

University of Western Ontario
Department of Gender, Sexuality, & Women's Studies,
Centre for Transitional Justice and Post-Conflict Reconstruction

Winter 2023

GSWS9600B: Memory, Identity & Race © (PRELIMINARY)

We are located on the traditional land of Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lenape and Attawanaron peoples and we complicate the meaning of this location in our course.

Instructor:	Dr. Kate Korycki
Email:	kate.korycki@uwo.ca
Class Meeting & Location:	Thursday 1:30-4:30 & TBD
Office hours & Location:	TBD
Class Website:	https://owl.uwo.ca/portal

Course Description and Learning Objectives:

This course rests on the Indigenous wisdom that storytelling and relationships are central to our collective self-understandings. As such, the course investigates how stories of the past constitute, justify, and make invisible the present-day systems of stratification; and conversely, it explores how collective remembering mobilizes and sustains challenges and resistance to those systems. At the time when monuments of the past - and now discredited - heroes are falling off their pedestals in the United States while race-based rhetoric makes a newly authorized comeback; and at the time when Canada attempts to reconcile its colonial relationship with Indigenous communities while maintaining its sovereign control, the questions about the past, and its political productivity, gain special poignancy and urgency. Our course attends to these questions, as it examines how the past is viewed as a *burden* to be overcome, and how it is dealt with by the provisions of the transitional justice; or how the past serves as a *tool* in crafting of identity and/or searching for justice. Drawing on political and critical theory, collective memory, political sociology and transitional justice literatures, this course examines how the present politics informs the past, and how the past shapes the present.

Despite the examples listed above, this course has a loose geographic focus, and this is deliberate. We devote much attention to race and indigeneity in Canada and US, but we also read on Germany, Haiti, Israel, Japan, Korea, Mozambique, Rwanda & South Africa. Furthermore, students are welcome to locate their explorations based on their interests and larger projects.

Readings:

Students will read a) a novel by Yishai Sarid, *The Memory Monster*; b) Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*; and c) Thomas King, *The Truth About Stories* (Massey Lectures, available on CBC website – see link below).

All other readings will be available online through OWL link. Students are encouraged to find out the library's policies on e-access.

Assignments & Expectations:

In this seminar, we read, we write & we talk. Curiosity about the material, analyzing & working through problems, transforming the ways in which we see the world, and grappling with complexity are encouraged & nurtured. Furthermore, we follow a model of active & participatory learning. This means that students read and think about the assigned readings before class; & they come to class ready to write about, share & clarify their ideas. Also, the classes build on one another, so if a student misses a class, it is imperative that s/he/they reads the assigned material and asks a colleague to share notes from the class meeting.

In terms of assignments, half of the points are connected with readings (class writing and class discussion); half are earned through research & writing. Readings-related work is done as the classes progress and ends on April 4. Research writing is delivered through options specified below and delivered any time before **April 15 (to be confirmed)**.

Class writing refers to 10 short written submissions related to readings/films. Each is ~500 words. They involve: 3 summaries produced in class; 3 summaries produced before class; 4 short analytical pieces of movies/shows produced after class (**schedule TBD**). If you miss a class and wish to get the writing points, you may submit the writing by the end of the week in question (Friday, 8pm); if you do not submit the writing, you forfeit the points.

Class discussion refers to weekly exploration of readings done together.

Students select the type of research writing they want to do, depending on their degree and path.

1. If you are a PhD student, you will write up to 6,000 words-long paper (or a policy brief) related to the themes of the course, which may be used for your candidacy and/or publication.
2. If you are an MA student, you will write up to 4,500 words-long paper (or a policy brief) related to the themes of the course, which you may use as your IRP.
3. You are welcome to propose three other types of writing - an op-ed, a research report, a policy brief, article for *The Conversation*, for instance. You will research the formal requirements of each then write it. Each will be worth 1/3 of the 50%.

By the third class, students have to declare their assignment path.

All students submit their work for review up to 3 times. You decide when you do this, but note: a) no version may be submitted before the previous one is returned by me, b) I need one week to grade & comment on papers (there is no exception to this rule), and c) no work will be accepted after April 15. If you want support, structure and feedback as you write, submit earlier drafts giving me time to comment and you to implement suggestions. If you don't wish to receive comments as you go along, you may submit your work once, on or before April 15.

Instructions on the shape of the assignment and each stage will be explained in class and posted on OWL. Note that those who talk to me as they go along and submit work early & often, do better!

Course Structure and Policies:

Absenteeism: the course structure discourages it as half of your grade is earned in-class. You do not need to advise me of absences or seek my approval, but note that if you miss more than two classes, I will require you to speak with me to decide the path forward. (As per departmental policy, more than two absences put you at risk of having to retake the course.)

Discussion etiquette: to ensure best learning, I look for a) depth of engagement with readings b) listening and respect for the views of others, c) a spirit of discovery, and finally d) a commitment to collective learning – this requires not only affirmation but also good, honest, and respectful disagreements. To paraphrase bell hooks on love, in this class, we look for commitment to making each other grow, not staying the same; and we listen to Sarah Schulman who counsels, that conflict is not abuse.

During class, please turn your phone, messengers & email off.

Communication with the professor: I warmly encourage and invite talking to each other and me - as opposed to writing. All students can bring their questions to class or office hours. As to emails: I may take up to 48 hours to respond to emails, outside of weekends. Please note, there are many emails to which I don't respond individually – either your question is brilliant, in which case I'll answer via a class announcement, or in class; or the answer is in the syllabus, which you are strongly encouraged to read 😊

Weekly Topics & Readings (Order & readings TBD)

1. **Jan 11** - Introduction to class & each other
2. **Jan 17** – Identity as social, collective & political processes
3. **Jan 24** - Identity as an analytic
4. **Jan 31** - Collective memory (a what)
5. **Feb 7** - Collective memory (a why)
6. **February 14** - Collective memory (a how)
1. **February 28** - Memory, History, Power
2. **Mar 7** - Memory & Amnesia I (war & conflict)

3. **Mar 14** – Memory & Amnesia II (colony & empire)
4. **Mar 21** - Transitional Justice & the limits of law
5. **Mar 28** - Transitional justice, apology & reconciliation (TRC in SA)
6. **Apr 4** - Transitional justice, reconciliation & memory in the colony (TRC in Canada)