

# HISTORY 1R: FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR: REMEMBERING HISTORY

## COURSE INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTOR

Swarthmore College, Fall 2018

Mon. 1:15-4:00; Trotter 210

Bruce Dorsey

Office: Trotter 214; Email: bdorsey1@swarthmore.edu

Hours: Mon. 4:00-5:00; Wed. 3:00-4:00 (and by appointment)

"The past is what you remember, imagine what you remember, convince yourself you remember, or pretend to remember."  
Harold Pinter, *Old Times* (1970)

"Remembering is not the negative of forgetting. remembering is a form of forgetting."  
Milan Kundera, *Testaments Betrayed* (1993)

"the twilight zone that lies between living memory and written history is one of the favorite breeding places of mythology."  
C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (1955).

"who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past."  
George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1954)

## COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

Memory is essential to our humanity, and an inextricable part of our own personal, social, or communal identity. Memory is also vitally important to all human history. History would be impossible, and inconceivable, without memory. Nearly every scrap of evidence we have to reconstruct the past is composed of memories and filtered through memories. And the compelling human desire for history derives from a wish to frame, preserve, enshrine, control, and especially to tell and retell, memories. Yet, despite memory's necessity for history, historians frequently maintain that memory and history can be antagonistic, even contrary, impulses in any given society and culture. The very act of constructing a memory, especially the collective memory of a group of people, often involves the intentional erasure or exclusion of someone's story or history at the moment that history is supposedly preserved. Memory is all too frequently built on intentional acts of forgetting. Understanding this complex interrelationship of memory and history is the principal goal of this seminar. What receives the privilege of being remembered and what gets deliberately forgotten constitutes the essence of what we know as history.

This course explores the relationship between the creation of personal and collective memory and the production of history. The seminar will examine the tensions between memory and history in U.S. history, including current battles over race and historical monuments. Students will learn to think critically about memoirs and autobiographies, oral histories and personal reminiscences, festivities and holidays of commemoration, historical memory in popular culture, and family lore and stories. Students will also learn research skills and develop critical skills for constructing arguments and communicating both orally and in writing within the discipline of history.

This is a Writing ("W") Course.

**READINGS:**

The following required readings are available at the College Bookstore:

- Alfred F. Young, *The Shoemaker and the Tea Party* (1999).
- David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (2001).
- Tony Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic* (1998).
- Edward T. Linenthal and Tom Englehardt, eds., *History Wars: The Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past* (1996).
- *Additional required readings for each week are available on Moodle.*

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:****READING AND CLASS PARTICIPATION:**

Students are expected to attend all class meetings, complete all readings, and be prepared for discussion of the assigned reading each week. Thoughtful preparation on the part of all students is essential for a seminar to be a positive learning environment for everyone. Hence, a student's participation in the seminar will be an important part of the final assessment by the professor.

**ANALYTICAL ESSAY:**

Students will write an analytical essay on the theme of history and memory surrounding the defining events of early U.S. history -- the American Revolution, slavery, and the Civil War. The analytical essay will be approximately **5-6 double-spaced pages (i.e., 1500 words)**. A description of the paper assignment will be posted on Moodle. This paper is designed to be an analytical essay, based on the course readings. No additional research is expected.

**RESEARCH PROJECT:**

Students will research and write a semester-long project on memory and history in the United States. The objective of the project is to develop an original interpretation of the relationship of memory to some aspect of American history and culture. Students can choose their own projects, but projects must be designed with the assistance and approval of the professor. Suggestions of possible research topics will be available on the course Moodle site. For the sake of coherence, projects will usually address an event in U.S. history between 1940 and 2000 (although exceptions can be made for compelling and feasible projects in earlier U.S. history). Typically, the final paper will be at least a **12-14 double-spaced page paper (i.e., 3500-4000 words)**. There are as many creative ways to present these projects as there are creative students. Students are not limited to the traditional research paper format. Still, all projects must be the equivalent of at least a 12-14 page paper. A well-written and engaging work of historical analysis (i.e., a good paper), however, will always be preferred to less engaging work in a different format.

Each student will make an oral presentation of her/his project during the last two weeks of the semester. **Five preliminary assignments** will help each student make progress on the research project:

**PRELIMINARY ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE RESEARCH PROJECT:**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Preliminary Research Topic	Sept. 24 (in class)
Prospectus & Bibliography	Oct. 29 (in class)
Primary Source Analysis	Nov. 19 (in class)
Draft of the Research Paper	Nov. 28 by 5pm
Class Presentation	Week 12 or 13

**POLICIES:****EVALUATION/GRADING:**

Activity	Grade Percentage
Class Participation	20%
Analytical Paper	30%
Research Paper	50%

**Note: Students must complete all writing assignments to pass this course.**

**ATTENDANCE & COMMUNICATION:**

The following is the History Department policy on attendance & communication: *Students are required to attend all classes. Unexcused absences will result in a lower grade for the course. If you are having a medical or personal emergency, please contact the Dean's Office as well as the instructor. It is your responsibility to inform your instructor as soon as possible. It is essential that you check your email on a regular basis since History professors will contact you via email. We also expect you to use email to contact History professors.*

**LAPTOPS & ELECTRONIC DEVICES:**

To facilitate discussion and to avoid distractions, I am going to ask that you do not use a laptop or other electronic device for notetaking in class. You can consult the readings on an electronic device during discussions. All social media and internet browsers must be turned off, and all phones silenced, during class. (Disability accommodations requiring the use of a computer are not covered by this policy.)

**ACCOMMODATIONS FOR DISABILITY:**

If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability or a chronic medical condition, please contact Student Disability Services (Parrish 113W, 123W) via email at [studentdisabilityservices@swarthmore.edu](mailto:studentdisabilityservices@swarthmore.edu) to arrange an appointment to discuss your needs. As appropriate, the office will issue students with documented disabilities a formal Accommodations Letter. Since accommodations require early planning and are not retroactive, please contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. For details about the accommodations process, visit the Student Disability Service website at <https://www.swarthmore.edu/academic-advising-support/welcome-to-student-disability-service>. You are also welcome to contact the Professor privately to discuss your academic needs. However, all disability-related accommodations must be arranged through Student Disability Services.

**CLASS SCHEDULE:****WEEK 1: SEPT. 3 INTRODUCTION****WEEK 2: SEPT. 10 MEMORY OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION****READINGS:**

Young, *The Shoemaker and the Tea Party*. [Skip or skim pp. 58-70; 121-142]

Jill Lepore, *The Whites of Their Eyes: The Tea Party's Revolution and the Battle over American History* (2010), pp. 14-25, 43-47, 60-69, 94-97.

Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," *Representations* 26 (1989), 7-24.

**WEEK 3: SEPT. 17 FIELD TRIP TO THE PRESIDENT'S HOUSE SITE & THE MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION (PHILADELPHIA)**

**READINGS:**

Gary B. Nash, "For Whom Will the Liberty Bell Toll? From Controversy to Cooperation," in *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory* (2006), 75-101.

Erica Armstrong Dunbar, *Never Caught: The Washingtons' Relentless Pursuit of Their Runaway Slave, Ona Judge* (2017), 75-86; 99-116.

President's House Website, National Park Service. [Links available on Moodle]

**ON HISTORY & MEMORY:**

Maurice Halbwachs, "Historical Memory and Collective Memory" in Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* (1950; reprint, New York, 1980).

Gavriel D. Rosenfeld, "A Looming Crash or a Soft Landing? Forecasting the Future of the Memory 'Industry'," *Journal of Modern History* 81 (2009), 122-58.

Kerwin Lee Klein, "On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse," *Representations* 69 (2000), 127-50.

**WEEK 4: SEPT. 24 WHOSE NAT TURNER? & WHICH SOJOURNER TRUTH? /THE MEMORY OF SLAVERY**

**READINGS:**

Painter, *Sojourner Truth, A Life, A Symbol*, ch. 1, 12-15, 17-18, 20, 26 & Coda.

*Nat Turner: A Troublesome Property* (2002), dir. . DVD on reserve & online streaming.

**Preliminary research topic due.**

**WEEK 5: OCT. 1 "THE QUARRAL FORGOTTEN": THE CIVIL WAR & MEMORY**

**READINGS:**

Blight, *Race and Reunion*, Prologue-ch. 5, ch. 8-9, & Epilogue.

**WEEK 6: OCT. 8 REENACTING: STILL FIGHTING THE CIVIL WAR AT THE END OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY (& IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY TOO)**

**READINGS:**

Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic*, ch. 1-4, 6, 8, 10-11, 14.

Tony Horwitz, "After Charlottesville, New Shades of Gray in a Changing South," *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 25, 2017.

**WORKSHOP ON RESEARCH & LIBRARY SKILLS: SARAH ELICKNO, SOCIAL SCIENCES LIBRARIAN**

**ANALYTICAL ESSAY DUE: OCT. 12 BY 5PM**

**OCT. 16: FALL BREAK**

**WEEK 7: OCT. 22 HOLLYWOOD AND HISTORICAL MEMORY [e.g. Women's Suffrage]**

**READINGS:**

*Iron Jawed Angels* (2004), dir. Katja Von Garner.

Film Reviews [on Moodle]

Lisa Tetrault, *The Myth of Seneca Falls: Memory and the Women's Suffrage Movement, 1848-1898* (2014), ch. 4.

Meetings with the professor to discuss research project (Oct. 22-26).

## **WEEK 8: OCT. 29 FAMILY LORE: SOTIRES AND MEMORIES**

### **READINGS:**

Jonathan Scott Holloway, *Jim Crow Wisdom: Memory & Identity in Black America since 1940* (Chapel Hill, 2013), selected chapters.

Beryl Satter, "On Family Properties: Race, Real Estate, and the Exploitation of Black Urban America," *Reviews in American History* 41.1 (2013), 174-80.

*This American Life* (NPR), episode 204, "81 Words".

Prospectus and bibliography for research project due.

## **WEEK 9: NOV. 5 WHY NOT FORGET? ENOLA GAY AND THE HISTORY WARS**

### **READINGS:**

Linenthal & Englehardt, *History Wars: The Enola Gay & Other Battles for the American Past*.

## **WEEK 10: NOV. 12 FORGETTING THE COLD WAR & FIGHTING OVER A MASSACRE**

### **READINGS:**

Jon Wiener, *How We Forgot the Cold War* (2012), 1-41.

Ari Kelman, *A Misplaced Massacre: Struggling over the Memory of Sand Creek* (2013), 1-43.

## **WEEK 11: NOV. 19 RESEARCHING & INTERPRETING SOURCES**

Primary source analysis (in class).

## **WEEK 12: NOV. 26 STUDENT PRESENTATIONS OF RESEARCH PROJECTS**

## **WEEK 13: DEC. 3 STUDENT PRESENTATIONS OF RESEARCH PROJECTS**

**RESEARCH PROJECT DUE: FRIDAY, DEC. 21.**

**NO FINAL EXAMINATION.**