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:

- 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 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:**

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

EVALUATION/GRADING:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Grade Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical Paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>50%</td>
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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 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]
WEEK 3: SEPT. 17  FIELD TRIP TO THE PRESIDENT’S HOUSE SITE & THE MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION (PHILADELPHIA)

Readings:
President’s House Website, National Park Service. [Links available on Moodle]

On History & Memory:


Readings:
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.


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

Workshop on Research & Library Skills: Sarah Elichkno, 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:
WEEK 8: OCT. 29 FAMILY LORE: SOTIRES AND MEMORIES

READINGS:
*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:

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.