

We remember what “they” want us to remember

ASC 1137, **Freshman Seminar**

1 semester-hour Credit

Day/Time Room

Goal: In this seminar, students will understand how collective memory of the group’s/ nations’ past is constructed and how this memory is reconstructed to support the positive self image of the group by often pushing against the other group’s past. The comparison of the collective memory of the same historical events involving Russia and the US serves to illustrate the process of memory reconstruction.

Course Description

As humans we remember our personal past and enjoy sharing those memories with our loved ones. As group members/ members of the society we remember important political events that shaped the identity of our country. How do we remember the nation’s past? Is it based on the often biased representation of media, cinematography, and history textbooks or is it also based on what our parents and grandparents shared with us based on their lived experience of the event? In this seminar, we will approach a big area of collective memory from two major perspectives: 1) how this memory is constructed by official “producers” and 2) how the construction of this memory in individual minds is influenced by the personal memories shared within the family. Students will read and discuss academic articles related to the topic of collective and individual memory. We will look at the reconstruction of the collective memory of the same events, WWII, the Cuban missile crisis, and the Soviet War in Afghanistan through the perspective of the two countries directly or indirectly involved in the event: US and Russia. In addition, students will choose a topic of their interest from the US history to see how it was and is presented by the US media and official textbooks. The course engages students through class discussions, critical analysis of assigned readings and films, and a small scale research project.

Texts

(All readings will be posted on Carmen)

Baumeister, R. & Hastings, S. (1997). Distortions of collective memory: How groups flatter and deceive themselves. In J. Pennebaker, D.Paez, & B.Rime (eds.). *Collective memory of political events* (pp. 277-293). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates

Boyer, P. (2009). What are memories for? Functions of recall in cognition and culture. In P.Boyer & J. Wertsch (eds.). *Memory in mind and culture* (pp. 3-28). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Conway, M. (1997). The inventory of experience: Memory and identity. In: In J. Pennebaker, D. Paez, & B. Rime (eds.) (1997). *Collective memory of political events* (pp. 21-45). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Svob, C. & Brown, N. (2012). Intergenerational transmission of the reminiscence bump in biographical conflict knowledge. *Psychological Science* 23 (11), 404-409.

Wilson, A. & Ross, M. (2003). The identity function of autobiographical memory: Time is on our side. *Memory* 11 (2), 137-149.

Films

(all films will be available at <https://resourcecenter.odee.osu.edu/secured-media-library>)

Stalingrad (2013) <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1966566/>

Saving Private Ryan (1998) <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0120815/>

Thirteen Days (2000) <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0146309/>

9th Company (2008) <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0417397/>

Course Policies

Attendance	10
Class participation.....	20
Media	30
Individual project (oral presentation).....	15
Short paper	25

Grading Scale:

A	93-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69
A-	90-92	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	60-66
		B-	80-82	C-	70-72	E	0-59

Attendance: Lectures and class discussions will cover material which is not necessarily in the readings and which you will be responsible for. It is therefore important that you attend every class, ask questions and participate in discussions and workshops. You are allowed to miss not more than 1 class without an excuse (all other justified absences should be covered with a written note). You are responsible for all assignments that are given or due on the day when you missed the class. All other absences result in 0% as a participation grade.

Participation Note that attendance by itself is not sufficient. I expect you to actively engage with me, and with your classmates. The grade for your participation is as follows:

A – clear evidence of preparation, frequent voluntary participation, and significant contribution to class discussions – 20%. (Frequent participation means participation in 70% of class discussions during the semester) Students make significant contribution to discussions when their answers relate to the topic and their arguments are based on class material.

B – clear evidence of preparation and some participation – 15%

C – presence, evidence of preparation, and no voluntary participation – 10% (I check students' preparation when posing questions to individual students. If these students show evidence of preparation, but otherwise do not volunteer to participate, this amounts to a "C" for participation).

The midterm evaluation of the participation grade will be given to students.

Media

Students will look for digital media publications related to the question of "Who won WWII?" and the US media related to the Soviet war in Afghanistan and the Cuban Missile crisis. They are required to discuss in class at least one article for each event (10% for each event).

Individual project

For this assignment, students will choose an event from the recent US history (e.g. 9/11, war in Iraq, etc.) and look into the construction of the collective memory of this event by official US sources and media. They also will interview people who witnessed the event or knew those who did in order to see how collective memory is constructed in the minds of people. The project will teach students how to design and conduct a small scale empirical study. The findings will be presented orally and reported in the short course paper (3 double spaced pages).

Important Policies

Academic Integrity: It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info_for_students/csc.asp).

Students with Special Needs: Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu>.

Weekly Schedule

Weeks	Topic	Reading/Assignment
1	Collective memory versus history	Boyer, P. (2009).
2	Memory and Identity	Wilson, A. & Ross, M. (2003).
3	Memory distortion, reconstruction and forgetting.	Baumeister, R. & Hastings, S. (1997).
4	Memory across generations	Svob, C. & Brown, N. (2012).
5	Individual memory in the construction of collective memory	Conway, M. (1997).
6	WWII in Russian memory	Instructor’s lecture
7	The eternal debate: Who won the war?	Students find relevant sources in digital media
8	WWII through the Hollywood perspective: D-Day & Stalingrad	Students watch <i>Saving Private Ryan</i> and <i>Stalingrad</i> on their own and get ready to discuss the films in class

9	Cuban missile crisis in American memory	Students watch <i>Thirteen Days</i> on their own and get ready to discuss it in class Students find relevant sources on the event in digital media
10	<i>What crisis?</i> The Cuban missile crisis and its absence in the collective memory of Russians	Instructor's lecture
11	The Soviet war in Afghanistan	Students watch <i>The 9th Company</i> on their own and get ready to discuss in class Instructor's lecture
12	Two wars in Afghanistan: Soviet and the US-led Soviet war in Afghanistan, as reflected in the US media	Students find relevant sources in digital media
13	Individual projects	Students present their projects
14	Individual projects	Students present their projects
15	Catch up and wrap up	Course paper is due