

HI221/PO394 Catastrophe & Memory

Tuesdays & Thursdays 9:30-11:00 — MET B02B

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Office Hours: Tues 11:30AM-1:00PM &
Thurs. 3:45PM – 5 PM

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This course explores how catastrophes are remembered, both by the individuals who lived through them and by the those who have come after them. It focuses on four events — the Battle of the Somme (1916), the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (1945), the first decade of the AIDS pandemic (1981-1991), and the attack on the World Trade Center of September 11, 2001 — and examines the differing ways in they have been remembered. The forms of memorialization we investigate include architectural monuments, museums, memoirs, poems, photographs, films, musical compositions, and digital archives. The questions with which we will be concerned include the relationship between individual testimonies and public narratives, the conflict between historical documentation and artistic representation, the impact of trauma on memories (both personal and collective), the difficulties of drawing analogies between individual and collective memories, and the troubled relationship between “history” (i.e., the study of past events) and “memory” (i.e., the way in which the past reaches into the present). The aim of the course is to understand individuals and the cultures in which they live go about making sense of events that would seem to defy comprehension, to examine how they attempt to preserve the memory of what has been lost, and to reflect on how the work we will be doing in this course might, itself, be understood as an example of the complicated relationship between memory and history.

This is a rather demanding course. We will be drawing on a wide variety of materials (e.g., scholarly articles, memoirs, magazines, photos, movies, digital archives, etc.) and there is a great deal of it. You may also find that some of these materials (particularly the images) are quite disturbing. We will be spending quite a bit of time trying to make sense of how people and societies wrestle with horrible events and, as a result, this course inevitably raises (but cannot pretend to answer) questions about how to deal with loss, suffering, and death. All of this can be quite emotionally draining. Depending on what else might be going on in your life at the moment, it might be worth considering whether you want to spend this semester confronting the material this course will ask you to face.

Course Structure and Requirements:

This is not a lecture course. Class meetings will consist of discussions of the assigned materials (which should be read prior to class meetings), explorations of their implications for the broader themes of the course, and reflections on the relevance of the material we are discussing for the projects on which students will be working. In order to make sure that everyone has an equal opportunity to participate in discussions, I may sometimes select students at random to initiate discussions.

The main assignment for this course will be the construction of a website that exploring some of the questions we have been examining this term. The particular focus of the site is open ended, though it should be recognizably concerned with the broader issues (though not necessarily the particular cases) that we have been exploring this term. For example, while you are welcome to focus on one particular aspect of the cases we have examined, you should feel free to explore how the work we have been doing might be applied to other catastrophes. Sites examining broader questions (e.g., the relationship between “memory” and “history”, or issues involving the role of particular media in the process of memorialization) are also welcome. In evaluating the final projects, both the substantive content (e.g., its use of relevant sources, the quality of its analysis) and in the quality of its presentation of this content. In other words, while the final project will require you to do the sort of research that goes into producing an acceptable term paper, a successful website is something more than an uploaded term paper. Examples of previous student projects will be available for you to review and you will receiving ample feedback and aid in completing this project and should come away from the experience with a better sense of how to go about presenting your work to a wider audience.

By noon on Friday, November 6, students will be required to submit the url for a preliminary version of their course project, which will be linked to the course website. Through a random selection process, students will be assigned

three projects to review. These peer reviews will be due on November 18. Final revisions of the projects must be completed by 11:59 PM on Monday, December 9.

In addition to the final project, students will be asked to write four short (1500-2500 words) papers in response to questions that will be drawn from issues raised in the readings, class discussions, and the course's online discussion forum. These papers will be due on October 7, October 28, November 13, and December 4.

Students will also be expected to make regular (i.e., at least twice a week) contributions to the "Discussion" section of the course website analyzing the assigned materials, suggesting future lines of discussion, drawing connections between the differing parts of the course, and offering links to (and discussions of) other relevant materials.

Finally, from time to time, other events and activities (e.g., film screenings, site visits, concerts, etc.) outside of class time. While attendance at these events is not required, I hope that you will make an effort to attend at least some of them: given the range of the questions we will be investigating, there is only so much that can be accomplished in the classroom.

In computing final grades for this course, the final project will count for 40% of the final grade, the four papers will count for 40%, and participation (which includes contributions to class discussions and to the online forum, as well as project peer reviews) will count for 20%. More than two absences from classes will result in a lowering of your grade.

Academic Conduct, Privacy Rights, and Copyright

All students should review the university's [Academic Conduct Code](#). Particular attention should be paid to the exhaustive discussion in the section entitled "Plagiarism," which reviews the variety of forms that plagiarism can take and provides clear examples of what each involves. Since past experience indicates that, unfortunately, students tend not to be aware of the range of actions that constitute plagiarism, it is *imperative* that you review this section of the code. It amounts to nothing less than the fundamental rules that govern the work we do as scholars and, as such, they are, and ought to be, strictly enforced.

Students also enjoy various rights under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act ([FERPA](#)). Since the implications of FERPA for the use of social media in a classroom context remain somewhat unclear, I have restricted access to the main WordPress course site to students enrolled in the course. I do, however, hope to aggregate the best work done in this course on a public website on the BU domain. If you would prefer that your work not be included on such a site, please notify me.

Policy on Digital Devices, Absences, Incompletes, and "Information Overload Days"

Students are welcome to use computers or portable digital devices for note-taking, but please mute any alarms or notification sounds and refrain from using these devices for tasks *other* than those connected with the course. Mobile phones should, of course, also be silenced.

Should any problems arise (e.g., absences, problems with the course site, scheduling of meetings), I can best be reached by email (messages can also be left on my office phone, but I don't always notice them).

While I would like for this class to be the most important thing in your life, I am aware that it is likely to have significant competition from other quarters. In recognition of that fact, I have adopted the policy pioneered by Ryan Cordell (Northeastern University) of allowing students to claim up to two "information overload" ("IO days") days during the semester, which exempt them from participation in class discussions (you will, however, be expected to show up for class and may not use your IO days to supplement your two excused absences, nor do they exempt you from having to fulfill assignments). You must notify me at the *start* of class if you plan to claim an IO day.

Incompletes will be given only in cases of serious illness, family emergencies, and other matters of sufficient gravity to render you incapable of finishing the course. If at all possible, we should meet to discuss arrangements for the completion of coursework *prior* to my issuing an Incomplete.

Course Materials:

All of the readings for the course will be available online and can be accessed from the links on this syllabus. In the case of materials housed on Mugar Electronic Reserves, you will need to search by course number.

Course Schedule

The syllabus contains clickable links that should take you to the materials assigned (please notify me of any broken links or other problems). For materials housed on proprietary databases (e.g., JSTOR, Project Muse, etc.), the links will take you to the BU proxy server. After signing in with your user name and password, you should be able to access the material. For materials placed on Mugar Electronic Reserve, you will need to search for the material (the drop down menu allows searches by author, title, course number, and instructor).

I. Introduction: Loss, Memory, and History

9/4 Mourning, Melancholia, and Catastrophic Loss

[Walter Benjamin, "On the Concept of History,"](#) Section IX
Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey, vol. XIV (London: Hogarth Press), 243–258.
[available from [Mugar Electronic Reserves](#)]
[Dominick LaCapra, "Trauma, Absence, Loss,"](#) *Critical Inquiry* 25, no. 4 (1999): 696–727.
[Cathy Caruth, "Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and the Possibility of History,"](#) *Yale French Studies*, no. 79 (1991): 181–92.

9/9 Memories, Individual and Collective

Maurice Halbwachs, "Historical Memory and Collective Memory," in Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980) 50-87 [[Mugar Electronic Reserves](#)]
[Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire,"](#) *Representations* no. 26 (April 1, 1989): 7–24.
[Vilém Flusser, "On Memory \(Electronic or Otherwise\),"](#) *Leonardo* 23:4 (1990): 397–99.

9/11 History vs Memory

[David Lowenthal, "Fabricating Heritage,"](#) *History and Memory* 10:1 (1998): 5–24.
[Ross Poole, "Memory, History and the Claims of the Past,"](#) *Memory Studies* 1:2 (2008): 149–166
[Noa Gedi and Yigal Elam, "Collective Memory — What Is It?,"](#) *History and Memory* 8:1 (1996): 30–50.

II. The Battle of the Somme

9/16 The Somme as History and Memory

"[The Great Battle](#)," *The Times* [London], July 3, 1916
Selections from [Edmund Blunden, *Undertones of War*](#)
Selections from [Robert Graves, *Good-bye to All That*](#)
Selections from [Ernst Jünger, *Storm of Steel*](#)

Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* 3-35 [[Mugar Electronic Reserves](#)], "[Battle of the Somme](#)," Wikipedia article [look at both the main entry and the "Talk" tab]

Additional Digital Resources to review:
[First World War Centenary \(Imperial War Museum\)](#)
[First World War Centenary \(Oxford\)](#)
[Europeana 1914-1918](#)

9/18 Siegfried Sasson: Notes and Memoirs

Siegfried Sasson, [Journal, 26 June 1916-12 Aug. 1916](#) (Cambridge University Libraries): read pages 10r-13v, 18r-24v, 34r, 35v; skim remainder.
Excerpts from [Siegfried Sassoon, *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer*](#)

9/23 War Poetry

Laurence Binyon, "The Fourth of August," "For the Fallen", in [The Winnowing Fan: Poems on the Great War](#) (1914)
Jessie Pope, "Play the Game" and "The Call," in [Jessie Pope's War Poems](#) (1915)
Edmund Blunden, "[Report on Experience](#)"
Sassoon, "The Redeemer," "Trench Duty", "The Hero," "Suicide in the Trenches," "They," "Base Details," "The General," "Editorial Impressions," "Fight to a Finish," "Glory of Women," "Repression of War Experience" in [The War Poems of Siegfried Sassoon](#).
Owen, "Preface," "Strange Meeting," "Parable of the Old Men and the Young," "Anthem for Doomed Youth," "Dulce et Decorum Est," in [Poems by Wilfred Owen](#)

9/25 & 10/2 Mass Death and Modern Memory

Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* 36-51, 64-74. 310-335 [[Mugar Electronic Reserves](#)]
Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning* 29-53, 204-229 [[Mugar Electronic Reserves](#)]
Note: because of copyright restrictions, these readings will be made available in two parts: the first group of selections from Fussell and Winter will be available until September 25; the second group will become available on September 26.

10/7 Missing Bodies and Public Memorials

[Remembrance Day Ceremonies at the Cenotaph](#) (23 minute video of 2011 ceremony)
[Allan Greenberg, "Lutyens's Cenotaph," The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians 48, no. 1 \(March 1989\): 5-23.](#)
Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning* 78-116 [[Mugar Electronic Reserves](#)]
"[5000 Ice Sculptures Placed on City Steps in Moving World War I Commemoration](#)," *Birmingham Mail*, August 2, 2014.

10/7 First Short Paper Due

III. Hiroshima

10/9 American Reports and Reactions

President Truman's [statement on the bombing](#) (plus [draft](#) of statement)
Life [August 20, 1945](#) pp. 17-35, *Life* [September 17, 1945](#), 36-49; "The 36-Hour War," *Life* [November 19, 1945](#), 27-35.
Gene Sherman, "Coliseum Throng Views Tableau of War Scenes," *Los Angeles Times* (October 28, 1945): 2.
["A Tale of Two Cities"](#) [US Government film]
["Hiroshima After One Year"](#) [Universal Newsreel]

[Michael J. Yavenditti, "John Hersey and the American Conscience: The Reception of "Hiroshima","](#) *The Pacific Historical Review* 43, no. 1 (February 1974): 24-49.
[Peter Schwenger, "America's Hiroshima" boundary 2 21 \(1994\) 233-253.](#)

10/14 Monday Schedule —No Class

10/16 Hibaksha Narratives

Account of the bombing by [John A. Siemes, S. J.](#)
[Memoirs of Atomic Bomb Survivors](#), National Peace Memorial Halls for Atomic Bomb Victims
[Testimony of Hibakusha](#) (atomic bomb survivors), Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs
[John Whittier Treat, "Hiroshima's America," boundary 2 21 \(1994\) 233-253.](#)

10/21 Drawings and Confiscated Photographs

[Barbara Marcoñ, "Hiroshima and Nagasaki in the Eye of the Camera," Third Text 25, no. 6 \(2011\): 787-97.](#)
[Unforgettable Fire: Pictures Drawn by Atomic Bomb Survivors](#)
[Iri and Toshi Maruki, The Hiroshima Panels](#)

10/23 Rituals, Museums, and Memorials: The Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum

[Hiroshima Peace Site](#)
[Benedict Giomo, "The Myth of the Vanquished: The Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum," American Quarterly 55 \(2003\) 703-728.](#)
[Martin J Sherwin, "Hiroshima as Politics and History," The Journal of American History 82 \(1995\) 1085-1093.](#)
[James H. Foard, "Imagining Nuclear Weapons: Hiroshima, Armageddon, and the Annihilation of the Students of Ichijo School," Journal of the American Academy of Religion 65:1 \(1997\): 1-18.](#)

10/28 Historians, Veterans, and Politicians: The Enola Gay Controversy

[Susan A. Crane, "Memory, Distortion, and History in the Museum," History and Theory 36:4 \(1997\): 44-63.](#)
[Martin Harwit, "Academic Freedom in 'The Last Act,'" The Journal of American History 82:3 \(1995\): 1064-84.](#)
[Edward T. Linenthal, "Struggling with History and Memory," The Journal of American History 82:3 \(1995\): 1094-1101.](#)
[Richard H Kohn, "History and the Culture Wars: The Case of the Smithsonian Institution's Enola Gay Exhibition," The Journal of American History 82:3 \(1995\): 1036-63.](#)
["Documents," The Journal of American History 82:3 \(1995\): 1136-44.](#)

10/28 Second Short Paper Due

IV. The AIDS Pandemic

10/30 Memoirs of Researchers and Activists

[In Their Own Words: NIH Researchers Recall the Early Years of AIDS \(NIH, Office of History\)](#)
[ACTUP Oral History Project](#)

11/4 Diseases & Metaphors

Susan Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor & AIDS and Its Metaphors* pp. 3-9, 257-61, 63-67, 104-112, 132-134, 173-183 [Mugar E-Reserves]
[Sander L. Gilman, "AIDS and Syphilis: The Iconography of Disease," October 43 \(1987\): 87-107.](#)

- [Matthew Ward and Maxine A. Papadakis, "Untrapping the Metaphor of AIDS,"](#) *The American Journal of Medicine* 83, no. 6 (December 1987): 1135–37.
- Michael S. Sherry, "The Language of War in AIDS Discourse," in *Writing AIDS: Gay Literature, Language, and Analysis*, ed. Timothy F. Murphy and Suzanne Poirier (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 39–53. [Mugar E-Reserves]
- Paula A. Treichler, "AIDS, Gender and Biomedical Discourse: Current Contests for Meaning," in *AIDS: The Burdens of History*, ed. Elizabeth Fee and Daniel M. Fox (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 191–234.

11/6 Paul Monette: The Writer as Witness

[The Life and Work of Paul Monette \(UCLA Library Website\)](#)

Paul Monette, "Preface," "No Goodbyes," "Manifesto," and "Dreaming of You," in *Love Alone: Eighteen Elegies for Rog* pp. xi-xiii, 4-5, 40-42, 56-59 [Mugar E-Reserves].

[Lisa Diedrich, "'Without us all told': Paul Monette's Vigilant Witnessing to the AIDS Crisis,"](#) *Literature and Medicine* 23, no. 1 (2004): 112-127.

By Noon, Friday November 6: Launch Preliminary Version of Course Site, Commence Peer Review

11/11 Photography & Memory

[Nicholas Nixon and Christopher Lyon, "The AIDS Project: An Interview with Nicholas Nixon,"](#) *MoMA*, no. 49 (1988): 4–5.

[Anne Hudson Jones, "A Note on Billy Howard's Photographs,"](#) *Literature and Medicine* 10:1 (1991): 80–82.

[Billy Howard, "Words and Images in the Time of AIDS,"](#) *Literature and Medicine* 10, no. 1 (1991): 83–85.

Douglas Crimp, "Portraits of People with AIDS," in Crimp, *Melancholia and Moralism*, 82-107 [Mugar Reserves].

[A Day with HIV](#), 2013 Gallery

11/13 Memorialization & Action: The AIDS Quilt

[The Names Project AIDS Memorial Quilt](#)

[Cleve Jones, "A Vision of the Quilt,"](#) *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 10, no. 4 (2007): 575–79

[Cleve Jones, "The First Displays: D.C. and S.F., 1987,"](#) *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 10, no. 4 (2007): 580–94.

[Peter Hawkins, "Naming Names: The Art of Memory and the NAMES Project AIDS Quilt,"](#) *Critical Inquiry* 19:4 (1993) 752-779.

[Neil Michel and Carole Blair, "The AIDS Memorial Quilt and the Contemporary Culture of Public Commemoration,"](#) *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 10, no. 4 (2007): 595–626

Douglas Crimp, "The Spectacle of Mourning," in Crimp, *Melancholia and Moralism* 196-202 [Mugar E-Reserves].

11/13 Third Short Paper Due

11/18 Submit Peer Reviews

V. September 11, 2001 in Manhattan

11/18 Images

Digital Photos from Site Visitors, [September 11 Digital Archive](#) (browse)

[Understanding 9/11: A Television News Archive](#)

"9.11.01 The Photographers' Stories," *American Photo* ([iPad app](#) or [website](#))

[James Nachtwey, "September 11, 2001, New York: A Photo Essay,"](#) *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 101, no. 2 (2002): 337–48.

[Andreas Huyssen, "Twin Memories: Afterimages of Nine/Eleven,"](#) *Grey Room*, no. 7 (2002): 9–13.

[Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Kodak Moments, Flashbulb Memories: Reflections on 9/11," *The Drama Review* 47, 1 \(Spring 2003\) 11-48.](#)
[Rosemary V. Hathaway, "Life in the TV: The Visual Nature of 9/11 Lore and Its Impact on Vernacular Response," *Journal of Folklore Research* 42, no. 1 \(2005\): 33-56.](#)

11/20 &
25

Narratives: Spoken, Written, and Graphic

Stories, [September 11 Digital Archives](#) (browse in a few of the account in the collections)
[Jenny Edkins, "The Rush to Memory and the Rhetoric of War," *Journal of Political and Military Sociology* 31:2 \(2003\): 231-51.](#)
[John M. Murphy, "'Our Mission and Our Moment': George W. Bush and September 11th," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 6, no. 4 \(2004\): 607-32.](#)
[David Hoogland Noon, "Operation Enduring Analogy: World War II, the War on Terror, and the Uses of Historical Memory," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 7:3 \(2005\): 339-64.](#)
[Hillary Chute, "Temporality and Seriality in Spiegelman's *In the Shadow of No Towers*," *American Periodicals: A Journal of History, Criticism, and Bibliography* 17 \(2007\) 228-244.](#)

12/2

Memorials: Spontaneous, Public, Virtual, and Musical

[National 9/11 Memorial](#)
[Flight 93 National Memorial](#)
[National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial](#)
[Boston Logan International Airport 9/11 Memorial](#)
[Marita Sturken, "The Aesthetics of Absence: Rebuilding Ground Zero," *American Ethnologist* 31, no. 3 \(August 2004\): 311-325.](#)
[Walker, Joyce. "Narratives in the Database: Memorializing September 11th Online." *Computers and Composition* 24, no. 2 \(2007\): 121-153.](#)
[John Adams, *On the Transmigration of Souls* \(musical composition, approx. 25 minutes\).](#)

12/4

The National Memorial Museum

[National September 11 Memorial Museum](#)
[Hoskins, Gregory. "The Politics of Memory and The World Trade Center Memorial Site." *Journal of Social Philosophy* 38, no. 2 \(2007\): 242-254.](#)
[Billie Pivnick, "Enacting Remembrance: Turning Toward Memorializing September 11th." *Journal of Religion and Health* 50, no. 3 \(2011\): 499-515.](#)
["A Memorial Inscription's Grim Origins," *New York Times*, April 2, 2014.](#)
[Adam Gopnik, "Stones and Bones," *The New Yorker*, June 30, 2014.](#)

12/4

Fourth Paper Due

By 11:59 PM, Monday, December 9: Complete Revisions on Course Sites

12/9

Presentation and Discussion of Course Sites