Honors 203: The Battle for Public Memory

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Fall Semester Office Hours: Mon. & Tues. 10:30-11:30, Friday 12:45-1:45

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Fall Semester Office Hours: MWF 10:30-11:30 and 2:00-3:00; TR 10:30-12:30

Course Description:
“He who controls the present controls the past.” This famous quotation from George Orwell draws our attention to the complicated relationship between ourselves and our history. History is not just what happened prior to the present. It is the way we choose to tell the story of past events. Deciding how to present the stories of our past is a complicated and highly contentious process. What we choose to highlight and ignore says at least as much about contemporary social and political relationships as it does about the events being retold. This class will focus on a number of conflicts over public memory, both personal and political.

In this course, we will define public memory and examine its constructs. Students will study myriad expressions of public memory in different contexts (personal, communal, national, and international). We will investigate how individuals, communities, and nations have wrestled with the past in order to shape the present and the future. The disciplinary perspectives of history, political science, and sociology, among others, will be applied, and students will be responsible for a challenging amount of reading and writing.

Course Outcomes. By the end of this course students should be able to:
* define public/collective memory and explain its relationship to the study of history
* describe the role of power in constructing public memory
* explain the importance of temporal, cultural, and political context in creating public memory
* identify and apply theoretical approaches to the study of public memory
* identify manifestations of public memory and evaluate them critically.

Course Readings:
- Other readings as posted, marked with a *

Accessibility Statement:
Students with documented or suspected disabilities that prevent full access to course resources and/or facilities should contact Faith Craig, Disability Resources Director. Find the Disability Resource Office in 209 Thompson-Clark Hall or call 724-946-7192 for more information and assistance.

Academic Integrity:
An explanation of the Academic Integrity Policy is listed in your Westminster Catalog. You must submit your own work and properly acknowledge anyone else’s work you use. If we determine that you have violated this policy, you will fail the assignment and the Dean will be notified. A second violation will result in a failing grade for the class. In addition, the following might result:

“After reviewing the instructor’s explanation of the violation and penalty, as well as the student’s record of previous offenses, the VPAA (Vice President for Academic Affairs) will take the following additional action:
“a. FOR A FIRST OFFENSE, the VPAA may supplement the instructor’s penalty with further action, up to and including suspension and permanent dismissal. . .
“b. FOR A SECOND OFFENSE, the VPAA will impose a one-semester suspension.
“c. FOR A THIRD OFFENSE, the VPAA will impose a penalty of permanent dismissal from the College.”

Assignments and Grades:

Attendance and Participation:
Faithful attendance and active participation that demonstrate suitable preparation are required. Students should come to class having read the assigned material and/or completed the assigned homework. Please bring the appropriate readings to class (in paper or digital form).

Evaluation:
2 Exams 20% each  Museum Paper 10%  Group Poster 10%
Flight 93 Reflection 10% Participation 10%  Final Project 20%

Flight 93 Memorial Reflection:
On Sunday, September 10, we will travel to the Flight 93 Memorial. If you are not able to go, you will need to find some other way to visit the memorial before the reflection is due. Your paper should relate your impressions of the content of the memorial, but you should also comment on the memorial’s purpose, form, and design. What narrative(s) does/do the memorial promote? What messages are being sent? How effectively? How does the memorial encourage audience participation? Cite at least one
assigned reading in your reflection (using any format). Double-space your reflection and use 10-12 Times New Roman font with one-inch margins. It should be 2-3 pages long. Submit a paper and an electronic copy of your review (by uploading it to D2L) by **Monday, September 18**. Your grade will reflect the quality of your insight and analysis as well as the quality of your writing.

**Genealogy Assignment:**
You will interview one family member who is over 50 years old to discover one thing about your family’s history that you did not know. Take good notes. You will need to do this before we discuss *My Grandfather Would Have Shot Me*. When we meet for library instruction on Monday, October 16, you will be introduced to some resources you can use to further investigate the information you discover in the interview. Use the information and your research to pull together a cohesive narrative. Write a 1-2-page paper on what you discovered about your family history. This paper is due to the dropbox on D2L by Monday, October 30th. It will be assessed as part of your participation grade.

**Museum Paper:**
The purpose of this assignment is to help you familiarize yourself with the museum or memorial you will be researching in your final project. Choose a museum or a memorial in Washington D.C. that you will research, visit, and analyze. You must have your topic approved before the first scheduled library day on Monday, October 16. Before the class visits Washington on November 3-5, research and write a paper on that museum’s history and background to familiarize yourself with your topic. Your paper should cite (in any standard format) at least three monographs or articles on the museum’s founding, rationale, and history. Double-space your paper and use 10-12 Times New Roman font with one-inch margins. It should be 2-3 pages long. Submit a paper and an electronic copy (by uploading it to D2L) by **Friday, October 20**. Your grade will reflect the quality of your insight, analysis, and research as well as the quality of your writing.

**Research Project:**
All students will complete a 15-20-page research paper and group poster presentation about a Washington D.C. public memory site not covered in depth in class and about which you have written your museum paper. Double-space your paper and use 10-12 Times New Roman font with one-inch margins. Your paper grade will reflect the quality of your insight, analysis, and research as well as the quality of your writing. The final paper, which you will submit electronically to D2L, is due on **Monday, November 20**. Projects will include the following components:

**Research (background and context):**
Do additional research on your chosen museum or memorial. How is the memory site funded? Administered? What individuals or groups advocated for its creation? Why? Were/are there any controversies surrounding the museum/monument, its history, or its exhibits? Be sure to include dates when describing its history. Include at least one paragraph that comments on the historical context of its founding. [Describe some of the major and relevant political, cultural, social, economic, etc. issues of the time. In what ways was the museum/monument a product of its time?] Cite AT LEAST five more monographs or articles in your final paper. Include a description and analysis of its website. [What content is available on the website? Who creates the content? Who is the intended audience? How is the content presented? What are the website’s strengths and weaknesses?]
Literature review/Historiography:
One section of your paper will incorporate theory about collective/public memory that you have studied in the class as well as analyze what other scholars have said about public memory and/or your chosen museum or memorial. This part of your paper should be at least three pages long, and it should cite a MINIMUM of two class readings and one other secondary source.

Evaluation of a public memorial or museum:
For this project, your evaluation of the Washington D.C. public memory site is your primary source analysis. We will visit Washington from November 3-5. While we are there, visit your topic. Take extensive, thorough notes on what you find there, observing the content, form, and design of the museum and its exhibits (or of the memorial). Use what you learned evaluating the Flight 93 Memorial. When studying an exhibit within a museum, for example, consider the following: 1.) the exhibit’s sponsor; 2.) the topic and content; 3.) the purpose and intended audience; 4.) the historical conclusions found in the exhibit; 4.) the evidence and how the exhibit’s conclusions are presented (written text, photos and/or objects used, design, etc.). These same observations should be made about a memorial. If your topic is a museum, you will want to examine a few exhibits and make note of how the exhibits relate to each other, which topics are covered (and which are not), and the design of the museum as a whole.

When writing your evaluation, critique both content and form after describing what you observed. What conclusions and narratives were expressed? Were those clear? What evidence was used in the displays? Was the historical analysis clear and appropriate? What strengths and weaknesses did you observe? Finally, link your analysis to public memory theory and scholarship in a way that is relevant and insightful.

Bibliography/Works Cited/References:
Include a properly formatted bibliography if you are using Chicago-style, works-cited page if you are using MLA, or reference page if you are using APA.

Group Poster Presentation:
You will work with a partner to create a poster on some aspect of your research projects and present it together on Friday, December 8. We will assign everyone a partner based on your topics. Together, you should discuss your poster’s topic and design. If you both researched a similar public memory site, for instance, you may present on both of your findings. Another option is to highlight a common theme that both of you identified as you researched different public memory sites.

Go to http://www.westminster.edu/academics/research/pdf/submit-a-poster.pdf for tips. We will give you time in class after Thanksgiving to work on your posters and to ask questions. You will need to include AT LEAST a title, an abstract with a description of your thesis, five images [you are encouraged to use your own images and be sure to credit others’ work], a list of four of your most important sources, and an explanation of the significance of your work. Take a look at the following articles for suggestions and tips: http://hass.ugresearch.ucla.edu/urwposters.htm and https://wp.nyu.edu/archivesandpublichistory/2014/05/13/poster-tips-for-humanities-conference-posters/.
In addition to the poster, you will need to craft an elevator speech for the day of the presentation. Type up a few sentences that succinctly and engagingly sum up your research. Submit this to D2L before the poster session on Friday. Use this summary to present your research to visitors to your posters.

Your completed poster should be turned in NO LATER than Friday, December 1 at 1:00 pm. Save your poster file to the course D2L dropbox by this date and time or you will be responsible for printing your poster yourself. Posters will be graded on the insight of your major conclusions (and their reflection of an understanding of some aspect of public memory); on the content, design, and clarity of
your poster (that includes grammar, syntax, etc.); on your ability to work with a partner; and on your participation on the day of the presentation (including the quality of your elevator speech). Please come to the presentation in appropriate attire (professional dress) and feel free to invite your friends and family.
Course Schedule:

Unit One: Collective Memory—Stories We Tell Ourselves (Aug. 28-Sept. 11)

Monday, Aug. 28 – Course Introduction

Wednesday, Aug. 30 –
Olick, Vinitsky-Seroussi, and Levy, “Introduction” Reader pp. 3-29

Friday, Sept. 1 –
Olick, Vinitsky-Seroussi, and Levy, “Introduction” Reader pp. 29-49

Monday, Sept. 4 –
Halbwachs, Bloch, and Blondel, The Collective Memory. Reader pp. 139-154

Wednesday, Sept. 6 –
http://www.jstor.org/stable/25605361

Friday, Sept. 8 -

Sunday, Sept. 10 – Trip to Flight 93 Memorial

Monday, Sept. 11 –
Warner, The Living and the Dead, Reader pp. 163-167

Image: James Dean’s hometown newspaper reporting on his burial
Unit Two: History, Meaning and Identity--Obituaries, Family Histories, Identity Construction (Sept. 13-Oct. 4)

**Wednesday, Sept. 13 – Friday Sept. 15**
Burke “History as Social Memory.” Reader pp. 188-92


**Monday, Sept. 18 –**
Megill, “History, Memory, Identity.” Reader pp. 191-97


**Flight 93 Memorial Reflection Paper Due**

**Wednesday, Sept. 20 –**
* “Why Turkey Won’t Say the G-word when it Comes to the Armenians”
cnn.com/cnn/2015/04/24/Europe/Armenia-turkey-massacre/index.html


**Friday, Sept. 22 –**
* Pauli Murray, excerpt from *Proud Shoes*

**Monday, Sept. 25 – Wednesday, Sept. 27**
* Ball, excerpt from *Slaves in the Family*

**Friday, Sept. 29 – Wednesday, Oct. 4**

**Exam 1 Friday, October 6**
Image: Rosa Parks' statue in National Statuary Hall of the United States Capitol

Unit Three: Power, Politics and Contestation—Museum Exhibits, Textbooks, Trauma (Oct. 9-Nov. 3)

**Monday, Oct. 9**


**Wednesday, Oct. 11**

Alexander, “Toward a Cultural Theory of Trauma.” Reader pp. 307-310

Kansteiner, “Finding Meaning in Memory.” Reader pp. 300-303

**Friday, Oct. 13**
Winter, Remembering War: The Great War between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century, Reader pp. 426-429

* Emily Swafford, “Controversy Surrounds Department of Defense Commemorative Website,”

**Monday, Oct. 16** – Library Day

**Wednesday, Oct. 18**
* Gary Nash, “For Whom Will the Liberty Bell Toll? From Controversy to Cooperation” [posted on D2L]

**Friday, Oct. 20** – **Museum Paper Due**

**Monday, Oct. 23** – No class, Mid-break
Wednesday, Oct. 25 –
* Tony Horwitz, excerpt from *Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War* [posted on D2L]

Friday, Oct. 27 –

Monday, Oct. 30 –
* Jay Winter, excerpt from *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* [posted on D2L]

**Genealogy Assignment Due**

Wednesday, Nov. 1 –
* Akiko Takenaka, excerpt from *Yasukuni Shrine: History, Memory, and Japan’s Unending Postwar* [posted on D2L]

Friday, Nov. 3 –
* Susan Crane, “Memory, Distortion, and History in the Museum” [posted on D2L]


Image: A world map showing all the truth and reconciliation commissions in the Museum of Memory and Human Rights, Santiago, Chile (By Warko - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=9449374](https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=9449374))

**November 3-5** travel to Washington D.C. to study Public Memorial or Museum
Unit Four: Memory, Justice, Contemporary Epoch—Reckoning with and Erasing the Past (Nov. 6 – Nov. 29)

**Monday, Nov. 6 – Wednesday Nov. 8**

Boym “Nostalgia and its Discontents” Reader pp. 452-57

* Frederick Douglass “The Meaning of July 4th for the Negro”  


Young “At Memory’s Edge: After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture.”  
(Reader pp. 371-74

**Friday, Nov. 10 –**
* Andrew Denson, *Monuments to Absence* [posted on D2L]

**Monday, Nov. 13 – Library Day**

**Wednesday, Nov. 15 – Monday, Nov. 20**
Vinitsky-Seroussi “Commemorating a Difficult Past.” Reader pp. 375-77

Nora “The Reasons for the Upsurge in Memory.” Reader pp. 437-41

Trouillot, “Abortive Memories: Historical Apologies in the Global Era.” Reader pp. 458-64

Osiel, “Mass Atrocity, Collective Memory and the Law.” Reader pp. 468-70

**Monday, Nov. 20 – Research Project Due**

**Wednesday, Nov. 22 –** No class, Thanksgiving

**Friday, Nov. 24 –** No class, Thanksgiving

**Monday, Nov. 27 –** Group work on poster presentations

**Wednesday, Nov. 29 –** Group work on poster presentations

**Friday, Dec. 1 –** Group work on poster presentations  
  **Poster Due by 1:00 pm**

**Monday, Dec. 4 –** Discuss *The Submission*

**Wednesday, Dec. 6 –** Discuss *The Submission*
Friday, Dec. 8 – Discuss *The Submission*

**Thursday, Dec. 14 8:00-10:30 (Final Period) – Exam 2**

Image: Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, Berlin, Germany