gornick.** 2001. The Situation and the Story. New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, pp. 3-26 [23 pages]
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3. **Hayden White.** 1987. The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality. *In* *The Content of the Form.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1987, pp. 1-25.

Recommended: Mikhail Bakhtin. 1981. The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays. Austin: University of Texas Press,

pp. 1-40 [40 pages]

View:

Waltz with Bashir (2008)-Director: Ari Folman

Week 8. Memory and Embodiment (Mo March 8th and Thurs March 11th)

1. **Shahla Talebi.** 2011. Roya: The Threshold of Imagination and Phantasm. In *Ghosts of Revolution: Rekindled Memories of Imprisonment in Iran*, Chapter 2, pp. 54-77. Stanford: Stanford University Press **[23 pages]**

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2. **Rachel Aviv.** 2017. Remembering the murder you didn't commit: DNA evidence exonerated ix convicted killers. So why do some of them recall the crime so clearly? *The New Yorker*, Juli 18 **[40 pages]**

Recommended: Mahua Sarkar. 2006. Difference in memory. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 48, No. 1, pp. 139-168 [29 pages];

Spring Recess From March 13th to March 21st

Week 9. Memory and History (Mo March 22nd and Thurs March 25th)

1. **Equal Justice Initiative.** 2015. Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror. Montgomery, Alabama: EJI. **View:** <https://lynchinginamerica.eji.org/>
2. **Frederick Douglass.** 1994 [1855]. Life as a Slave. In My Bondage and y Freedom, Chapter I-III. In *Douglass: Autobiographies* (The Library of America), pp. 139-157 **[18 pages]**

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3. **Hilton Als.** 2020. My Mother's Dreams for Her Son, and All black children. *The New Yorker*, June 21st, 2020 **[15 pages]**
4. **David Roediger.** 1999. On Autobiography and Theory: An Introduction. In *The Wages of Whiteness*, pp. 3-15 **[12 pages]**

Week 10. Landscapes of Memory (Mo March 29th and Thurs April 1st)

1. **Lawrence Kirmayer.** 1996. Landscapes of Memory: Trauma, Narrative, and Dissociation, pp. 173-198. In *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory*. Antze and Lambek (eds.), New York: Routledge **[25 pages]**
2. **John Borneman.** 2015. Knowledgeability and the Materiality of Child Sex Abuse, In *Cruel Attachments*, Chapter 4. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. pp. 142-159 **[17 pages]**

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4. **Duncan Light and Craig Young.** 2015. Public Memory, Commemoration, and

Transitional Justice: Reconfiguring the Past in Public Space. *In Post-Communist Transitional Justice: Lessons from Twenty Five Years of Experience*, pp. 233-250
[17 pages]

Recommended: Keith Basso. 1988. Speaking with names: Language and landscape among the Western Apache. *Cultural Anthropology*, 3(2):99-130 [31 pages]

Week 11. The Politics of Memory (Mo April 5th and Thurs April 8th)

1. **Gerry Webster** and **Jonathan Leib**. 2016. Religion, Murder, and the Confederate Battle Flag in South Carolina. *Southwestern Geographer* 56 (1), pp. 29-37 **[8 pages]**
2. **William Wan**. 2020. Historians question Trump's Choice of 'Heroes' for national garden monument. *Washington Post*, July 4th **[3 pages]**
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3. **Benjamin Forest** and **Juliet Johnson**. 2002. Unraveling the threads of history: Soviet-era monuments and post-Soviet national identity in Moscow. *Annals of the association of American Geographers*, 92, pp. 524-547 **[20 pages]**
4. **Kathleen E. Smith**. 2019. A Monument for our Times? Commemorating Victims of Repression in Putin's Russia. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 71(8), pp. 1314-1344 **[30 pages]**

Week 12. Memory Projects (Mo April 12th and Thurs April 15th)

1. **James E. Young**. 1992. The Counter-Monument: Memory against Itself in Germany Today. *Critical Inquiry* 18, pp. 267-296 **[29 pages]**
2. **James E. Young**. 2016. The memorial arc: between Berlin's *Denkmal* and the New York City's 9/11 memorial. *Memory Studies*, 9(3), pp. 325-331 **[6 pages]**
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3. **Quentin Stevens, Karen Franck, and Ruth Fazakerley**. 2012. Counter-monuments: the anti-monumental and the dialogic. *The Journal of Architecture* 17(6): 951-972 **[21 pages]**
4. **Barbara Misztal**. 2005. Memory and democracy. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 48(10), pp. 1320-1338 **[18 pages]**
5. **BBC World Service Podcast**. 2020. Why do we care about statues? *On The Inquiry*, BBC, June 25. Listen to: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/w3cszl3k> (accessed Dec. 15, 2020) **[23 minutes long]**

Week 13. Memory Projects (Mo April 19th and Thurs April 22nd)

1. **Art Spiegelman**. 1986. Maus: A Survivor's Tale: My Father Bleeds History. NY: Pantheon. Graphic Novel **[159 pages]**
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2. **Jelena Subotic**. 2019. The Politics of Holocaust Remembrance after Communism. *In Yellow Star, Red Star: Holocaust Remembrance after Communism*, pp. 17-44 **[27 pages]**

Week 14. Mother & Memory & the Real (Mo April 26th and Thurs April 29th)

1. **Roland Barthes.** 1982 [1980]. Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography. Part Two, pp. 63-110. New York: Hill and Wang **[47 pages]**
2. **Timothy Ryback.** 1993. Evidence of Evil (on Auschwitz), *The New Yorker*, Nov. 15, pp. 68-81 **[13 pages]**

Recommended: Slavoj Zizek. 1989. Which subject of the real? *In* The Sublime Object of Ideology, pp. 153-173 [20 pages]

View:

Mother (2009)-Director: Bong Jung-Ho (Korean with subtitles)

Week 15. Conclusion and Take-Home Exam (Mo May 3rd)

Last Day of Classes!

Final Take-Home Exam

Due **May 11th** (or later but *before* grades are due). Maximum 4-5 pages, double-spaced.