

ENGL 396-A: Rhetoric, Memory, and the Archive (Fall 2013)



Course: ENGL 396-A-101

Meeting Day and Time: Monday and Wednesday; 3:30-4:45 p.m.

Classroom: Modern Languages 214

Instructor: Professor Matthew Abraham

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday, 1-3:15 p.m.; and by appointment

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Purpose of Course: This course will examine the constitutive role rhetoric and persuasion play in the construction of memory, history, and the archive. We will conduct this examination by:

1. Studying memory and memorialization in relation to its opposing concepts—forgetfulness and denial;
2. Analyzing how the memorialization of key events structures our perceptions and understandings of those events;
3. Examining “multidirectional memory”—a concept that emerges at the intersection of postcolonial theory and Holocaust remembrance—as an effective prism for framing the predicament of postcolonial subjects and the survivors of the Shoah;
4. Assessing the central role of the United States Holocaust museum in American cultural life;
5. Recognizing how confluences of memory (fusing events together that are separated by vast swaths of time) work to serve political purposes;
6. Learning about how the constructions of archives, as textual systems, play an instrumental role in sustaining the materiality of a key historical moment.

Conceptual Framework of the Course:

The memories associated with an historical event sustain that event’s importance in the public imagination. For example, think about how the events surrounding the September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks have become a central aspect of public consciousness. The official narrative about those attacks contributes to conceptions of American identity, as well as to ways of thinking about the United States’ place in the world. The media have contributed to the discourse of memorialization around 9/11, solidifying and memorializing the official narrative by situating the attacks in relation to the country’s external enemies.

Furthermore, consider the centrality of the Holocaust in American life. In the United States, the Holocaust has played an undeniable role in shaping our understanding of how group identities are used by the state in times of crisis and division. In addition, the memorialization of the Holocaust’s victims and survivors plays a pivotal role in advancing universal understandings of human suffering. This type of

memorialization entails affective, rhetorical, and historical processes. These processes will be the object of our analysis and explication.

Course Goals:

1. To better understand how rhetoric, history, memory, and archival systems interact in several different contexts;
2. To study the process of memorialization and the production of commemorative artifacts;
3. To analyze the rhetorical and political effects of memorializing historical suffering in specific contexts and certain ways;
4. Through 1-3, develop an appreciation for the guiding research methods and questions in rhetorical theory.

Required Texts:

Bernard-Donals, Michael. *Forgetful Memory: Representation and Remembrance in the Wake of the Holocaust*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2009.

Rothberg, Michael. *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005.

Vivian, Bradford. *Public Forgetting: The Rhetoric and Politics of Beginning Again*. State College: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010.

Attendance Policy:

Attendance will be taken at every class. You are allowed **one absence** without penalty. After your first absence, I will deduct one letter grade for each additional absence. I do not differentiate between excused and unexcused absences. Please arrive to class on time and stay for the entire session.

Grading

Your course grade for the semester will be calculated as follows:

‡Final Paper (25%)—due December 11th, 2013

Two-Page Paper Proposal with Sources (4%)—due on September 30th, 2013

Annotated bibliography (15%)—due on November 4th

†5 Reading Responses (30%)

**In-class Presentation (10 %)

***Discussion questions (5%)

****Participation (in-class and on list-serv) (10 %)

****In-class presentations**

I will circulate a sign-up sheet during our first class meeting. Please sign up to give a ten minute presentation on one of the chapters listed on the sheet. You might create a handout to lead the class through the concept you will be discussing. You will receive full credit for this portion of the course just by doing the presentation and giving it a good-faith effort.

*****Discussion questions**

With the exception to our first class session on August 26th, **please email me two substantive questions about the reading under consideration by 2 p.m. on Mondays before every class session.** Although we will not meet on September 2nd (Labor Day) or November 11th (Veteran's Day), please send me your questions so we can continue to make steady progress through the material We will use your questions to think through the main issues within the specific pages that have been assigned. After removing your names from your submissions, I will distribute everyone's questions to the class.

†Reading Responses

Once a week, you will have an opportunity to reflect on what we are reading by responding to a question that I will email to you. This "reading response" is a way to help you gauge your understanding and understanding and retention of the course material, which will require a cumulative mastery. With the exception of the first week of class, I will email you the week's writing prompt every Monday after class. Your response to the prompt should be between **3.5-4 typewritten pages** (double-spaced, 11-point, Time New Roman font). You are required to submit five of these responses over the course of the semester. If you chose to respond to a particular prompt, be sure to do so within a week's time of its distribution. In other words, do not plan to do all your reading responses during the last week of class.

‡Final Paper: The final paper will be due on December 13th, 2013 at our designated final exam period. You will receive detailed instructions about how to go about writing this paper throughout the quarter. For example, I will be circulating some sample topics in the next few weeks so you will have plenty of time to think about what you will want to focus on in this final paper. For the **final paper**, you will receive a detailed assignment sheet well in advance of the due date. In brief, you should pursue a topic of interest to you that is somehow relevant to the course, focusing on the relationship between memory, history, rhetoric, and the archive. Your paper should be between **thirteen and fifteen pages (double-spaced)**. If you would like, I am happy to provide you with extensive feedback on one draft of your paper if you give me your draft by December 1st

******Desire to Learn Site and Class list-serv:** If you visit <https://d2l.arizona.edu>, you will see that—by virtue of being enrolled in this class—you have access to course materials through the course blackboard site, as well as access to the class email list, which will facilitate communication between all of us during the semester. As is so often the case, the best ideas pertaining to the course material often come to you when you are not in class. By posting your ideas to the class-list, you can help me and others to understand the material a little better. If you have a question, please feel free to post it to the list, as others might have a similar question. You are required to make **at least three** substantive postings to the list-serv this semester. I hope to have some of the authors of our course texts join in us in online conversation.

Disability Support: Please see: <http://drc.arizona.edu/students>

Statement from <http://drc.arizona.edu/faculty-staff/syllabus-statement>:

Accessibility and Accommodations:

It is the University’s goal that learning experiences be as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability, please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options. You are also welcome to contact Disability Resources (520-621-3268) to establish reasonable accommodations.

Please be aware that the accessible table and chairs in this room should remain available for students who find that standard classroom seating is not usable.

Academic Integrity Policy: Please see:

http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/sites/deanofstudents.arizona.edu/files/code_of_academic_integrity.pdf

Avoiding Plagiarism

Helpful Link: <http://www.library.arizona.edu/help/tutorials/plagiarism/index.html>

Schedule:

Activity/Reading	Topic	Reading/Assignment Due for Next Class
WEEK 1		
(Monday, August 26th): Discuss our plan for the quarter, course syllabus, and structure of the class; circulate presentation sign-up sheet	Introductions; Framing the Course	Read Introduction and Chapter 1 in <i>Public Forgetting</i>
(Wednesday, August 28th): Discuss “Introduction” and “The Two Rivers, Past and Present” in <i>Public Forgetting</i>	<i>Keywords:</i> Memory Mnemosyne Lethe	Read Chapter 2 in <i>Public Forgetting</i>
WEEK 2		
(Monday, September 2nd): NO CLASS		
(Wednesday, September 4 th): Meet in the first floor of library for tutorial with Yvonne Mery. Discuss “Forgetting Without Oblivion” in <i>Public Forgetting</i>	<i>Keywords:</i> Oblivion	Read Chapter 3 in <i>Public Forgetting</i>
WEEK 3		
(Monday, September 9th): “Hallowed Ground, Hallowed	<i>Keywords:</i> Commemorative Politics	Read Chapter 4 in <i>Public Forgetting</i>

Memory” in <i>Public Forgetting</i>		
(Wednesday, September 11 th): Discuss “Historical Forgetting: John W. Draper and the Rhetorical Dimensions of History”		Read Chapter 5 in <i>Public Forgetting</i>
WEEK 4		
(Monday, September 16 th): Discuss “Cultural Forgetting: The ‘Timeless Now’ of Nomadic Memories” in <i>Public Forgetting</i>	<i>Keywords:</i> Historical Forgetting	Read Chapter 6 in <i>Public Forgetting</i>
(Wednesday, September 18 th) Discuss “Moral and Political Forgetting: Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address” in <i>Public Forgetting</i>		Read Conclusion of <i>Public Forgetting</i> and Chapter 1 of <i>Multidirectional Memory</i>
WEEK 5		
(Monday, September 23 rd): Discuss “Theorizing Multidirectional Memory in a Transnational Age” in <i>Multidirectional Memory</i>	<i>Keywords:</i> Mnemsoyne	Read Chapter 2 in <i>Multidirectional Memory</i>
(Wednesday, September 25 th): Discuss “At the Limits of Eurocentrism: Hannah Arendt’s <i>The Origins of Totalitarianism</i> ” in <i>Multidirectional Memory</i>	<i>Keywords:</i> Colonial Encounter and the Trauma of Race	Read Chapter 3 in <i>Multidirectional Memory</i>
WEEK 6		
(Monday, September 30 th): Discuss “‘Un Choc En Rentour’: Aime Cesaire’s Discourse of Colonialism and Genocide” in <i>Multidirectional Memory</i>	<i>Keywords:</i> “Un Choc en Rentour”	Read Chapter 4 in <i>Multidirectional Memory</i>
(Wednesday, October 2 nd): Discuss “W.E.B. Dubois in Warsaw: Holocaust Memory and the Color	<i>Keywords:</i> The color line	Chapter 5 in <i>Multidirectional Memory</i>

Line” in <i>Multidirectional Memory</i>		
WEEK 7		
(Monday, October 7th): Discuss “Anachronistic Aesthetics: Andre Schwarz-Bart and Carlyl Phillips on the Ruins of Memory” in <i>Multidirectional Memory</i>	<i>Keywords:</i> Anachronistic Aesthetics	Read Chapter 6 in <i>Multidirectional Memory</i>
(Wednesday, October 9th): Discuss “The Work of Testimony in the Age of Decolonization: <i>Chronicle of a Summer</i> and the Emergence of a Holocaust Survivor” in <i>Multidirectional Memory</i>	<i>Keywords:</i> Testimony in the Age of Decolonization	Read Chapter 7 in <i>Multidirectional Memory</i>
WEEK 8		
(Monday, October 14th): Discuss “The Counterpublic Witness: Charlotte Delbo’s <i>Les belles lettres</i> ” in <i>Multidirectional Memory</i>	<i>Keywords:</i> Counterpublic witness	Read Chapter 8 in <i>Multidirectional Memory</i>
(Wednesday, October 16th): Discuss “A Tale of Three Ghettos: Race, Gender, and ‘Universality’ After October 17, 1961”		Read Chapter 9 in <i>Multidirectional Memory</i>
WEEK 9		
(Monday, October 21 st) Discuss “Hidden Children: The Ethics of Multigenerational Memory After 1961”	<i>Keywords:</i> Multigenerational Memory	Read Epilogue in <i>Multidirectional Memory</i>
(Wednesday, October 23 rd) Discuss “Multigenerational Memory in the Age of Occupations”	<i>Keywords:</i> Occupations of Place and Memory	Read Chapter 1 in <i>Forgetful Memory</i>

WEEK 10		
(Monday, October 28 th): Discuss “On the Verge of History and Memory” in <i>Forgetful Memory</i>	<i>Keywords:</i> Verge	Read Chapter 2 in <i>Forgetful Memory</i>
(Wednesday, October 30 th): Discuss” Ethics, the Immemorial, and Writing” in <i>Forgetful Memory</i>	<i>Keywords:</i> Ethics The Immemorial	Read Chapter 3 in <i>Forgetful Memory</i>
WEEK 11		
(Monday, November 4 th): Discuss ‘If I Forget Thee O Jerusalem: The Poetry of Forgetful Memory in Palestine’ in <i>Forgetful Memory</i>	<i>Keywords:</i> Forgetful Memory in Palestine	Read Chapter 4 in <i>Forgetful Memory</i>
(Wednesday, November 6 th) Discuss “Memory and the Image in Visual Representations of the Holocaust” ” in <i>Forgetful Memory</i>		Read Chapter 5 in <i>Forgetful Memory</i>
WEEK 12		
(Monday, November 11 th)—no class!		
(Wednesday, November 13 th): Discuss “‘Thou Shalt Not Bare False Witness’: Witness and Testimony in the <i>Fragments</i> Controversy” in <i>Forgetful Memory</i>	<i>Keywords:</i> Witness and Testimony	Read Chapter 6 in <i>Forgetful Memory</i>
WEEK 13		
(Monday, November 18 th): Discuss “Denials of Memory” in <i>Forgetful Memory</i>	<i>Keywords:</i> Denial of the Holocaust	Read Chapter 7 in <i>Forgetful Memory</i>
(Wednesday, November 20 th): Discuss “Conflations of Memory; or, What They Saw at the Holocaust Museum after 9/11” in <i>Forgetful Memory</i>	<i>Keywords:</i> Conflations of Memory	Read Chapter 8 in <i>Forgetful Memory</i>
WEEK 14		
(Monday, November 25 th): Discuss “‘Difficult Freedom’: Levinas,	<i>Keywords:</i>	Read Chapter 9 in

Memory, and Politics” in <i>Forgetful Memory</i>	Difficult Freedom	<i>Forgetful Memory</i>
(Wednesday, November 27 th): Discuss “Conclusion: Forgetful Memory and the Disaster”	<i>Keywords:</i> The Disaster	Work on Final Paper
WEEK 15		
(Monday, December 2 nd): Discuss Final Paper		Complete Final Paper
(Wednesday, December 4 th): Discuss Final Paper		Complete Final Paper
WEEK 16		
(Monday, December 9 th): Discuss Final Paper		Complete Final Paper
(Wednesday, December 11 th): Wrap up		
FINAL EXAM PERIOD (December 13 th , 1-3 p.m.)		Final paper due by 3 p.m.