Syllabus

Historian Eric Hobsbawm famously refers to the twentieth century as “the age of extremes,” an era of violence marked especially by “the destruction of the past.” In response to this perceived break with history, contemporary narratives seek to recover lost pasts, employing tropes of homecoming and return in order to bridge temporal as well as geographical gaps. Stories of “coming home” document the urgency with which our culture attempts to remember the past in the aftermath of trauma and invests specific places, or “sites of memory,” with the power of recall. This course investigates the linkages between identity and place as they are imagined in the aftermath of historical trauma, in film, literature, and critical theory. The ways in which contemporary narratives treat the theme of coming home across boundaries of time and space and the role this idea plays in the construction of ethnic, racial, and national identities will serve as the impetus for frequent exploratory writing, formal essays, and a research paper.

Introductions

Week 1
Thur 9/3  Introductions and course requirements

Tue 9/8  Composing “Where I’m From” poems

Thur 9/10  Andreas Huyssen, “Present Pasts: Media, Politics, and Amnesia;” Svetlana Boym, “Nostalgia and Its Discontents” (handouts); class visit from Bluestockings Books.

Writing assignment: post your completed poem to our course blog and comment on at least two other poems by Tuesday, 9/15.

Veterans, Home, Nostos

Week 2
Tue 9/15  Jonathan Shay, excerpts from Odysseus in America; Linda M. Small, “Grave Goods and Social Identity at the Vietnam War Memorial” (handouts)

Thur 9/17  Watch “The Messenger,” on reserve at Bobst Phil Klay, stories from Redeployment (handout); listen to NPR interview with Klay (link available via Classes)

Assignment sheet for essay #1 distributed.

Writing assignment: post a one-page response to this week’s texts and respond to at least two other students by Tuesday, 9/22.

Week 3
Tue 9/22  Toni Morrison, Home, chapters 1 – 6 (read through page 81); additional reading TBA

Come prepared to share your essay topic with the class.

Thur 9/24  Toni Morrison, Home, chapter 7 – end.
Writing assignment: work on your draft!
Week 4
Tue 9/29 Draft of essay #1 due for in-class workshop. See assignment sheet for details.

Returning to Where You’ve Never Been


Writing assignment: complete Essay #1 through revisions to your draft.

Week 5
Tue 10/6 Jack Kugelmass, “Missions to the Past: Poland in Contemporary Jewish Thought and Deed” (handout).
Essay #1 due. Please hand in your draft along with your completed essay.

Thur 10/8 Read The Property, beginning – page 101
Additional reading TBA.

Writing assignment: post a response to some aspect of the readings by Frescow, Racymow, Hirsch, or Kugelmass by Tuesday, 10/13. Comment on at least two other responses.

Week 6
Tue 10/13 No class meeting (classes meet on a Monday schedule)

Thur 10/15 The Property, page 103 – end

Writing assignment: post a one page response to The Property and comment on entries by at least two other students by Tuesday, 10/20

Week 7
Tue 10/20 Discussion of “Hiding and Seeking” (on reserve at Bobst) and Jonathan Safran Foer, “The Very Rigid Search” (handout)

Thur 10/22 Draft of essay #2 due for in-class workshop. See assignment sheet for details.

Writing assignment: post a response to “Hiding and Seeking” or “The Very Rigid Search” and comment on at least two other responses by Tuesday, October 27.

Objects, Return, Repatriation

Week 8
Tue 10/27 Laurie Anne Whitt, “Cultural Imperialism and the Marketing of Native America” (handout)

Thur 10/29 Kathleen Fine-Dare, “Museums and Objects of Empire” (handout)

Writing assignment: work on completing Essay #2.
| **Week 9** | Tue 11/3 | Jace Weaver, “Indian Presence with No Indians Present: NAGPRA and Its Discontents” (handout) |
| - | Essay #2 due. Please hand in your draft along with your completed essay. Research paper assignment sheet distributed. |
| Thur 11/5 | Readings on repatriation (handouts) |

**Week 10**

| Tue 11/10 | In-class workshop of research paper sketch. See assignment sheet for details. |
| Thur 11/12 | Readings on repatriation, continued (handouts) |

Writing assignment: post a response to one or more of the readings on repatriation and comment on at least two other entries by Tuesday, 11/17

**In-Depth Research and Writing**

**Week 11**

| Tue 11/17 | Library Visit – meet in classroom #619 at Bobst Library |
| Thur 11/19 | Class cancelled |

Writing assignment: work on your annotated bibliography

**Week 12**

| Tue 11/24 | Annotated bibliography for Essay #3 due for in-class workshop. Please be sure to email me your bibliography in addition to bringing a copy to class. |

Thur 11/26 | Thanksgiving recess |

**Week 13**

| Tue 12/1 | In-class work on Essay #3 |
| Th 12/3 | Draft of Essay #3 due in class for exchange with group members. |

**Week 14**

| Tue 12/8 | Assignment TBA |
| Th 12/10 | Responses to Essay #3 due. We meet in groups to discuss. |

**Week 15**

| Tue 12/15 | Last day of class: reflections and celebrations. Essay #3 due. |
Course Information

Course objectives: During this course, students will ideally improve critical reading and thinking skills; increase fluency through regular writing practice; sharpen research techniques and knowledge of NYU’s bibliographic resources; refine editing skills through peer workshops; deepen knowledge of course content and related topics.

Required Texts: Texts are available at Bluestockings Books, 172 Allen Street. Early in the semester, a representative from Bluestockings will bring the course books to our class to purchase.


In addition to our course books, you will be asked to read essays provided as handouts or through our Classes site and to watch several films on reserve at the Avery Fisher Center, second floor of Bobst.

Office hours/Conferences: I encourage you to meet with me outside of class to talk about any of the reading or writing assignments. My office hours are Tuesdays 2:00 – 3:00, and my office is #608, 1 Washington Place. If you cannot meet during this time, please let me know and I will do my best to accommodate your schedule.

Course Requirements:

Attendance and participation (10%): Your participation is integral to the success of the class and will therefore be part of your grade. This includes keeping up with assignments and contributing to discussions and other class activities such as in-class writing and peer group workshops.

Regular attendance is expected, and excessive absence (more than 2 classes) or chronic lateness will adversely affect your grade. If you need to be absent, please be sure to email me so that you can find out about any missed assignments.

Reading assignments: Reading assignments will consist of the texts listed above as well as the handouts, articles, etc. as listed on the syllabus.

Writing assignments (90%): You will be asked to do the following written work:

In-class writing: We will often spend time writing together in class. These informal assignments will serve as a basis for class discussion and offer opportunities for thinking and writing practice. You may be asked to share what you have written with the class or in small groups, and I will let you know in advance if this is going to be the case.
Course Blog: You will be asked to write for the course in some form every week. Frequently, this will include posting to a blog created for our course and then responding to your classmates’ posts. I will provide a suggested prompt and a writing schedule for each blog assignment, but the topics will generally be open. Your post will usually need to be completed by Tuesday of each week as indicated on the syllabus. I will provide a handout that describes the blog requirements in more detail.

Drafts and Formal Papers: We will write three finished papers, including two short essays of 3-5 pages each and a final research paper of 8-10 pages. I will provide suggestions for paper topics, but I encourage you to choose your own. The papers will be written in a series of stages, from in-class writings through drafts we will workshop together. For each of the papers, I will provide a handout with details about topics and requirements.

Grading: Grades for the course break down as follows:

- Attendance and participation (including reading, discussion, timely completion of assignments, and participation in workshops): 10%

Writing assignments:

- Blog assignments: 10%
- Essay 1: 20%
- Essay 2: 25%
- Essay 3 (research paper): 35%

Statement on academic integrity: As a Gallatin student you belong to an interdisciplinary community of artists and scholars who value honest and open intellectual inquiry. This relationship depends on mutual respect, responsibility, and integrity. Failure to uphold these values will be subject to severe sanction, which may include dismissal from the University. Examples of behaviors that compromise the academic integrity of the Gallatin School include plagiarism, illicit collaboration, doubling or recycling coursework, and cheating. Please consult the Gallatin Bulletin or Gallatin website [http://gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/integrity.html](http://gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/integrity.html)