

War and Forgetting - Fall 2014
ANG 6930 14DH / ANT 4930 07GD

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Office Hours: Thursdays 2:30-5:00 pm or by appointment

Mondays 6-8
(12:50 pm - 3:50 pm)
CBD 0234



War is the motor of history... — 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 the temporal horizons of political societies come to be structured hinges in part 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 to probe how *oblivion* is paradoxically central not only to the legitimization work of political societies but to critical engagement with their temporal figurations.

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 acknowledge painful events from the past and even make them vivid in the present. As such, returning soldiers and the disquieting place of the war dead in national societies will be areas 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 term paper with a first draft due by mid-semester.

Texts: The following six titles are required:

Augé, Marc. *Oblivion* (Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2004)
Bergson, Henri. *Matter and Memory* (Zone Books, 1990)
Gonzalez, Olga. *Unveiling Secrets of War in the Peruvian Andes* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 2011)
MacLeish, Kenneth. *Making War at Fort Hood* (Princeton Univ. Press, 2013)
Nelson, Diane. *Reckoning: The Ends of War in Guatemala* (Duke Univ. Press, 2009)
Silko, Leslie Marmon. *Ceremony* (Penguin Books, 2006)

recommended (though not required):

Deleuze, Gilles. *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (Columbia Univ. Press, 2006)
Ricoeur, Paul. *Memory, History, Forgetting* (University of Chicago Press, 2009)
Schivelbusch, Wolfgang. *The Culture of Defeat* (Picador, 2003)

Copies of the above books 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 me, the Instructor, ahead of time (or as soon as possible) and provide appropriate documentation. In the event of an absence your 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 *third* unexcused absence the final grade will automatically 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.

For official UF Policy on attendance and absences please consult:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

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

Participation (20%): A grade for participation will be assessed at the end of the semester based on the degree to which you play an active, informed role in class discussions, and in so doing contribute to the course's overall success. This requires that you arrive at each session on time with the assigned materials in hand and prepared to share your impressions, questions and interpretations. You are also highly encouraged to meet with me in office hours two or three times during the semester to talk about your progress in the course and your on-going work on the final project.

Seminar Report and Presentation (30%): 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 summary of the texts but 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 must 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 paper (20%): The midterm is a first draft of the final paper. The required length for undergraduate students is 2000 words; for graduate students 4000 words. An initial project abstract (250-words approx.) is due *three weeks ahead of the mid-term deadline*.

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 close consultation with me. 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.

The term paper must be handed in no later than the last day of class.

All papers and reports should be typed and double-spaced with one-inch margins and pages numbered. Please don't forget to staple. In addition to handing in a hard copy of the assignment, *you are also required to submit an electronic version 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) seminar report & presentation: TBA
- 2) term paper abstract: Sept. 22
- 3) mid-term (first draft of term paper): Oct. 13
- 4) final paper: Dec. 8

Late policy: Assignments are due at the beginning of class of the calendar deadline. Mid-term papers 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. No extensions will be granted for the final term paper.

Academic Honesty: Plagiarism and cheating are serious academic offenses. All work submitted for a grade must be free from unauthorized assistance or deliberate misrepresentations of one's own effort. 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/studenthandbook/studentrights.php#academichonestyguidelines>

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: 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 <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx#calculating>.

Additional UF Resources:

Reading & Writing Center (Broward Hall, 392-0791)

Career Resource Center (Reitz Union, 392-1601)

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: I 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**

8/25 **film:** *Días de Santiago* (dir. Josué Mendez)

Benjamin, "Excavation and Memory"

Augé, "Memory and Oblivion"

Serres, "War, Peace"

recommended:

Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*: Part I, Chapter 1

week 2 **no class**

9/1 Labor Day Holiday

week 3 **national loss**

9/8 Schivelbusch, *The Culture of Defeat* (selected chapters)

recommended:

Freud, "Screen Memories"

week 4 **sense, value, history**

9/15 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

recommended:

Kernaghan, "Esparza"

week 5 **tellings**

9/22 Silko, *Ceremony*

term paper abstract due

week 6 **does forgetting have an image?**

9/29 Borges, "Funes, the Memorious"

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

Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*: Part III, Chapter 3

week 7 **war affects and aftermaths**

10/6 Orrantia, *Aqueous Recollections*

recommended:

Uribe, "Memory in Times of War"

week 8 **some Freudian concepts**

10/13 Freud, "A Note upon the 'Mystic Writing Pad'"

mid-term paper due

Freud, "The Unconscious"

Freud, *Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (excerpts)

Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (excerpts)

week 9 **knowing not to know**

10/20 Gonzalez, *Unveiling Secrets of War* (selected chapters)

week 10 **wounds and their animation**

10/27 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 11 soldiers

11/3 MacLeish, *Making War at Fort Hood*

recommended:
Feldman, "On Cultural Anesthesia"

week 12 repetition, or three syntheses of time

11/10 Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*: Chapter 2

Kernaghan, "Oblivious Title: on the political time of land claims in a postwar setting of Peru

week 13 looking back at death worlds

11/17 Nelson, *Reckoning* (selected chapters)

Taussig, "The Language of Flowers"

recommended:
Bataille, "The Language of Flowers"

Blanchot, "Two Versions of the Imaginary"

week 14 presentations

11/24

week 15 presentations

12/1

week 16 presentations & final remarks

12/8

term paper due