

New York University Abu Dhabi
MCC-UH-1011J
J-Term, January 4-20, 2023
NYU Buenos Aires
Anchorena 1314
Classroom: Molloy (2nd Floor)

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Memory and Visual Culture

Course Description:

The last several decades have witnessed a “memory boom” throughout much of the world, most visibly through the building of numerous memorials and memory museums, as well as high-profile debates about memory. This course examines the intersections of visual culture, commemoration, nationalism, and social movements with the politics of human rights and memory in the global context. We will study the contestations over memorialization and artistic engagements with the memory of traumatic events, with a particular focus on the politics of memory in Argentina regarding state terrorism from 1976-1983. In recent years, the Argentine state has also managed to convict approximately 1,000 officers and several civilians for systematic human rights violations during that period. The course will put memory projects in Argentina into comparative dialogue with examples of memorialization in other contexts such as 9/11 in the United States, the Holocaust in Germany, and state terrorism in Chile, Peru, and throughout Latin America. Through explorations of how art, photography, digital media, and design have shaped cultural memory in these contexts, we will investigate the aesthetics of memory, the role of pedagogy in memorial museums, the spatialization of memory, the digitalization of memory, the role of human rights, and the deployment of memory into political action.

Credits: 4

Prerequisites: none

Teaching and Learning Methodologies

This course is based on methodologies of media studies, visual culture studies, and cultural studies. It will be conducted as an interdisciplinary seminar, in which we will critically analyze texts, images, and institutions in relation to the politics of memory, the role of art and design in memorialization, and human rights advocacy and political action.

Students are required to attend all seminars, to undertake the reading assignments seriously, and to participate fully in seminar discussions. Readings will be prioritized each class.

Course Materials

Required Reading:

All readings will be distributed as essays in pdf in Brightspace. Please aim to do the readings before the class in which they are assigned. Readings will be prioritized for each class. Recommended readings will also be a resource for the paper assignments. Full list of course readings is in Appendix 3.

Assignments and Grades

Grades will be calculated:

Participation 10%

Blog posts 20%

Paper 1: 20% Paper 2: 20% Paper 3: 30%

Participation is an important part of your grade: students will be assigned to bring questions to class and to do summaries of the readings. We will have a class blog and students will be expected to write a minimum of 8 blog posts while in Buenos Aires. Your participation will be evaluated on the level at which you demonstrate an engagement with the course topics, in class discussion, and on the blog. An explanation of participation is in Appendix 2.

Students should post blog posts 2-3 times a week in a timely fashion and read each other's posts. Blog posts should be at a minimum several paragraphs, and engage with topics raised in class or on field trips.

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1:

Wednesday, Jan. 4: Introduction

9:30 – 1:00: NYU-BA Orientation

1-4:00: Class at NYU-BA

Reading (Recommended):

Jennifer Adair, Introduction to *In Search of the Lost Decade*

Jack Nicas and Ana Lankas, “Think 9% Inflation is Bad. Think 90%”

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/06/business/inflation-argentina.html>

Thursday, Jan. 5: Introduction to Memory Studies

9-12:00: Class at NYU-BA:

Reading:

Marianne Hirsch, “Memory Studies are a Fruitful Site to Think Citizenship Beyond the Boundaries of Nation States,”

<https://europeanmemories.net/magazine/memory-studies-are-a-fruitful-site-to-think-citizenship-beyond-the-bounds-of-nation-states/>

Marita Sturken, “Introduction” to *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering*

Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History”

Recommended:

Sigmund Freud, “A Note Upon the Mystic Writing Pad”

Maurice Halbwachs, “The Collective Memory”

Andreas Huyssen, “Present Past: Media, Politics, Amnesia”

Juhani Palasma, “Space, Place, Memory and Imagination”

City Bus Tour in afternoon 2:00 pm departure

Friday, Jan. 6: Sites of Detention as Sites of Memory

10 am to 3 pm: Visit to Ex-ESMA (Ex-Escuela Mecánica de la Armada) and Memoria Abierta

Guest Speaker: Alejandra Sanchez Anteló; guided tour of Espacio Memoria y Derechos Humanos and Memoria Abierta. Lunch at the Centro Cultural Haroldo Conti.

Reading:

<http://www.espaciomemoria.ar/english.php>

Jens Andermann, "Returning to the Site of Horror: On the Reclaiming of Clandestine Concentration Camps in Argentina"

Rodolfo Walsh, "Open Letter from a Writer to the Military Junta"

Recommended:

Gonzalo Conte, "A Topography of Memory: Reconstructing the Architectures of Terror in the Argentine Dictatorship"

Vincent Druliolle, "Remembering and its Places in Post-Dictatorship Argentina"

Saturday, Jan. 7: Disappearance and Spaces of Detention

11-2:00 Class at NYU-BA

Reading:

Susana Kaiser, "Argentina's Trials: New Ways of Writing Memory"

Emilio Crenzel. "The Ghostly Presence of the Disappeared in Argentina"

Recommended:

Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*

WEEK 2

Paper 1: Due in class on Monday

Monday Jan. 9: Memory Museums and Strategies of Pedagogy

11-2:00: Class at NYU-BA

Reading:

Marita Sturken, "The 9/11 Memorial Museum and the Remaking of Ground Zero"

Katherine Hite and Jordi Huguet: Guiding Light"

<https://www.guernicamag.com/katherine-hite-jordi-huguet-guiding-light/>

Diana Taylor, "Trauma as Durational Performance"

Recommended:

Monica Eileen Patterson, "Teaching Tolerance through Objects of Hatred: The Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia as 'Counter-Museum'"

Katherine Hite, "Revisiting the Cold War through Twenty-First Century Museums of Memory of the Americas"

Tuesday Jan. 10: Art and the Politics of Memory

9-12:00 Class at NYU-BA

Reading:

<http://parquedelamemoria.org.ar/en/>

Monumento a las Víctimas del Terrorismo del Estado Parque de la Memoria (essays in English and Spanish)

Andreas Huyssen, "Memory Sites in an Expanded Field"

Brigitte Sion, *Memorials in Berlin and Buenos Aires: Balancing Memory, Architecture, and Tourism*. Introduction and Chapter 4.

Recommended:

Cynthia Milton, "Introduction" to *Art from a Fractured Past: Memory and Truth-Telling in Post Shining Path Peru*

Claudette Lauzon, "A Home for Loss: Doris Salcedo's Melancholic Archives"

2-5:00 pm Visit to Parque de la Memoria.

Wednesday Jan. 11: Photography and Memory

11-2:00 Class at NYU-BA

Reading:

Marianne Hirsch, "Mourning and Post-Memory"

Leo Spitzer, "The Album and the Crossing"

Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer, "School Photos and Their Afterlives"

Recommended:

WJT Mitchell, "What do Pictures Want?"

View in class:

Marcelo Brodsky, *Buena Memoria/Good Memory*

Gustavo Germano, *Ausencias*, 2006.

<http://www.gustavogermano.com/portfolio/width-double/>

4-6 pm Visit to MALBA

Thursday Jan. 12: Women's Movement, Protest and the Street

11-2:00: Class at NYU BA

Guest Speaker María del Carmen Feijoó

Reading:

Diana Taylor, "Trapped in Bad Scripts: The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo"

Hebe de Bonafini and Matilde Sánchez, "The Madwomen at the Plaza de Mayo"

Alyssa Bedrosian, "How #Niunamenos Used Discourse and Digital Media to Reach the Masses in Argentina"

Recommended:

Adam Rosenblatt, "Politics of Grief"

Katherine Sobering, Introduction to *The People's Hotel: Working for Justice in Argentina*

Diana Taylor, "You Are Here: HIJOS and the DNA of Performance" and "Acts of Transfer"

Katherine Hite and Manuela Badilla, "Memorializing in Movement: Chilean Sites of Memory as Spaces of Activism and Imagination"

3:30 Madres de Plaza de Mayo march, Plaza de Mayo

Friday Jan. 13: Memorials and the Politics of Memory

11-2:00 Class at

NYU-BA Reading:

James Young, Introduction to *Stages of Memory: Reflections on Memorial Art, Loss and the Spaces Between*

Marita Sturken, "The Wall and the Screen Memory: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial"

Katherine Hite and Marita Sturken, "Stadium Memories: The Estadio Nacional de Chile and the Reshaping of Space through Women's Memory"

Recommended:

Katherine Hite, "Victims, victimizers, and the question of empathy"

WEEK 3

Paper 2 Due in Class on Monday

Monday Jan. 16: Contested Monuments, Race and Nation

11-2:00: Class at NYU-BA

Reading:

Mitch Landrieu, Speech on Removal of Confederate Monuments from New Orleans

Tess Thackara, "They Are Their Own Monuments"

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/03/arts/design/monument-lab-philadelphia.html?searchResultPosition=1>

Marita Sturken, "The Memory of Racial Terror"

Monument Lab <https://monumentlab.com/>

Zip Code Memory Project <https://zcmp.org/>

Listening Lab <https://www.listeninglab.nyc/>

Beyond Granite video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NYFUvaC4rBA>

Tuesday Jan. 17: Human Rights

10:30-1:30: Class at NYU-BA

Guest speaker: *Emilio Crenzel*

Reading:

Emilio Crenzel, "Genesis, Uses, and Significations of the Nunca Más Report in Argentina"

Emilio Crenzel, "The crimes of the last dictatorship in Argentina and its qualification as genocide: a Historicization"
Andreas Huyssen, "International Human Rights and the Politics of Memory"

Recommended:

Terrell Carver, Dolores Amat, and Paulo Ravecca, "The People's Paving Stones: The Material Politics of International Human Rights in the *Baldosas por la Memoria* of Buenos Aires"

Adam Rosenblatt, "Aparición con vida: Disappearance and the Politics of the Counterfactual from Argentina to Ayotzinapa"

Mark Ungar and Katherine Hite, "The Arc of Human Rights"

Wednesday Jan. 18: All-Day Visit to La Plata
9:00 am to 5:00 pm

Visit to the Comisión Provincial por la Memoria
<http://www.comisionporlamemoria.org/>

Guest speaker: Sandra Raggio, at the Comisión

Visit to Casa Mariani, and to the mural commemorating "The Night of the Pencils"

Reading:

Katherine Hite, "Empathic Unsettling and the Outsider Within Argentine Spaces of Memory"

Recommended

Silvia Tandeciarz, "Affective Transmissions: Toward a Pedagogy of Human Rights"

Thursday Jan. 19: Nostalgia and Memory Tourism

10:30-1:30: Class at NYU-BA

Reading:

Marita Sturken, "Pilgrimages, Reenactment, and Souvenirs: Modes of Memory Tourism"

Ksenija Bilbija, "Tortured by Fashion: Making Memory through Corporate Advertising"

Recommended:

Jonathan Bach, "The Taste Remains"

Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*.

Brigitte Sion, "Death Tourism and ArchiTourism"

Laurie Beth Clark, "Ethical Spaces: Ethics and Propriety in Trauma Tourism"

Friday Jan. 20: Conclusions and Reflections

11-2:00: Class at NYU-BA

Paper 3 due by 5 pm