

HI221/PO394 Catastrophe & Memory  
Tuesdays & Thursdays 9:30-10:45 — CAS 201  
Course Site: <http://sites.bu.edu/catastrophe/>

**Professor James Schmidt**

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**Office Hours:**

Tuesdays 2-3:30 PM  
Thursdays 10:45 AM- 12:15 PM

This course explores how catastrophes are remembered, both by the individuals who lived through them and by those who come after them. We will focus 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 use them as a point of departure for an exploration of the differing ways in which the memory of these (and other) events have been preserved.

The forms of memorialization we will be investigating include personal memoirs, literary works, architectural monuments, museums, photographs, films, digital archives, and musical compositions. The questions that will concern us include the relationship between individual testimonies and public narratives, 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 lives on into the present). Our goal will be try to understand how individuals and the cultures in which they live have made sense of events that would seem to defy comprehension, to appreciate the myriad ways in which human beings have sought to preserve the memory of what has been lost, and to reflect on how the work that we will be doing in this course can itself be understood as yet another example of the complicated relationship between memory and history.

### **Caveats:**

This will be a rather demanding course. It draws on a wide variety of materials (e.g., scholarly articles, memoirs, magazines, photos, musical compositions, movies, digital archives, etc.). It is unlikely that anyone (including the instructor) will be conversant with all of the material we will be exploring. The good news is that this means that you are sure to learn something new; the bad news is that some of the materials will present greater challenges than others. Since it may not be obvious which materials may present stumbling blocks, you should be careful not to fall behind.

Since we will be spending the semester examining how people have been forced to wrestle with horrible events, this course inevitably prompts (but cannot pretend to resolve) questions that lie at the heart of the human condition, among them the ultimate meaning of the seemingly inevitable experience of loss, suffering, pain, and death. This can be quite emotionally draining and, while these are matters that we must all ultimately confront, it might be worth considering whether — depending on what else is going on in your life at the moment — you want to deal with them this semester. I will indicate which materials might present particular problems and am receptive to discussing any particular concerns you might about the materials I will be asking you to examine.

### **Course Structure:**

This is not a lecture course. You should come to class prepared to discuss the materials, examine their implications for the broader themes of the course, and draw connections between the materials with which we have been working. In order to make sure that everyone has an equal opportunity to participate, from time to time I may select students at random (there’s an app for this) to initiate discussions.

In order to make sure we make the best use of our time together, I have set up a [discussion forum on the course website](http://sites.bu.edu/catastrophe/). A week before each meeting, I will post brief comments about the materials we will be discussing, along with a few suggestions about issues that we might want to explore. These posts will remain open for comments until twenty-four hours prior to our class meetings. At some point during the six days in which the posts are open for

Syllabus version: September 2, 2017

The syllabus will be subject to modifications as needed as the semester progresses. The latest version of the syllabus will be available at <http://sites.bu.edu/catastrophe/> )

comments, you should post responses that analyze the assigned materials, suggest future lines of discussion, draw connections between the differing parts of the course, and/or offer links to (and discussions of) related materials. I will draw on your comments to structure our class discussions and, if necessary, address any the confusions that might have sprung up.

## **Course Requirements**

In addition to active participation in class discussions and regular (i.e., at least twice a week) contributions to the discussion forum on the course website, the main requirement for this course will be the creation of an entry for a Boston “memory site” on [CLIO](#), a collaborative, crowd-sourced public history project. A guide for using CLIO, along with a schedule for the completion of the various steps involved in executing the project is available on the course WordPress site.

In addition to the Clio project, you will be asked to write four short (1500-2500 words) papers in response to questions drawn from issues raised in the readings, class discussions, and the course’s online discussion forum. These papers will be due on October 5, October 31, November 16, and December 12.

In determining final grades for this course, the Clio project will count for 40% of the final grade, the three short papers will count for 30%, participation (which includes contributions to class discussions and to the online forum) will count for 30%. Grading rubrics for the different assignments are available on the course WordPress site.

## **Academic Conduct and Privacy Rights**

All students should review the university’s [Academic Conduct Code](#). Particular attention should be paid to the discussion in the section entitled “Plagiarism,” which reviews the variety of forms that plagiarism can take and offers 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 essential 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. Contributions to the Clio site will be publicly accessible.

## **Policy on Digital Devices, Absences, Incompletes, and Other Matters**

Students may use computers or portable digital devices for note-taking and/or accessing course materials in class, but please mute any alarms or notification sounds. They should, of course, refrain from using these devices for tasks *other* than those connected with the course. I reserve the right, from time to time, to request that laptops be closed, so you may want bring alternative note-taking media with you. Mobile phones should, of course, be silenced.

Should any problems arise (e.g., absences, issues with the course site, scheduling of meetings), I can best be reached by email (messages can also be left on my office phone, but the response time may be slower).

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

Students with learning disabilities that may require adjustments in course arrangements should contact me by September 19.

## Course Materials:

The following book is available for purchase from the Boston University Bookstore:

Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford University Press)

While focusing on World War I, it has broader implications for thinking about the relationship between catastrophe, history, literature, and memory and is worth buying, keeping, and rereading.

We will also make use of the following collection of readings, which offers a convenient survey recent literature on the questions we will be addressing [may be downloaded](#) from the Mugar Library site:

Susannah Radstone and Bill Schwarz, editors, *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates* (Fordham University Press).

The rest of the material for the course is available online and can be accessed from the course website:

<http://sites.bu.edu/catastrophe/>

The course site contains both an online version of this syllabus and a downloadable version. During the semester it may be necessary to make minor adjustments in the schedule and in the assignments. For the *current* version of this syllabus, please consult the course site.

## 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. In most cases, problems accessing the readings can be resolved by searching for the title on the main Mugar page or by checking your proxy settings. If problems persist, please contact me.

## I. Introduction: Memory Sites

### 9/7 Heritage, History, and Public Monuments

[David Lowenthal, "Fabricating Heritage."](#) *History and Memory* 10:1 (1998): 5–24.

Mitchell J. Landrieu, "Truth: Remarks on the Removal of Confederate Monuments in New Orleans"

Quin Hillyer, "In (partial) defense of the New Orleans Monuments" (May 1, 2017)"

[Josh Marshall, "Some Thoughts on Public Memory."](#) *Talking Points Memo*, August 14, 2017

Jennifer Schuessler, "Historians Question Trump's Comments on Confederate Monuments," [New York Times, August 15, 2017](#), p. A12

John Daniel Davidson, "Why We Should Keep the Confederate Monuments Right Where They Are," *The Federalist* (August 18, 2017)

Benjamin J. Dueholm, "We don't erase history by pulling statues down. We do it by putting them up," [Washington Post, August 23, 2017](#).

Marc Fisher, "Why those Confederate soldier statues look a lot like their Union counterparts," [Washington Post, August 18, 2017](#)

## 9/12 Collective Memory

[Maurice Halbwachs, "Historical Memory and Collective Memory,"](#) in Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980) 50-87

[Noa Gedi and Yigal Elam, "Collective Memory — What Is It?,"](#) *History and Memory* 8:1 (1996): 30–50.

Bill Schwartz, "Memory, Temporality, Modernity: Les Lieux de Mémoire," in *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates* 41-58.

## 9/14 Memory Sites and Historical Remembrance

[Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire,"](#) *Representations* no. 26 (1989): 7–24.

[Ross Poole, "Memory, History and the Claims of the Past,"](#) *Memory Studies* 1:2 (2008): 149–166

J. M Winter, "Sites of Memory," in *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates* 312–24.

# II. The Battle of the Somme

## 9/19 The Somme as History and Memory

"[The Great Battle](#)," *The Times* [London], July 3, 1916

"[Battle of the Somme](#)," Wikipedia article [look at both the main entry and the "Talk" tab]

Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* 3-55, 74-81

Additional Digital Resources:

[First World War Centenary \(Imperial War Museum\)](#)

[First World War Centenary \(Oxford\)](#)

[Europeana 1914-1918](#)

## 9/21 Journals and Memoirs

Siegfried Sasson, [Journal, 26 June 1916-12 Aug. 1916](#) (Cambridge University Libraries): read pages 10r-13v, 18r-24v, 34r, 35v.

Excerpts from [Siegfried Sassoon, \*Memoirs of an Infantry Officer\*](#)

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* 82-122

## 9/26 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\*](#)  
Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* 168-206

## 9/28 Missing Bodies and Public Memorials

[Remembrance Sunday Ceremonies at the Cenotaph](#): 2 hour video of 2014 ceremony — at least watch the first 20 minutes (which includes historical footage), then the wreath laying (from the 30 minute mark to 50 minute mark); the ceremony ends after one hour; the second hour consists of crowd interviews and parade of troops.  
[Allan Greenberg, "Lutyens's Cenotaph," The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians 48, no. 1 \(March 1989\): 5-23.](#)  
Jay Winter, "[War Memorials and the Mourning Process](#)," in *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning* 78-116  
[Jennifer Wingate, "Over the Top," American Art 19:2 \(2005\): 26-47.](#)  
"[5000 Ice Sculptures Placed on City Steps in Moving World War I Commemoration](#)," *Birmingham Mail*, August 2, 2014.

## 10/3 Mass Death and Modern Memory

Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* 336—362.  
Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning* [29-53](#), [204-229](#)

## 10/5 A Musical Memorial: Britten's *War Requiem*

Introduction to the *War Requiem* ([ten minute video](#))  
Benjamin Britten, *War Requiem* ([musical composition, 85 minutes](#))  
[Alec Robertson, "Britten's War Requiem," The Musical Times 103 \(1962\) 308-310.](#)

## 10/5 First Short Paper Due

## 10/10 No class (Monday Schedule)

## III. Hiroshima & Nagasaki

## 10/12 American Reports and Reactions

President Truman's [statement on the bombing](#)  
*Life* [August 20, 1945](#) pp. 17-35, *Life* [September 17, 1945](#), 36-49; "The 36-Hour War," *Life* [November 19, 1945](#), 27-35.  
"[A Tale of Two Cities](#)" [US Government film]  
"[Hiroshima After One Year](#)" [Universal Newsreel]  
[Peter Schwenger, "America's Hiroshima" boundary 2 21 \(1994\) 233-253.](#)  
Paul Boyer, "Exotic Resonances: Hiroshima in American Memory," *Diplomatic History* 19:2 (1995): 297-318.

10/17 John Hersey's *Hiroshima*

John Hersey, [\*Hiroshima\*](#)  
[Michael J. Yavenditti, "John Hersey and the American Conscience: The Reception of "Hiroshima", "The Pacific Historical Review 43, no. 1 \(February 1974\): 24-49.](#)

10/19 Classified Films, Confiscated Photographs, and Hibakusha Drawings

Erik Barnouw, "The Hiroshima-Nagasaki Footage: A Report," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 2:1 (March 1982): 91–100.  
*Hiroshima Nagasaki August 1945* ([1995 documentary](#) 16 minutes)  
*Nagasaki Journey* ([1995 documentary](#) 29 minutes))  
[Barbara Marcoñ, "Hiroshima and Nagasaki in the Eye of the Camera," Third Text 25, no. 6 \(2011\): 787–797.](#)  
John W. Dower, *Ground Zero 1945*, MIT Visualizing Culture ([website](#))

10/24 Hibakusha Testimonies

[Testimony of Hibakusha](#) (atomic bomb survivors), Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (select any five pdfs)  
[Lisa Yoneyama, \*Hiroshima Traces : Time, Space and the Dialectics of Memory\*, Chapter 3: On Testimonial Practices](#)  
[John Whittier Treat, "Hiroshima's America," boundary 2 21 \(1994\) 233-253.](#)

10/26 Rituals, Museums, and Memorials: The Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum

[Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum](#)  
[Benedict Giamo, "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.](#)

10/31 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.](#)

10/31 Second Short Paper Due

## IV. The AIDS Pandemic

### 11/2 Diseases & Metaphors

- Susan Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor & AIDS and Its Metaphors* pp. 3-9, 257-61, 63-67, 104-112, 132-134, 173-183
- [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.](#)
- 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.

### 11/7 Oral Histories of Researchers and Activists

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

### 11/9 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.
- [Lisa Diedrich, "'Without us all told': Paul Monette's Vigilant Witnessing to the AIDS Crisis," \*Literature and Medicine\* 23, no. 1 \(2004\): 112-127.](#)

### 11/14 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.](#)
- [A Day with HIV](#)

### 11/16 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 .](#)

### 11/16 Third Short Paper Due



## V. September 11, 2001 in Manhattan

### 11/21 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)  
[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.

### 11/28 Narratives: Spoken, Written, and Graphic

[September 11 Digital Archives](#) (browse in a few of the collections to get a sense of the material; try a few search terms)  
[Jenny Edkins, “The Rush to Memory and the Rhetoric of War,”](#) *Journal of Political and Military Sociology* 31:2 (2003): 231–51.  
[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.  
Art Spiegelman, *In the Shadow of No Towers* (Mugar Permanent Reserve, Folio PN6727.S6 I5 2004)

### 11/30 Memorials: Spontaneous, Public, and Virtual & 12/5

[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.  
[Andrew Bacevich, “Is a ‘Global War on Terrorism Memorial’ an appropriate tribute?”](#) *Boston Globe*, July 25, 2017.

### 12/7 The National September 11 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.

### 12/12 Musical Memorials

[John Adams, On the Transmigration of Souls](#) (musical composition, approx. 25 minutes)



[Steve Reich, WTC 911](#) (musical composition, approx. 16 minutes)

William Basinski, [The Disintegration Loops I](#) (the first hour of a five hour musical composition, with the video Basinski recorded from the roof of his Brooklyn apartment of the last hour of daylight over lower Manhattan on September 11, 2001).

**12/12 Fourth Paper Due**