

# HI221/PO394 Catastrophe & Memory

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Office Hours: Mondays 2-3:30 PM, Wednesdays 12:45-2:15 PM

This course explores how catastrophes are remembered, both by the individuals who experienced them and by those who have lived 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. Our goal will be to examine the differing ways in which the memory of these events has been preserved and how those memories continue to shape the present.

The forms of memorialization we will explore include personal memoirs, literary works, architectural monuments, museums, photographs, films, musical compositions, and digital archives. The questions with which we will be concerned include the often-problematic relationship between individual testimonies and public narratives, the difficulties of drawing analogies between individual and collective memories, and the tension between “history” (i.e., the construction of empirically grounded narratives of past events) and “memory” (i.e., the various ways in which the past continues to live on into the present).

## **Course Structure:**

The Monday and Wednesday meetings of the course will be devoted to a discussion of the readings assigned for the day. You should come to class prepared to discuss the materials, examine their implications for the broader themes we will be discussing, and draw connections between the materials with which we have been working. The focus and structure of the Friday meetings will vary from week to week and, in addition to further discussion of the week’s readings, will include further discussions of points raised in posts to the course WordPress site, visits to sites on or near to campus, work on course projects, meetings with invited guests, screenings and discussion of short films.

This site will also serve as a way for me to post brief comments about the materials we will be discussing. New posts will appear by noon on Fridays and will remain open for comments until noon on Thursdays. At some point during the period when the posts are open for comment 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. From time to time, the site will also be used as a way of generating comments for discussion in the Friday workshops.

## **Course Requirements:**

In addition to faithful attendance and regular participation in class discussions, a significant requirement for this course will be the creation of an entry on Clio, a crowd-sourced public history site, documenting a Boston area memory site. Instructions and interim deadlines for the completion of the various stages of this project can be found on the “About the Clio Project” tab on the course’s WordPress site. To receive full credit, the project must be completed and approved by noon on Monday, December 9, 2019.

You will also be asked to write four short (1500-2500 words) papers in response to questions drawn from issues raised in the readings, the course’s online discussion forum, class discussions, and topics explored in the Friday workshops. Dates for the short papers are listed on the syllabus. In computing the grade for this component of the course, the lowest of the four grades will be dropped.

In determining final grades for this course, the Clio project will count for 40% of the final grade and the three best grades on the short papers will count for 30%, contributions to the online discussion forums and randomly scheduled in-class analysis exercises will count for 30%. Grading rubrics for the assignments are available on the course WordPress site.

Version: September 3, 2019

(The current version of the syllabus will be available at <http://sites.bu.edu/catastrophe/> )

## **Policy on Digital Devices, Absences, Late Papers, Incompletes, and Learning Disabilities**

Students are welcome to use computers or portable digital devices for note-taking and/or accessing course materials in class, but please mute any alarms and notification sounds. It goes without saying that you should refrain from using these devices during class times for tasks *other* than those connected with the course. Since I reserve the right, as needed, to ask you to cease using such devices, so you may want bring alternative note-taking media (e.g., paper and pen) with you.

If possible, please advise me of any unavoidable absences prior to class. Frequent (i.e., more than three) unexcused absences will result in a lowering of your grade by a half step (i.e., from B to B-). Late papers will not be accepted unless there is a compelling explanation (computer malfunctions typically do not constitute a “compelling explanation”: it is your responsibility to make backups of your work, update your system software, and submit work on time).

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 discuss arrangements for the completion of coursework *prior* to my issuing an Incomplete.

Should any problems arise (e.g., absences, issues with the course site, scheduling of meetings), I can best be reached via [email](#). Messages can also be left on my office phone (617-358-1781), but it will take longer for me to respond.

Students with learning disabilities that may require adjustments in course arrangements should contact me by the second week of class.

## **Academic Conduct and Privacy Rights**

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 offers clear examples of what each involves. Since past experience suggests that 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, these rules will 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 setting remain somewhat unclear, I have restricted access to the course WordPress course site to students enrolled in this course. Your contributions to the Clio site will, of necessity, be publicly accessible and identified as your work.

## **BU HUB Learning Outcomes:**

Completion of this course satisfies the following BU HUB Learning Outcomes:

1. *Historical consciousness*: Our fundamental concern will be with examining the ways in which individuals and the cultures in which they live have gone about making sense of events that would seem to defy comprehension. This will involve examining a variety of primary source materials (e.g., contemporary newspaper accounts, individual diaries, letters, and other archival materials, etc.). We will also explore the diverse ways (e.g., memoirs, memorials, museums, ceremonial rituals, literary works, motion pictures, musical compositions, etc.) in which memories of catastrophic events have been passed on to subsequent generations. memoirs, magazines, photos, movies, musical compositions, digital archives, etc.). My hope is that, in the process, we may come 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 in which we are engaged might itself serve as yet another example of complicated relationship between memory and history.
2. *Aesthetic Exploration*: Since one of the ways in which the past remains present is in works of art, we will be considering the ways diversity of ways in which artworks serves as memorials. This will require us to learn to “read” not only written testimonials, but architectural monuments (e.g., the

Whitehall Cenotaph), literary works (e.g., the poems by soldiers and AIDS activists), films (e.g., *Hiroshima mon Amour*), and musical compositions (e.g., Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem* and Steve Reich and John Adams' 9-11 compositions).

3. *Research and Information Literacy*: Increasingly, the memory of catastrophic events has been preserved in online digital archives. You will need to shuffle between the roles of consumers, critics, and contributors to this undertaking. Much of the material we will be examining will be drawn from these archives and part of our job will be to reflect, compare, and criticize the way in which these new "memory sites" go about their work. you will be making your own contribution to these endeavors by documenting a Boston area memory site on [Clio](#), an online, crowd-sourced, public history site.

Finally, for those who are (or decided to become) History majors, this course can be used to satisfy either the American or the European area requirement.

### **Caveats:**

It is unlikely that anyone 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 be 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 very 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 have about the materials I will be asking you to examine.

### **Course Materials:**

All of the readings for the course will be available as downloads from Mugar library. We will also make use of the following collection of readings that offers a convenient survey recent literature on the questions we will be addressing: Susannah Radstone and Bill Schwarz, editors, *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates* (Fordham University Press). The entire text can be downloaded from the Mugar Library site. The rest of the materials for the course is available on the course website.

## **Course Schedule & Readings:**

The syllabus contains clickable links that should take you to the materials assigned (please notify me of any broken links or other problems).

### **I. Introduction: History, Memory, and Memory Sites**

Sept. 6      Friday Workshop

                 Visit to Marsh Chapel (gather outside the front doors)

Sept. 9      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)"
- 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](#)

Sept. 11 Memories, Individual and Collective

- [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.

Sept. 13 Friday Workshop

Sept 16 "Memory Sites"

- [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

Sept. 18 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](#) (ACLS Humanities Ebook) 3-55, 74-81

Sept 20 Friday Workshop

Search these sites come prepared to share what you found:

- [First World War Centenary \(Imperial War Museum\)](#)
- [First World War Centenary \(Oxford\)](#)
- [Europeana 1914-1918](#)

Sept 23 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

- Sept. 25 War Poetry: Sassoon and Owen  
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](#)
- Sept. 27 Friday Workshop  
Find something in the [Oxford First World War Poetry Digital Archive](#) to present
- Sept. 30 War Poetry: Blunden, Binyon, and Pope  
Laurence Binyon, “The Fourth of August,” “For the Fallen”, in [The Winnowing Fan: Poems on the Great War](#) (1914)  
Edmund Blunden, [“Report on Experience”](#)  
Jessie Pope, “Play the Game” and “The Call,” in [Jessie Pope’s War Poems](#) (1915)  
Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* 168-206
- Oct 4 Friday Workshop
- Oct 7 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,” Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning](#) 78-116  
[“5000 Ice Sculptures Placed on City Steps in Moving World War I Commemoration,” Birmingham Mail, August 2, 2014.](#)
- Oct. 9 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  
[James D Herbert, “Bad Faith at Coventry: Spence’s Cathedral and Britten’s ‘War Requiem.’” Critical Inquiry 25:3 \(Spring 1999\): 535–65.](#)
- Oct. 11 Friday Workshop
- Oct 15 (Tuesday) A Musical Memorial: Britten’s War Requiem  
Introduction to the *War Requiem* ([ten minute video](#))  
Benjamin Britten, *War Requiem* ([musical composition, 85 minutes](#))

## October 16— First Short Paper Due

### III. Hiroshima & Nagasaki

#### Oct. 16 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.  
Account of the bombing by [John A. Siemes, S. J.](#)  
["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.

#### Oct. 18 Friday Workshop

#### Oct. 21 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.](#)

#### Oct 23 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](#)).

#### Oct. 25 Friday Workshop

#### Oct. 28 Hibakusha Testimonies

[Memoirs of Atomic Bomb Survivors](#), National Peace Memorial Halls for Atomic Bomb Victims  
[Testimony of Hibakusha](#), Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
[John Whittier Treat, "Hiroshima's America," boundary 2 21 \(1994\) 233-253.](#)

#### Oct 30 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.](#)

- Nov 1 Friday Workshop
- Nov 4 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.

**November 6 — Second Short Paper Due**

**IV. The AIDS Pandemic**

- Nov. 6 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.
- Nov 8 Friday Workshop
- Nov 11 Oral Histories of Researchers and Activists
- [In Their Own Words: NIH Researchers Recall the Early Years of AIDS \(NIH, Office of History\)](#)  
[ACTUP Oral History Project](#)
- Nov.13 Paul Monette: The Poet as Witness
- 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.
- Nov. 15 Friday Workshop
- Nov. 18 Memorialization & Activism: 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 .

## November 18: Third Short Paper Due

### V. September 11, 2001 in Manhattan

Nov. 20 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.

Nov. 22 Friday Workshop

Nov. 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.

Dec 2 Memorials: Spontaneous, Public, and Virtual

[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.

Dec. 4 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 Inscripton's Grim Origins," *New York Times*, April 2, 2014.  
[Adam Gopnik](#), "Stones and Bones," *The New Yorker*, June 30, 2014.

Dec 6 Friday Workshop

Dec 9 Three 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).

Dec 11    Presentation of Clio Projects