

SOCIOLOGY 476
SEMINAR IN COLLECTIVE MEMORY

Thursday 10:00-12:20
Seminar Room, 1812 Chicago Avenue

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Office hours: Thursday 2:00-3:00 and by appointment

This seminar is designed to expose graduate students to the realm of sociological research (and research in other disciplines, notably history and anthropology) that addresses how we think about and memorialize the past. How is history constructed? How are historical events shaped and made socially meaningful? Who are the shapers and who are the shaped?

We will be reading a considerable number of texts this quarter. Because of the amount of reading, I will assign a primary reader for each text each week, and I will ask that you submit to me (and to each other) by email by 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday a list of at least five questions from the readings that you think are important for our discussions. I expect you to know the fundamental arguments of each of the readings, and if you were called upon you could provide a reasonable exegesis of each reading. This does not mean that you need to have read every line of every reading. Informed skimming is a fundamental skill of graduate education. I should have no fear in giving you hundreds of pages of reading each week, assuming that you will be able to fit it into your schedule.

There are four ways that this graduate seminar can be run in terms of the requirements of the course. Each technique has its strengths and weaknesses, and I am open to each.

First, each of you can prepare a research paper on a topic of your choice related to collective memory. The advantage of this approach is that you will be able to choose the topic of greatest appeal to you. The disadvantages are that such an approach is likely to lead to a set of incompletes and, since I will ask for reports on your progress most weeks (in the last half of class), to a disjointed discussion.

Second, you can all work on related or coordinated projects. This has the advantage that our discussions will be focused and the outcome can be more or less coordinated. It is also possible that the outcome will be publishable if our coordination is

adequate. The disadvantage is that not everyone will be working on a topic of primary interest. Incompletes may also be a problem here, although probably less than in the first option, since there will be a push to be at the same stage of the project. This is a particular advantage if the enrollment in the seminar is fairly small.

Third, we can avoid a lengthy paper entirely, and instead you will be asked to hand in short papers (two to three pages) on some aspect of the assigned readings on six of nine weeks. The advantage here is that there will be no incompletes. The disadvantage is that we will be sticking close to the readings without creating new knowledge. Doing research provides you with an opportunity to understand the methodology of collective memory research.

Fourth, as a "compromise," we can have shorter research papers (ten pages), coupled with a smaller number (three) of short papers. Like most compromises, this may provide the best or the worst of each world.

The choice will be addressed the first week of class.

Books Available at Norris:

Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities (paper)
Gary Alan Fine, Difficult Reputations (paper)
Maurice Halbwachs, On Collective Memory (paper)
Sanford Levinson, Written in Stone (paper)
Barry Schwartz, Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory
(paper)
Eviatar Zerubavel, Social Mindscales (paper)

September 22 INTRODUCTION

September 29 COGNITIVE SOCIOLOGY

Paul Dimaggio, "Culture and Cognition." Annual Review of Sociology 23, 1997, 263-87.

Jeffrey Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Daniel Levi, "Introduction." Pp. 3-62 in The Collective Memory Reader. See: content.ub.hu-berlin.de/monographs/toc/ethnologie/BV037231187.pdf

Michael Schudson, "How Culture Works: Perspectives from Media Studies on the Efficacy of Symbols." Theory and Society 1989, 18, 153-80.

Eviatar Zerubavel, Social Mindscales (all).

October 6

REPUTATIONS

- Gary Alan Fine, Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2
Barry Schwartz, Introduction, Chapters 1 and 5,
Conclusion
Gladys Lang and Kurt Lang, "Recognition and
Renown: The Survival of Artistic Reputation."
American Journal of Sociology 94, 1988, 78-
109.
Gaye Tuchman and Nina Fortin, "Fame and
Misfortune: Edging Women Out of the Great
Literary Tradition." American Journal of
Sociology 90, 1984, 72-96.

October 13

HOW PEOPLE THINK ABOUT THE PAST

- Jan Assman, "Collective Memory and Cultural
Identity." New German Critique 65, 1995, 125-
33.
Maurice Halbwachs, Introduction, Preface, Ch. 3
Jeffrey Olick, "Collective Memory: The Two
Cultures." Sociological Theory 17, 1999, 333-
48.
Astrid Erll, "Travelling Memory." Parallax 17,
2011, 4-18

October 20

NO CLASS

October 27

IDENTITY AND COMMEMORATION

- Benedict Anderson, Introduction, Chapter 11
Lauren Rivera, "Managing 'Spoiled' National
Identity: War, Tourism and Memory in
Croatia." American Sociological Review 73,
2008, 613-34.
Sanford Levinson, all
Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, "Commemorating a
Difficult Past: Yitzhak Rabin's Memorials."
American Sociological Review 67, 2002, 30-51.

November 3

NATIONAL TRAUMA

- Didier Fassin and Estelle d'Halluin, "Critical
Evidence: The Politics of Trauma in French
Asylum Policy." Ethos 35, 2007, 300-329.
Hiro Saito, "Reiterated Commemoration: Hiroshima
as National Trauma," Sociological Theory 24,
2006, 353-76.

Christina Simko, "Rhetorics of Suffering: September 11 Commemorations as Theodicy," American Sociological Review 77, 2012, 880-902.

Jeffrey Alexander, "From the Depths of Despair: Performance and Counter-Performance on September 11th." Sociological Theory 22, 2004, 88-105.

November 10

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND MEMORY

Robert Jansen, "Resurrection and Appropriation: Reputational Trajectories, Memory Work, and the Political Use of Historical Figures," American Journal of Sociology 112, 2007, 953-1007.

Elizabeth Armstrong and Suzanna Crage, "Movements and Memory: The Making of the Stonewall Myth," American Sociological Review 71, 2006, 724-751.

Barry Schwartz, "Collective Forgetting and the Symbolic Power of Oneness: The Strange Apotheosis of Rosa Parks," Social Psychology Quarterly 72, 2009, 123-42.

Francesca Polletta, "It Was Like a Fever: Narrative and Identity in Social Protest," Social Problems 45, 1998, 137-59.

November 17

GENERATIONS

Karl Mannheim, "The Problem of Generations" in Karl Mannheim, Essays (1952), pp. 276-322. Available on the Internet as a PDF.

Howard Schuman and Jacqueline Scott, "Generations and Collective Memories," American Sociological Review 54, 1987, 359-81.

Larry Griffin, "Generations and Collective Memory" Revisited: Race, Region, and Memory of Civil Rights." American Sociological Review 69, 2004, 544-557.

Amy Corning, "Emigration, Generation, and Collective Memories: The Presence of the Past for Former Emigrants from the Soviet Union." Social Psychology Quarterly 73, 2010, 223-244.

November 24

THANKSGIVING

December 3

REPORTS AND SUMMARIES

