

Core 3.12  
Fall 2014  
W 2:45-5:30  
Hum. 105

Professor Liss  
Hum. 214, x73541  
Office Hrs: Tues. 4:15-5:30;  
Wed. 10:30-12

## History and Memory

“The past is never dead. It’s not even past.”—William Faulkner

This course is about histories in the present. All history is created in a present and says as much about that present as it does about the past. We will examine public representations in movies, museums, memorials, media, and other contexts, focusing on official memory, vernacular memory, remembering and forgetting, digital remembrance, historical amnesia, counter memory, and the development of identity—individual, communal and national. What is the relationship between individual and collective memories and history, what happened in the past and the stories we tell about it?

In keeping with the theme of the Core curriculum, the premise of this course is that we can examine the genealogies of the present by focusing on the representation of the past in the present (or presents). Today memorial preoccupations center on the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the U.S. Civil War, the centennial of World War I, the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Civil Rights Movement landmark events, and the opening of the 9/11 memorial museum, demonstrating how important—and contested—are acts of remembrance. These current preoccupations build on earlier episodes: the Smithsonian exhibit of the Enola Gay, memorialization of the Holocaust, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, and the trauma of and activist response to the AIDS epidemic. One goal of the Core theme is to denaturalize what we take for granted; this course examines a past we may take for granted, how representations of the past changes over time and with them our own relation to that past and sense of ourselves—as individuals and as members of communities. In this course, students will examine how the past exists in the present in which they live, including what has been forgotten or repressed. Sometimes what we regard as “tradition” is a recent invention; sometimes what we assume to be new and unique to us is embedded in longer histories that have been erased.

The following books are available at Huntley’s Bookstore and are on reserve at Honnold Library:

Toni Morrison, Beloved (ISBN 9781400033416)  
Erica Doss, Memorial Mania (9780226159416)  
Kristin Ann Hass, Carried to the Wall (9780520213173)  
Dolores Hayden, Power of Place (9780262581523)  
Richard White, Remembering Ahanagran (9780295983554)

Other readings listed on the syllabus (and marked with an asterisk \*) are available on Sakai in the Resources folder. Students should print these out and bring them to class when assigned.

Films: 12 Years a Slave (2012); Stories We Tell (2013); The Missing Picture (2014); Angels in America (1993); The Normal Heart (2014); How to Survive a Plague (2012) (arrangements TBA)

Field trips: downtown Los Angeles and the Museum of Tolerance. These are essential parts of the course and are required. Arrangements will be made at the beginning of the semester; students may go independently, if necessary.

Information on course learning objectives, requirements, grading policy, academic accommodations and academic integrity is on the following pages.

Course learning objectives and assessment:

Core III Learning Objectives *with additional goals for this course in italics:*

1. Students independently and creatively develop their understanding of different disciplines and interdisciplinary inquiry acquired in Core I and II, *in particular how fields such as history, sociology, museum and media studies construct knowledge about the past.*
2. Students explore and interrogate the historical construction of a particular field of inquiry. *This course focuses on the process of historical construction in the present from a variety of analytical, disciplinary, and topical perspectives.*
3. *Students examine the meaning and use of such concepts as “historical memory,” “cultural memory,” and “collective memory” in the study of history and identities from a variety of disciplinary perspectives.*
4. Students formulate, research, and execute a substantial project of their own design, *including a written component and, depending on the student’s interest, a “creative” component.*

Grades:

Participation:	20%
Sakai postings:	10%
Self-selected book response and presentation	10%
Three short papers:	30% (10% each, due: Sept. 26; Oct. 24; Nov. 21)
Final project:	20% (individual research paper—20%; individual project and short paper—10%+10%; group project and individual short paper—10%+10%)
Final presentation:	10%

Course requirements:

Participation, including attendance: This class is a seminar, which means that your active participation is necessary for the course’s success. Students are expected to attend all classes, complete the readings before class, and come prepared to discuss the material. Laptops and other electronic devices are not permitted, except for academic accommodations (see below). You should bring (and print out, as needed) the day’s assignment. Annotating the texts (underlining and taking marginal notes) will help you focus your reading and prepare for class. Take notes as you finish an assignment to identify key terms, arguments and ideas, questions, important passages and references or sources (be sure to read the footnotes). How does the reading connect to other material we have discussed? What would you like to know more about? What ideas for further explorations (or projects) does it suggest, by its methodology, theoretical perspective, or subject matter? I recommend that you keep a file, notebook or journal with your notes and reflections on the readings and assignments. You can use these for the day’s discussion questions (below) and for future reference for your papers and projects.

Sakai postings: discussion questions and film and field trip notes: You are required to post by 9 a.m. of the day’s discussion (in the appropriate Sakai forum thread) at least two questions for each class. Your questions should demonstrate that you have not only done the readings but also thought about them, taken collectively, if possible. Your questions should help generate discussion about the readings and films and their arguments or approaches. This means that you should avoid simple factual questions. In contrast, questions that focus on a key concept that is unclear, difficult, or controversial may be helpful.

Questions that explore the implications or conclusions of the readings or connect them to each other are also useful.

You should take notes on films that we screen and field trips that we take and post responses in the appropriate Sakai forum. The purpose of this requirement is to help focus your viewing of the films and exhibits/sites and to provide a resource for class discussion and your future reference (e.g. writing papers). These summaries and responses can be informal but should be insightful nonetheless.

Self-selected book response and presentation: Each student will select a book on a topic of particular interest. A list of suggestions will be distributed in the first weeks of the term. Substitutions are possible, with my approval. The response will consist of a 2-page summary of the book's argument and analysis of the issues it raises. Brief 5-10 minute in-class presentations will be scheduled to accompany the papers. Information and scheduling TBA.

Three short papers (4-5 pages): Synthetic essays that probe a problem raised by the readings and materials for this course. Prompts will be distributed two weeks before each assignment is due.

Final project and presentation: Students may elect to do individual or group projects, traditional research papers or "creative" projects with a shorter written component. Creative projects might include a film, alternative museum, website, visual or narrative presentation. All creative projects are accompanied by a short (4 page) written component by each student explaining how the project relates to the theories and themes of this class and to the Core theme, "Histories of the Present." All students will give presentations at the end of the semester, either individually or as part of groups. We will discuss projects throughout the semester and use readings to suggest potential topics and approaches. Final project proposals are due Oct. 31 and optional rough drafts may be turned in by Dec. 1.

Individual: traditional research paper (10-12 pages) or a "creative" project such as a film, alternative museum, website, visual or narrative presentation with a shorter (4 page) written component.

**or**

Group: projects may take a variety of forms such as a film, alternative museum, website, mini-conference or film festival, visual or narrative presentation. Each member of the group will also prepare a short, individual (4 page) written component explaining how the project relates to the theories and themes of this class and to the Core theme, "Histories of the Present."

Presentations of final projects will take place in the last weeks of the semester and, if necessary, during reading days. (Arrangements will depend on the size of the class and the number of individual and group projects).

**Academic accommodations:**

*Scripps students seeking to receive academic accommodations must contact Sonia De La Torre-Iniguez, [sdelator@scrippscollege.edu](mailto:sdelator@scrippscollege.edu), in the Dean of Students Office to formalize accommodations. Students should plan to meet with Sonia to discuss appropriate accommodations and provide documentation as necessary. Accommodations may not be provided for students who have not registered through the Dean of Students Office.*



**Week I. Sept. 3: Introduction to the course: memories, histories, ghosts**

Some relevant summer readings  
Morrison, Beloved

**Week II. Sept. 10: Slavery and the haunting of the nation**

Morrison, Beloved  
\*Gordon, Ghostly Matters, selections  
\*Renan, from What is a Nation?  
\*Blight, from American Oracle: The Civil War in the Civil Rights Era

**Week III. Sept. 17: Why memory?**

Doss, Memorial Mania, Introduction, ch. 1-3  
\*Anderson, from Imagined Communities, selections  
\*Levy and Sznajder, from “Memory Unbound”

**Week IV. Sept. 24: Slavery, revenge, and restitution**

12 Years a Slave (Steve McQueen, dir., 2012, 134 min) (to be screened outside of class)  
\*Readings on 12 Years a Slave  
\*Landsberg, Prosthetic Memory, selections  
\*Coates, “The Case for Reparations” and related material

**Paper #1 due by 4 p.m. Friday, Sept. 26 in your Sakai dropbox**

**Week V. Oct. 1: History, memoir, nostalgia**

White, Remembering Ahanagan  
\*Boym, The Future of Nostalgia, selections  
Stories We Tell (Sarah Polley, dir., 2012, 108 min.) (to be screened outside of class)

**Week VI. Oct. 8: Self-selected reading responses and presentations in class**

**Week VII. Oct. 15: AIDS: trauma and remembering/identity and resistance**

\*Sturken, Tangled Memories, selections  
\*Ramirez, “Memory and Mourning”  
Students will decide among the following films and accompanying readings:  
“Angels in America,” (Mike Nichols, dir., 2004)  
“How to Survive a Plague,” (David France, dir., 2012)  
“The Normal Heart” (Ryan Murphy, dir., 2014)

**Week VIII. Oct. 22: Los Angeles palimpsest: heritage, community and politics**

Hayden, The Power of Place  
\*Schrank, Art and the City, selections  
\*Siqueiros readings

**Paper #2 due by 4 p.m. Friday, Oct. 24 in your Sakai dropbox**

**Trip to Olvera St., Siqueiros mural, Japanese American Museum, Saturday, Oct. 25**

**Week IX. Oct. 29: Enola Gay: whose past? what past?**

Linenthal and Engelhardt, eds., History Wars, selections

Doss, Memorial Mania, ch. 4

\*Terkel, "The Good War", selections

**Project proposals due by 4 p.m. Friday, Oct. 31 in your Sakai dropbox**

**Trip to Museum of Tolerance, Sunday, Nov. 2**

**Week X. Nov. 5: Holocaust: exhibiting genocide**

\*Novick, The Holocaust in American Life, selections

\*Young, from "The Texture of Memory"

\*Williams, "The Memorial Museum Identity Complex"

\*Minear, "Atomic Holocaust, Nazi Holocaust"

**November 6: Humanities Institute event: Jeffrey Prager, "Like Parent, Like Child: Transmissions of Trauma across Generations," Boone Auditorium, 4:30 p.m.**

**Week XI. Nov. 12: "Vietnam": memorializing the dead**

\*Bodnar, from Remaking America, pp. 3-20, 245-253

Hass, Carried to the Wall

**November 13: Humanities Institute event: Nathalie Rachlin, "Rithy Panh's 'The Missing Picture'" Baxter 108, 12:30-2:00 p.m.**

**Week XII. Nov. 19: Interventions, revisions and salvage**

Doss, Memorial Mania, ch. 5 and 6

\*Wilson and Halle, "Mining the Museum" (view images online)

\*Patterson, "Teaching Tolerance through Objects of Hatred"

\*Carbonnel, "The Afterlife of Lynching"

\*O'Hara, "Kent State/May 4 and Postwar Memory"

**Paper #3 due by 4 p.m. Friday, Nov. 21 in your Sakai dropbox**

**Week XIII. Nov. 26: No class: Thanksgiving/Appts. Mon/Tues/Wed on final projects**

**Optional: rough drafts due by Monday, Dec. 1 at 4:00 in your Sakai dropbox**

**Weeks XIV-XV. Presentations (schedule may change, depending on the number of groups)**

**Dec. 3:** Presentations of works-in-progress

**Dec. 10:** Core 3 symposium: 3:30-4:30, Seal Court;  
Presentations of works-in-progress in class

**Dec. 11 or 12: Reading days:** More presentations, if needed

**Dec. 16: Final papers and projects due by 4 p.m.**