Historical Memory in War and Peace

In the aftermath of the Holocaust, Primo Levi wrote, “Never forget that this has happened.” Levi’s imperative raises important questions about the role of memory in contemporary atrocity and war. What is the purpose of remembering atrocity? What is the relationship between memory and justice? Between memory and history? Focusing on the Holocaust, 9/11, and the U.S. wars in Vietnam and Iraq, this course will examine how war tribunals, war memorials, literature, film and leaked government documents have shaped, challenged, and revised the way we think about these events. Readings will include works by Noam Chomsky, Karl Jaspers, Hannah Arendt, Philip Gourevitch, Tim O’Brien, Thuy Tram, Sinan Antoon, and Ann Jones.

Assignments and Grading:
Over the course of the semester, you will write 3 formal essays in which you explore a specific question about the historical memory of war and peace through an analysis of one or more texts on the syllabus. Be sure to choose topics and texts that interest and intrigue you. Essays will be graded for the form as well as the content of their analysis. Papers must be formatted appropriately. Please use 12-pt font, double-space, and paginate.

You will also write 4 informal responses of approximately 250 words in which you analyze some aspect of the day’s reading. You must write one response per unit. Unless specified otherwise, you may choose which reading in the unit you would like to write on.

Your responses, which should be posted to Blackboard’s Discussion Forum, are designed to function as preparation for class discussion as well as brainstorming for your essays. They will not be formally graded, although they do constitute an important part of your participation grade.

This course is a seminar. Your involvement in our discussions is key to its success. In addition to making regular contributions to class discussion, you will serve as “point person” at least once in the semester. On this day, you will be expected to help guide the conversation with critical and analytical questions you have prepared in advance.

The best way to do well in this class is to really engage with the readings and our discussions. Be ready to challenge yourself and to have fun doing it.

Essay 1: 4-6 pages (20%)
Essay 2: 4-6 pages (30%)
Essay 3: 6-8 pages (30%)
Participation: Response Papers and Class Discussion: (20%)

Attendance Policy: You are allowed 3 unexcused absences, no questions asked. Except for extenuating circumstances, additional absences will be penalized.
Late Papers: Unless you have made other arrangements with me, late papers will be penalized.

On Plagiarism and Academic Integrity: A description of Gallatin’s academic integrity policy, including plagiarism and its consequences, can be found at the following link: http://www.gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/policy/integrity.html

Laptop and Technology Policy: You are permitted, though not encouraged, to bring a laptop or other computer device to class in order to take notes on class discussion. You are not permitted to surf the web during class. Please turn your cell phones to vibrate and do not text during class.

Books:
Please purchase the following books from any vendor you prefer (Amazon, Strand Bookstore, Book Culture, etc.). You can find all other readings in the Course Documents section of Blackboard. Please print these out and bring a hard copy to class with you.

Karl Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt* (Fordham University Press)
Tim O’Brien, *The Things They Carried*
Thuy Tram, *Last Night I Dreamed of Peace*
Yusef Komunyaka, *Dien Cai Dau*

Schedule of Readings and Assignments:

**From September 11, 2001: Ten Years of Memorializing 9/11**

| W | Sept. 7: | -Course Intro: What is Historical Memory of War and Peace? And Why Does it Matter?
| W | Sept. 7: | -“Real” and “Fake” Memorials of 9/11
| M | Sept. 12: | -David Simpson, “Naming the Dead”
| W | Sept. 14: | Response Paper 1 Due (Post to Blackboard Discussion)


“Never Forget!”: Justice, Politics, and Hollywood in Holocaust Memory

| M | Sept. 19: | Karl Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*
| W | Sept. 21: | Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*
| W | Sept. 28: | The Holocaust and US Foreign Policy:
Assign Essay 1

M Oct. 3: Holocaust Drama: Broadway and Hollywood
- Ozick, “Who Owns Ann Frank?”
- Judith Doneson, “Holocaust Revisited: A Catalyst for Memory or Trivialization?”
- Finkelstein (55-78)

W Oct. 5: Special Meeting Time: 6:30-8PM:
- Visit to NYC Museum of Jewish Heritage @ 36 Battery Place (Take R Train to Whitehall Street) and Vietnam Memorial @ 55 Water Street
- Finkelstein, 72-78

M Oct. 10: NO CLASS: FALL BREAK

W Oct. 12: The Reader (screening: 3:30-5:45)
Essay 1 Due

M Oct. 17: The Reader (discussion)


Vietnam: Narrative and Contested Memories in International Politics

M Oct 24: The Things They Carried ("The Things They Carried," "On the Rainy River," "How to Tell a True War Story," "Ambush," "Field Trip")

W Oct. 26: -Christina Schwenkel, “Museums and Regimes of Representation and Objectivity”
-Optional: Christina Schwenkel, “Tortured Bodies and the Neoliberal Politics of Historical Unaccountability”

M Oct. 31: Thuy Tram, Last Night I Dreamed of Peace

W Nov. 2: Winter Soldier (you can access on Netflix instant viewing)
Assign Essay 2

M Nov. 7: Komunyaaka, Dien Cai Dau

W Nov. 9: The Fog of War (screening)

M Nov. 14: The Fog Of War (discussion)
Essay 2 Due
**Iraq and Afghanistan: Remembering and Forgetting Ongoing Wars**

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<td>M</td>
<td>Nov. 21</td>
<td>Nuha al Radi, “Diary of an Embargo” (access through JSTOR) Discuss Your Paper Ideas</td>
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| M   | Nov. 28    | - **Special Meeting Time: Noon**  
- **Brown Bag Lunch with Sinan Antoon**  
- Forgetting Iraq: Gurman, “The Iraq War: An Orwellian Success” |
| W   | Nov. 30    | Michael Rogin, “Make My Day!: Spectacle as Amnesia in Imperial Politics” |
| M   | Dec 5      | Afghanistan, Nick Cullather, “The Forgotten Disaster of the Helmand Valley Dam” |
| W   | Dec. 7     | Ann Jones, “Remember the Women?” in *The Case for Withdrawal from Afghanistan*  
**Essay 3 Due** |
| M   | Dec 12     | WikiLeaks: Digital History or Treason?  
- Gurman, “Telling the Story of WikiLeaks |
| W   | Dec. 14    | TBD                                                                  |