

War and Forgetting
ANG 6930 1C41 / ANT 4930 1C42
Fall 2012

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Mondays 3-5
(9:35 am - 12:35 pm)
FLI 109

Office Hours: Wednesdays 2-5 pm or by appointment

War is the motor of history: history begins with war and war set history on its course.—Michel Serres

What fiction makes possible, in all its forms... is to forget oneself, to forget thinking of oneself under the sign of repetition.—Marc Augé

Summary: This course asks how forgetting—understood both as an active and a reactive force—is integral to the ways former wars affect present and future social worlds. ‘War’ is a word whose sense and reference are often taken for granted but which upon scrutiny become more multiple and unstable than they might first appear. For it is not always obvious when a war is ‘on’ or when it is ‘over’, much less who actually has the right to declare or to decide. Likewise, the degree to which past armed conflicts insist in and even orient the present can be difficult to grasp for they touch subsequent generations in often hidden ways. Thus, what should not be ignored is war’s intimate relation to political time. Indeed, how that time comes to be structured in part hinges upon the kinds of social legitimacy accorded to acts of destruction and to the atmospherics of threat such acts engender. The aim of this class is precisely to probe how *oblivion* is paradoxically central not only to the workings of such legitimacy but to its critical engagement.

In our inquiry we will privilege the social legacies of several armed conflicts in the Americas. This broad geographical frame will allow us to focus on settler societies, questions of indigeneity, and, more specifically, the role foundational violence (still) plays in the continual refashioning of nationhood—whether through demands for reparative justice or through commemorative practices that attempt to bring painful events from the past and make them vivid in the present. As such, the disquieting place of the war dead in national society will be one area of special concern.

Throughout the semester we will draw upon an interdisciplinary mix of texts and representational genres (philosophy, psychoanalysis, history, literature, ethnography and film) with an aim towards weighing the rhetorical force of distinct modes of telling. These critical materials will enable us to (re)acquaint ourselves with theories of time, affect and materiality while increasing our sensitivity to how forgotten conflicts resonate in contemporary politics and even in the lives of those we know.

Overview of Requirements: This class is run as a seminar with active participation in all discussions expected. Each student will be asked to prepare and present a seminar report on one or more of the assigned readings at least once during the semester. There will be a take-home mid-term exam and also a final paper.

Texts: The following titles are required:

Augé, Marc. *Oblivion* (Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2004)
Bergson, Henri. *Matter and Memory* (Zone Books, 1990)
Deleuze, Gilles. *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (Columbia Univ. Press, 2006)
Gibler, John. *To Die in Mexico* (City Lights Books, 2011)
Gonzalez, Olga. *Unveiling Secrets of War in the Peruvian Andes* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 2011)
Nelson, Diane. *Reckoning: The Ends of War in Guatemala* (Duke University Press, 2009)
Schivelbusch, Wolfgang. *The Culture of Defeat* (Picador, 2003)
Silko, Leslie Marmon. *Ceremony* (Penguin Books, 2006)

Copies of the above texts will be placed on reserve at Library West. All remaining class readings can be downloaded from the Sakai course page.

Attendance: Please arrive punctually and remain until the end of class. An attendance sign-up sheet will be circulated each session. If you must miss class, please inform the Instructor ahead of time (or as soon as possible) and provide appropriate documentation. In the event of an absence it is the student's responsibility to contact a classmate in order to obtain notes on the materials covered while away.

Absences for reasons of religious holiday, illness, and official university business are excused; however, proper notification must still be provided. **Please note:** *More than one unexcused absence will undermine performance in the course. After the second unexcused absence the final grade will be reduced a full letter. Students with four or more unexcused absences will fail.* On the other hand, bonus credit will be granted for perfect (or near perfect) attendance.

Evaluations – Final course grades will be calculated according to a combination of four criteria:

Participation (20%): Students are expected to play an active, informed role in class discussions and in so doing contribute to the overall success of the course. Please arrive at each session on time with the assigned materials in hand, having carefully read them all, and prepared to share impressions, questions and interpretations. You are also encouraged to meet with the Instructor in office hours at least two times during the semester to talk about your individual progress in the course or plans for the final project.

Seminar Report and Presentation (25%): Every student will be responsible for the preparation and presentation of one seminar report on the assigned readings of a particular week. The seminar report should not be a mere summary of the texts but rather a well-crafted, spirited interpretation that situates the readings within the ideas and concepts of the course. It should also outline specific concerns and hone questions. Student(s) in charge of the coming week's presentation should circulate a list of discussion points and questions *at least 24 hours* prior to class (that is, no later than 9:30 am on Sunday) via Sakai.

Mid-term exam (25%): The mid-term will be a take-home exam distributed two weeks before the due date.

Term project paper (30%): For undergraduate students – The final paper should be an interpretative essay that critically examines one of the class themes in depth. The specific topic must be elaborated in consultation of the Instructor and receive his approval. Length: 3000 words.

For graduate students – The final paper should be an original, persuasive and creative engagement with one or more of the class concepts. Of approximately 5500-7000 words in length, it should contribute directly towards the development of a conference paper, journal article or dissertation chapter.

From all students a concise 250-word abstract that clearly outlines the objectives of the project is due in late October. The term paper itself must be handed in no later than the last day of class.

All papers, exams and reports should be typed and double-spaced with one-inch margins and pages numbered. In addition to submitting a hard copy of the assignment, *you are also required to send an electronic version to the Instructor via Sakai.*

Written assignments will be judged on content (the extent to which they succeed in explicating course material and themes) but also in terms of style (coherence, persuasiveness and creativity).

Assignment Deadlines:

- 1) mid-term take-home exam: Oct. 15
- 2) term paper abstract: Oct. 29
- 3) final paper: Dec. 3

Late policy: Assignments are due at the beginning of class. Mid-term exams and seminar reports handed in late but still within one week of the original due date will be docked the equivalent of a full letter grade. After that they will no longer be accepted. Except in cases of extremely unusual circumstances, no extensions will be granted for the term paper.

Academic Honesty:

All work submitted by a student for a grade must be completed by that student and free from unauthorized assistance or deliberate misrepresentations. The penalty for plagiarism or cheating is a grade of zero points on the assignment in question; in such cases an incident form will also be sent to the Office of the Dean of Students. If you have questions about what constitutes academic misconduct, please consult the UF Honor Code as well as the UF Policies on Academic Honesty, Student Rights and Responsibilities. These are available online at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide/studentrights.php> - [academichonestyguidelines](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide/studentrights.php).

ADA Statement: “Students with disabilities, who need reasonable modifications to complete assignments successfully and otherwise satisfy course criteria, are encouraged to meet with the instructor as early in the course as possible to identify and plan specific accommodations. Students will be asked to supply a letter from the Disability Resource Center to assist in planning accommodations.”

Grading Scale: The following scale will be used for grades on all assignments and exams: 94-100=A; 90-93=A-; 87-89=B+; 83-86=B; 79-82=B-; 76-78=C+; 72-75=C; 69-71=C-; 66-68=D+; 62-65=D; 59-61=D-; 58 and below=E (failing).

Regarding university grading policies, be advised that a grade of C- is not valid for major, minor, Gen Ed, Gordon Rule, or for college basic distribution credit. For questions about minus grades, please see <http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html>.

You may consult current UF policy on how grade point averages are calculated at <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>.

Health and Counseling: The University offers the following health and counseling services for students in the event personal problems hinder academic performance:

University Counseling Center (301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575),

Student Mental Health (Student Health Care Center, 392-1171), and

Sexual Assault Recovery Services (Student Health Care Center, 392-1161).

Please note: The Instructor may make minor adjustments to class readings or assignment requirements during the course of the semester. Any and all modifications will be announced ahead of time.

Course Schedule

week 1 **introductions**

8/27 **film:** *Días de Santiago*

Benjamin, "Excavation and Memory"

Augé, "Memory and Oblivion"

week 2 **sense, value, history** **(University Holiday: seminar does not meet)**

9/3 Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, Essay II

Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*:
Chapter I, sections 1-3; Chapter II, sections 1-4

Lomnitz, *Death and the Idea of Mexico*: Chapter 1

week 3 **which war? which time?**

9/10 Leach, "The Nature of War"

Serres, "War, Peace"

Serres, "The Birth of Time"

Kernaghan, "time as weather"

week 4 **tellings**

9/17 Silko, *Ceremony*

week 5 **does forgetting have an image?**

9/24 Borges, "Funes, the Memorious"

Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, Chapter III: "On the Survival of Images"

Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, Chapter 3

week 6 **war affects and aftermaths**

10/1 Uribe, "Memory in Times of War"

Orrantia, *Aqueous Recollections*

mid-term questions distributed

week 7 **some Freudian concepts**

10/8 Freud, "Notes upon the Mystic Writing Pad"

Freud, "The Unconscious"

Freud, *Beyond the pleasure principle*

week 8 **knowing not to know**

10/15 Gonzalez, *Unveiling Secrets of War*

mid-term exam due

week 9 **wounds and their animations**

10/22 Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, Essay II

Nietzsche, "On the Utility and Liability of History for Life"

Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, Chapter IV

week 10 **death worlds**

10/29 Gibler, *To Die in Mexico*

Canetti, "The Survivor"

Blanchot, "Two Versions of the Imaginary"

project abstract due

week 11 **repetition, or three syntheses of time**

11/5 Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, Chapter 2

Kublitz, "Seizing Catastrophes: the Temporality of *Nakba* among Palestinians in Denmark"

week 12 **voids and their figurations (University Holiday: seminar does not meet)**

11/12 Augé, *Oblivion*

Feldman, "On Cultural Anesthesia"

Morris, "Images of Untranslatability in the US War on Terror"

week 13 **national loss**

11/19 Schivelbusch, *The Culture of Defeat*

week 14 **concluding remarks**

12/3 Nelson, *Reckoning*

final papers due