

English 9229: Literature and the Production of Cultural Memory
Fall 2025
Department of English and Writing Studies
Western University

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Sakiru Adebayo

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Course Description

This seminar introduces students to the spectrum of basic themes that constitute the emergent field of cultural memory studies and familiarizes them with the theories, methods, and frameworks in the field. Because memory studies is an inter- and transdisciplinary field, students will bring to bear different disciplinary perspectives, as well as a range of topical, temporal, and geographical concerns. Most importantly, the course will provide students with research tools and analytical techniques for conducting graduate research in literary memory studies. In other words,

1. Through a study of the themes and concepts in critical memory studies, students will be introduced to foundational and contemporary scholars(hip) in the field.
2. In conjunction with point 1, students will also become acquainted with memory methodologies and theories across disciplines.
3. Through the process of learning memory themes, concepts, theories, and methods, students will become knowledgeable about different watershed moments in world literature and history, such as the Holocaust, 9/11, World Wars I and II.
4. Students will be able to apply all the theories and analytical techniques of memory in their analysis of fiction, creative non-fiction, memoir, film, etc.
5. Ultimately, at the end of this course, students will develop advanced skills in writing, research and analysis for academic and public audiences

Methods of Evaluation

Seminar Presentation 1	15%
Book Review	20%
Seminar Presentation 2	15%
Final Paper	30%
Participation	20%

Presentations 1 and 2

The first half of each class involves a discussion on assigned readings, after which there will be a short break. In the second half of the class, a student will do a seminar presentation on one of the readings for the week (the last boldened reading on the list). The student will make a 20-minute presentation with slides, followed by a Q and A session on their presentation. While the student-presenter is expected to provide a solid summary of the arguments in the reading they are presenting on, they are expected to go beyond that. An excellent presentation will provide a solid critique of the reading. It will highlight the strengths and flaws of the reading. It will also link the reading to the theme of the week as well as the other readings discussed in the first half of the class. Please note that plagiarism rules apply to oral presentations, so your presentation should be mostly in your own

words. You are not expected to do too many direct quotations and must indicate, in your presentation, when you do so. You are also expected to submit a draft/summary of your presentation at the end of the class. NOTE: Be creative with your presentation. Include nice slides and audiovisual clips. Show that you did your homework.

Book Review (1000 words)

Each student will write a review of any of the “memory studies” books assigned to them by the instructor (books will be assigned based on students’ research interests). In the review, students are expected to “think with the author” and highlight the author’s contribution to memory studies. Students are allowed to highlight not only the strengths but also the weaknesses of the author’s arguments. Students are to indicate what they think is missing in the author’s arguments, as well as what they have altogether learnt from reading the book. Students are also expected to state the areas in which the book’s subject matters intersect with their own research interests. Book reviews must be turned in by the 8th of November.

Final Paper (3000 words)

Students are required to write a final research paper of about 3000 words. The final paper will be based on the text assigned to students from the beginning of the class. Students are expected to incorporate the theories and frameworks of memory learnt in class in their analyses. Students are expected to consult with the instructor about what they plan to do with the text assigned to them. An excellent paper will take the format of a standard academic paper in literary and cultural studies. It will involve a close reading of the text assigned and will engage with relevant scholarly sources in memory studies. An excellent paper will appropriately reference the works cited using the MLA format. Overall, an excellent paper will demonstrate knowledge of cultural memory scholarship as well as critical/literary analysis skills. The final essay should be turned in by December 14.

Participation

To do well in this course, students must participate ACTIVELY in class discussions. Students are expected to read the assigned essays before each class. Students are advised to make notes as they read the assigned essays and come to class with their notes. As part of participation, students are expected to share with the class their understanding of the reading and use the class discussion as an opportunity to ask questions that they might have from reading the essays. Additionally, students should note that attendance, punctuality, and demonstration of preparedness for class are part of participation. Being attentive to and respectful of other discussants is also part of participation. The instructor will make a note of students’ performance at the end of each class, and they will use it to arrive at an aggregate for participation at the end of the term.

Late Submission Policy

A point will be deducted from the total grade (of the essay) for every 24 hours that an assignment is not submitted.

Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously, and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_offences.pdf. All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between Western University and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

AI Policy

The use of generative artificial intelligence tools (e.g., ChatGPT and other similar tools) to complete or support the completion of any assignment (oral or written) is not allowed in all cases. This is a graduate class meant to enhance students’ ability to engage in original thinking and independent writing. The use of AI defeats that purpose. Therefore, any unauthorized use of AI in writing or gathering information will be considered academic misconduct in this class. In addition to scoring zero, any student caught using generative artificial intelligence tools contrary to the expectations of the course will go through the standard procedure for scholastic offence.

Support Services

The website for the Office of the Registrar (<http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>), and the same for affiliated university colleges when appropriate, and any appropriate Student Support Services (including the services provided by the USC listed here: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>) and Academic Support and Engagement, should be provided for easy access. Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Statement on Gender-Based and Sexual Violence

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Course Schedule

Week 1: Introduction, September 4, 2025

Astrid Erll, [Memory in Culture](#), Part I and II (Pg. 1-37)
Elizabeth Loftus, [“The Fiction of Memory”](#), Tedtalk
Michael Pickering, [“The Developing Field of Memory Studies”](#), Youtube Lecture

Week 2: Individual, Collective, and Cultural Memory, September 11, 2025

Maurice Halbwachs, [“From Collective Memory,”](#) from CMR
Jan Assmann, [“Communicative and Cultural Memory”](#)
Aleida Assmann, [“Cultural Memory”](#), YouTube
Roger Brown and James Kulik, [“Flashbulb Memories”](#)
Eviatar Zerubavel, “Social Memories: Steps towards a Sociology of the Past,” CMR
Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories*, excerpt
Richard Sennett, “Disturbing Memories,” CMR
Lorenzo Zamponi, “Collective Memory and Social Movements”
James Wertsch, *Voices of Collective Remembering*, excerpt

Week 3: Memory Transmission and Generationality, September 18, 2025

Astrid Erll, [“Generations in Literary History”](#)
Karl Mannheim, [“The Problem of Generations,”](#) CMR
Marianne Hirsch, [“The Generation of Postmemory”](#)
Howard Schuman and Jacqueline Scott, “Generations and Collective Memory”
Ellen Fine, “Absent Memory”

Week 4: History and Memory, September 25, 2025

Walter Benjamin, [“Thesis on the Philosophy of History”](#)
Alon Confino, [“History and Memory”](#)
Charles Maier, [“A Surfeit of Memory,”](#) CMR
Jacques Le Goff, “Memory,” from History and Memory
Jay Winter, “Remembering War”, CMR
Chris Lorenz, “Blurred Lines: History, Memory, and the Experience of Time”

Week 5: NO CLASS, I'M AWAY FOR RESEARCH, October 2, 2025

Week 6: Memory and Forgetting, October 9, 2025

Friedrich Nietzsche, "[On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life](#)," CMR
Paul Connerton, **Seven types of forgetting**
Paul Ricoeur, Memory, history, and forgetting
David Rieff, In Praise of Forgetting

Week 7: The Politics and Ethics of Memory, October 16, 2025

Jean Amery, "[Resentments](#)" (the fourth chapter of *At the Mind's Limit*)
Avishai Margalit, [The Ethics of Memory](#), Introduction
Lea David's *The Past Can't Heal Us*, Introduction
Karl Jaspers, [The Question of German Guilt](#), Introduction by Joseph Koterski
Raphael Samuel, "Theaters of Memory", CMR
Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, "Commemorating a Difficult Past," CMR
Jeffery Blustein, *The Moral Demands of Memory*, excerpt
Valentina Pisanty's *The Guardians of Memory*, excerpt

Week 8: Memory and the Nation, October 23, 2025

Ernest Renan, "[What Is a Nation](#)"
Eric Hobsbawm, "[The Invention of Traditions](#)", CMR
Benedict Anderson, [Imagined Communities](#), excerpt
Jie-Hyun Lim, "Victimhood Nationalism"
Ann Rigney, "[Remembrance and Remaking: Memory of the Nation Revisited](#)"
Anthony Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*
Jeffrey Olick, "Memory and the Nation: Continuities, Conflicts and Transformations"

Week 9: Multidirectional and Global Memory, October 30, 2025

Chaira de Cesari and Ann Rigney, [Transnational Memory](#), Introduction
Astrid Erll, "[Travelling Memory](#)"
[Stef Craps and Lucy Bond's Memory Unbound](#), Introduction
Michael Rothberg, [Multidirectional Memory](#), Introduction
Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider, "Memory Unbound"
Julia Creet, *Memory and Migration*, Introduction

Week 10, Remembrance Day/Midterm Break, November 3-7

Week 11: Memory, Media, and the Digital, November 13

Astrid Erll's "Media and Memory" from *Memory in Culture*, chapter 5
Julia Creet and Silke Arnold de-Simine, "[Digital Afterlives](#)"
Allison Landsberg, [Prosthetic Memories](#), Introduction
Andrew Hoskins, "Digital Memory", Youtube
Aleida Assmann, "Canon and Archive," CMR
Andrew Hoskins' "The Mediatization of Memory"
Chris Locke, *Digital Memory and the Problem of Forgetting*, Introduction

Week 12: Monuments and Memorials, November 20, 2025

Andreas Huyssen, [Present Pasts](#), CMR
Reinhardt Koselleck, "[War Memorials](#)," CMR

Ann Rigney, “Memory Sites”, Youtube

Tony Bennett, [The Birth of the Museum](#) (introduction)

James Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorial and Meaning*, excerpt

Marita Sturken, *Tourists of History: Memory, Kitsch, and Consumerism*, Introduction

Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*, excerpt

Week 13: Postcolonial Memory/ Settler Memory/ Indigenous Memory, November 27, 2025

Sakiru Adebayo, [Continuous Pasts](#) excerpt

Michael Rothberg, “[Remembering Back](#)”

Kevin Bruyneel, [Settler Memory](#), Introduction

Dipesh Chakrabarty, “[Postcolonality and the Artifice of History](#)”

Dirk Gottsche, *Memory and Postcoloniality: Synergies and New Directions*,

Michele R. Jacobs, *Indigenous Memory*, excerpt

Martin Nakata, “Indigenous Memory, Forgetting and the Archive”

Week 14: Memory, Affects, and the Environment, December 4, 2025

Lucy Bond and Jessica Rapson, “[Planetary Memory in Contemporary American Fiction](#)”

Jenny Wustenburg, “[Toward Slow Memory Studies](#)”

Priscilla Solis Ybarra, “[The Land has Memories](#)”

Lawrence Buell, “[Uses and Abuses of Environmental Memory](#)”

Frank Ueokotter “[Environment and Memory](#)”

Week 00: Memory, Affect, the Body

Thomas Fuch, “[The Phenomenology of Body Memory](#)”

Basel Van Der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score*, excerpt

Nathan M To, “Memory, Affect and the Transmission of Trauma”