

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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Venue: TBD

Time: Wednesday, 12:30 to 3:30pm

Office hours: Wednesday, 11am- 12noon

Office: University College, 4414

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 wide 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 bolded 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 mostly be 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. They are expected to provide a holistic sense of what the book is about. As part of the review, students may also briefly summarize what each chapter of the book is about. They may also touch on the book’s methodology and the (inter)disciplinary perspectives it offers. 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 expected to state the areas in which the book’s subject matters intersect with their own research interests. Lastly, students are expected to incorporate memory terminologies learnt in class in writing their review. Book reviews must be turned in by the 4th 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 12.

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.

Graduate Course Health and Wellness

As part of a successful graduate student experience at Western, we encourage students to make their health and wellness a priority. Western provides several on campus health-related services to help you achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing your graduate degree. For example, to support physical activity, all students, as part of their registration, receive membership in Western's Campus Recreation Centre. Numerous cultural events are offered throughout the year. For example, please check out the Faculty of Music web page <http://www.music.uwo.ca/>, and our own McIntosh Gallery <http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca/>. Information regarding health- and wellness-related services available to students may be found at <http://www.health.uwo.ca/>. Students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone they feel comfortable confiding in, such as their faculty supervisor, their program director (graduate chair), or other relevant administrators in their unit. Campus mental health resources may be found <https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html>.

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.

Texts for Final Paper

Toni Morrison's *Beloved*
Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day*
Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*
Christopher Nolan's *Memento* (film)
Tara Westover's *Educated* (memoir)
Yōko Ogawa's *The Memory Police*
Boubacar Boris Diop's *Murambi, The Book of Bones*
Ars Spiegelman's *Maus* (graphic novel)
Julian Barnes' *The Sense of an Ending*
Joshua Oppenheimer's *The Art of Killing* (documentary)
Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*
Michel Gondry's *Eternal Sunshine of Spotless Mind* (film)
W.G. Sebald's *Austerlitz*
Viet Than Nguyen's *The Sympathizer*
The Giver (film and/or novel)

Books for Review

Paul Connerton's *How Societies Remember*
 Ann Rigney's *The Afterlives of Walter Scott*
 Christina Sharpe's *Ordinary Notes*
 Daniel Schacter's *Seven Sins of Memory*
 Stef Craps' *Postcolonial Witnessing: Trauma Out of Bounds*
 Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela's *A Human Being Died That Night*
 Michael Rothberg's *The Implicated Subjects*
 Avery Gordon's *Ghostly Matters*
 Edward Casey's *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study*
 Richard Crenshaw's *Transcultural Memory*
 Fabian Johannes' *Memory Against Culture*
 Alexander Mitscherlich *The Inability to Mourn*
 Viet Than Nguyen's *Nothing Ever Dies*
 Valentina Pisanty's *The Guardians of Memory*
 Lea David's *The Past Can't Heal Us*
 M. NourbeSe Philip's *Zong!*
 Anne Reading's *Gender and Memory in the Global Age*
 David Mwambari's *Navigating Cultural Memory: Commemoration and Narrative in Postgenocide Rwanda*
 Jill Jarvis' *Decolonizing Memory*

Course Schedule (Bolded readings are compulsory readings while the ones not bolded are optional).

Week 1: Introduction, September 9, 2026

Astrid Erll, [Memory in Culture](#), Part I and II (Pg. 1-37)
 Elizabeth Loftus, ["The Fiction of Memory"](#), Tedtalk

Week 2: Individual, Collective, and Cultural Memory, September 16, 2026

Maurice Halbwachs, ["From Collective Memory,"](#) from CMR (pg. 140-150)
 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 23, 2026

Astrid Erll, ["Generations in Literary History"](#)
 Karl Mannheim, ["The Sociological 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: National Day of Truth and Reconciliation

Week 5: History and Memory, October 7, 2026

Walter Benjamin, ["Thesis on the Philosophy of History"](#)
 Alon Confino, ["History and Memory"](#)
 Chris Lorenz, ["Blurred Lines: History, Memory, and the Experience of Time"](#)
 Jacques Le Goff, "Memory," from *History and Memory*

Jay Winter, "Remembering War", CMR
Karwin Lee, "[On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse](#)"

Week 6: October 14 (Reading Week/Thanksgiving)

Week 7: Memory and Forgetting, October 21, 2026

Friedrich Nietzsche, "[On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life](#)," CMR
Charles Maier, "[A Surfeit of Memory](#)", CMR
Paul Connerton, "[Seven types of forgetting](#)"
Paul Ricoeur, "Memory, history, and forgetting"
David Rieff, "Against Remembrance" (from *In Praise of Forgetting*)
Andreas Huyssen, "The Uses and Abuses of Public Forgetting"

Week 8: The Politics and Ethics of Memory, October 28, 2026

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
Mihaela Mihai's *Political Memory and the Aesthetics of Care*
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 9: Multidirectional and Global Memory, November 4, 2026

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

Week 10: Memory, Media, and the Digital, November 11, 2026

Astrid Erll's "Media and Memory" from *Memory in Culture*, chapter 5
Juila 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 11: Monuments and Memorials, November 18, 2026

Tony Bennett, [The Birth of the Museum](#) (introduction)
Sakiru Adebayo, [The Museum as a Carceral Space](#)
Reinhardt Koselleck, "[War Memorials](#)," CMR
Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*
Freakonomics, "[Is the Museum Just a Trophy Case?](#)"

Andreas Huyssen, [Present Pasts](#), CMR
James Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorial and Meaning*
Marita Sturken, *Tourists of History: Memory, Kitsch, and Consumerism*, Introduction

Week 12: Postcolonial Memory/ Settler Memory/ Indigenous Memory, November 25, 2026

Sakiru Adebayo, [Continuous Pasts](#) Introduction
Michael Rothberg, [“Remembering Back”](#)
Kevin Bruyneel, [Settler Memory](#), Introduction
Ruramisai Charumbirai, Mary McCarthy, Jocelyn Martin, Jarula Wegner’s “Decolonizing Memory Studies”
Dipesh Chakraborty, [“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 13: Memory and the Environment, December 2, 2026

Lucy Bond and Jessica Rapson, [“Planetary Memory in Contemporary American Fiction”](#)
Jenny Wustenburg, [“Toward Slow Memory Studies”](#)
Lawrence Buell, [“Uses and Abuses of Environmental Memory”](#)
Frank Ueokotter [“Environment and Memory”](#)

Week 14: Memory, Affect, the Body, December 9, 2026

Thomas Fuch, [“The Phenomenology of Body Memory”](#)
Basel Van Der Kolk, [The Body Keeps the Score \(Prologue: Facing Trauma\)](#)
Nathan M To, “Memory, Affect and the Transmission of Trauma”
EDWARD CASEY, “Remembering: A Phenomenological Study” CMR

Week 00: Memory and the Nation,

Ernest Renan, [“What Is a Nation”](#)
Benedict Anderson, [Imagined Communities](#), excerpt
Jie-Hyun Lim, “Victimhood Nationalism”
Eric Hobsbawm, [“The Invention of Traditions”](#), CMR
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”

NOTE: Thanks for Professor Astrid Erll who granted the permission to use the title of her book as the title of this course.