

New York University
Dept of Media, Culture, and
Communication
Summer 2012
NYU Buenos Aires

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DRAFT SYLLABUS

Visual Culture and the Politics of Memory: Global Perspectives
June 4-22, 2012
NYU Buenos Aires, Argentina

Course Description:

This course examines the intersections of visual culture, commemorative politics, social movements, and nationalism in an analysis of the politics of memory in the global context. We will examine the debates and contestations over memorialization and artistic engagements with the memory of traumatic events in several key sites around the world, including Argentina, the United States, Chile, Germany, and South Africa. The course will have a particular focus on the politics of memory at work in Argentina over the memory of its “dirty war” from 1976-1983, with visits to particular sites and projects in Buenos Aires in which artists, architects, and activists are engaging with questions of memory and the aftermath of trauma. It will put these local sites into comparative dialogue with examples of artistic and architectural memorialization in other contexts such as the memorialization of 9/11 in the United States, of the Holocaust in Germany, of Apartheid in South Africa, and of the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile.

We will examine the key role of visual culture in the politics of remembrance and the relationship of commemorative politics to social movements. The realization of memory through architecture, design, art, photography, digital media, and museums has been central to the politics of the memory of violence and trauma over the last few decades. Through explorations of how art, photography, and design have played a key role in shaping cultural memory in these contexts, we will investigate the aesthetics of memory, the role of pedagogy in remembrance, the spatialization of memory, and the deployment of memory through these forms into political action. The course will draw on the scholarship in visual culture and memory studies to examine the politics of memory from a global perspective.

The course will take place over a three week period in Buenos Aires, meeting regularly at the NYU-Buenos Aires site and with field trips to relevant sites in the city, including the Parque de la Memoria, ESMA (a former military school and site of torture that is now a museum and cultural center), the Plaza de Mayo, and Memoria Abierta, a nonprofit organization that has produced a Topografía de la Memoria through the work of designers and architects. We will take one trip to Rosario, 180 miles away, where the country's first national Museum of Memory was recently opened and where grassroots memory art is visible in streets throughout the city.

Guest speakers in Buenos Aires will include architects, designers, and activists involved in memorial projects in the city.

The course will be conducted in English, with additional recommended readings in Spanish for bilingual speakers.

Course Requirements:

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.

Students will write one short paper on course themes in the first week, and then will produce a written and/or written and visual project. Proposals will be reviewed in the second week of the course.

Required Texts:

Marguerite Feitlowitz, *A Lexicon of Terror: Argentina and the Legacies of Torture* (Oxford, 1998)

Elisabeth Jelin, *State Repression and the Limits of Memory* (Social Science Research Council, 2003)

Marita Sturken, *Tourists of History: Memory, Kitsch, and Consumerism from Oklahoma City to Ground Zero* (Duke, 2007)

Diana Taylor, *Disappearing Acts: Spectacles of Gender and Nationalism in Argentina's "Dirty War"* (Duke, 1997)

Victoria Donda, *My Name is Victoria*

All other readings will be distributed as essays.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1—

Class 1 (Monday June 4): Introduction

Reading:

Victoria Donda, *My Name is Victoria*

Elisabeth Jelin, *State Repression and the Limits of Memory*

Jorge Luis Borges, "Funes the Memorious"

Class 2 (Tuesday June 5): Models for Thinking about Memory

Reading:

Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, Introduction

Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories*, Introduction; *Tourists of History*, Introduction

Jenny Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*, Introduction

Katherine Hite, "Voice and Visibility and the Politics of Memory"

Marianne Hirsch, "The Generation of Post-Memory"

Recommended:

Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History"

Bill Schwarz, "Memory, Temporality, Modernity"

Judith Butler, *Prearious Life*, Violence, Mourning, Politics

Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia"

Class 3 (Wednesday June 6) Remembering Torture

Reading:

Jacobo Timmerman, *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number* (excerpt)

Marguerite Feitlowitz, *A Lexicon of Terror: Argentina and the Legacies of Torture*

Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain* (excerpt)

Class 4 (Thursday June 7): Visit to Plaza de Mayo (Madres protest) and Parque de la Memoria

Reading:

Parque de la Memoria (Essays in Parts I and II)

Andreas Huyssen, "Memory Sites in an Expanded Field"

Cecilia Sosa, "Queering Acts of Mourning in the Aftermath of Argentina's Dictatorship"

Alejandra Serpente, "The Traces of Postmemory in Second Generation Chilean and Argentinean Identities"

Friday June 8—Visit to ESMA

Emily E. Parsons, "The Space of Remembering: Collective Memory and the Reconfiguration of Contested Space in Argentina's ESMA," Working paper #04.

Week 2

Class 1: (Monday June 11) The Photograph and Memory

Reading:

Andreas Huyssen, "Present Pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia"

Marcelo Brodsky, *Buena Memoria/Good Memory*

Gustavo Germano, *Ausencias*

Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*

Recommended

Alfredo Jaar, "The Aesthetics of Witnessing"

Marita Sturken, "The Wall and the Screen Memory"

Short Paper Due.

Class 2: (Tuesday June 12) The City as Memory

Reading:

Marita Sturken, *Tourists of History* (Chapter 4)

Andreas Huyssen, "The Voids of Berlin"

Christine Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory* (excerpt)

Marc Treib, *Spatial Recall* (select essays)

Class 3: (Wednesday June 13) Absence, Emptiness, Missing and the Disappeared

Reading:

Diana Taylor, *Disappearing Acts* (Chapters 1-6)

Jenny Edkins, *Missing* (excerpt)

Project Proposal Due.

Class 4: (Thursday June 14) Performance, Protest, The Street

Reading:

Diana Taylor, "Acts of Transfer" and "You Are Here" from *The Archive and the Repertoire*

Diana Taylor, *Disappearing Acts* (Chapters 7-9)

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

Friday, June 15, Field Trip to Rosario, Museum of Memory

Reading:

Katherine Hite. *Politics and the Art of Commemoration* (Chapters 1, 5)

Meeting and tour with Rubén Chababo, Director of Museum of Memory, Rosario.

Week 3:

Class 1: (Monday June 18) Counter-Monuments and Memory Museums

Reading:

Marita Sturken, *Tourists of History*, Chapter 5 and “The Wall and Screen Memory”
James Young, “Memory, Countermemory and the End of the Monument”

Recommended:

Alois Riegl, “The Modern Cult of Monuments”

Class 2: (Tuesday June 19) Art and the Politics of Memory

Reading:

Katherine Hite, *Politics and the Art of Commemoration* (Chapters 3,4, Epilogue)
Doris Salcedo, *Plegaria Muda*
Mieke Bal, *Of What One Cannot Speak: Doris Salcedo’s Political Act* (excerpt)

Class 3: (Wednesday June 20) Mapping Memories

Visit to Memoria Abierta

Diana Taylor, “Trauma as Durational Performance”
Giuliana Bruno, *Public Intimacy* (excerpt)
Giuliana Bruno, *Atlas of Emotion* (excerpt)

Class 4: (Thursday June 21) The Consumerism of Memory

Reading:

Brigitte Sion, “Dark Tourism as Memorialization in Post-Genocide Cambodia”
Ksenija Bilbija, “Tortured by Fashion: Making Memory through Corporate Advertising”
Laurie Beth Clark, “Trauma Tourism as a Politics of Hope”
Marita Sturken, “Memory Tourism”

Friday, June 22, Class Project Presentations

Additional Readings in Spanish:

Memorias de la Represion Series:

Ponciano del Pino and Elizabeth Jelin, eds., *Luchas Locales, Comunidades e Identidades*

Elizabeth Jelin and Victoria Langland, eds., *Monumentos, Memoriales y Marcas Territoriales*

Elizabeth Jelin and Federico Guillermo Lorenz, eds., *Educacion y Memoria. La Escuela Elabora et Pasado.*

Memorial Abierta, *Recorrido por los sitios de la Memoria del Terrorismo de Estado*

Memorial Abierta, *Memorias en la Ciudad*

Victoria Donda, *Mi Nombre es Victoria*

Marcelo Brodsky, *Escultura y memoria: 665 Proyectos presentados al concurso en homenaje a los detenidos desaparecidos y asesinados por el terrorismo de estado en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Comisión a las Víctimas del Terrorismo de Estado and Eudeba, March 2000).

Peter Birle, Vera Carnovale, Elke Gryglewiski, Estela Schindel, eds., *Memorias urbanas en diálogo: Berlín y Buenos Aires* (Heinrich Boll Stiftung and Buenos Libros, 2010).