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**

*Tue 9/6*  
Introductions and course requirements

*Writing assignment: update your “About Me” page on your ePortfolio [#1].*

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

*Writing assignment: post your completed poem to the forum on our Classes site by Tuesday, 9/13; read and comment on at least two other students’ poems by Thursday, 9/15.*

**Week 2**

*Tue 9/13*  
Pierre Nora, “Reasons for the Current Upsurge in Memory;” Svetlana Boym, “Nostalgia and Its Discontents” (handouts); class visit from Bluestockings Books.

**Veterans, Home, Nostos**

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

**Week 3**

*Tue 9/20*  
Watch “The Messenger,” on reserve at Bobst  
Read 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 the texts by Shay, Small, Klay and “The Messenger” by Thursday, 9/22; read and respond to at least two other students by Tuesday, 9/25. Update your ePortfolio [#2] by adding your courses and brief reflections.*

*Thur 9/22*  
Toni Morrison, *Home*, chapters 1 – 6 (read through page 81).  
*Come prepared to share your topic for Essay #1 with the class.*
### Week 4

**Tue 9/27**  
Toni Morrison, *Home*, chapter 7 – end. Additional reading TBA.

*Writing assignment: work on your draft!*

**Thur 9/29**  
*Draft of essay #1 due for in-class workshop. See assignment sheet for details.*

### Post-Holocaust Returns

### Week 5

**Tue 10/4**  
Nadine Fresco, “Remembering the Unknown;” Henri Raczymow, “Memory Shot Through with Holes;” Marianne Hirsch, excerpt from “The Generation of Postmemory” (handouts)  
*Assignment Sheet for Essay #2 distributed.*

*Writing assignment: post a one-page response to Fresco, Raczymow, and Hirsch by Thursday, 10/6; read and respond to at least two other students by Tuesday, 10/11.*

**Thur 10/6**  
Daniel Mendelsohn, “What Happened to Uncle Shmiel?” (available via Classes); Jonathan Safran Foer, “The Very Rigid Search” (handout); excerpt from Eva Hoffman, *After Such Knowledge* (handout).

### Week 6

**Tue 10/11**  
Watch “Hiding and Seeking” (on reserve at Bobst)

*Writing assignment: post a one page response to Mendelsohn, Foer, Hoffman and/or “Hiding and Seeking” by Thursday, 10/13; read and respond to at least two other students by Tuesday, 10/18.*

**Thur 10/13**  
The Property, beginning – page 101  
*Essay #1 due. Please hand in your draft along with your completed essay.*

### Week 7

**Tue 10/18**  
The Property, page 103 – end. Additional reading TBA.

*Writing assignment: post a one-page response to The Property by Thursday, 10/20; read and respond to entries by at least two other students by Tuesday, 10/25.*

**Thur 10/20**  
Geoffrey M. White and Eveline Buchheim, “Traveling War: Memory Practices in Motion” (available via Classes); Jack Kugelmass, “Missions to the Past: Poland in Contemporary Jewish Thought and Deed” (handout).

### Week 8

**Tue 10/25**  
*Draft of essay #2 due for in-class workshop. See assignment sheet for details.*

*Writing assignment: post a response to White and Buchheim and Kugelmass by Thursday, 10/27; read and respond to at least two other entries by Tuesday, November 1.*

### Objects, Returns, Repatriation

**Thur 10/27**  
Vine DeLoria, Jr., “Thinking in Time and Space” (handout)
**Week 9**
**Tue 11/1**
Laurie Anne Whitt, “Cultural Imperialism and the Marketing of Native America” (handout)

*Writing assignments: post a response to one or more of the readings on repatriation by Thursday, 11/3; comment on at least two other entries by Tuesday, 11/8. Work on Essay #2.*

**Thur 11/3**
Kathleen Fine-Dare, “Museums and Objects of Empire” (handout)

*Research paper assignment sheet distributed.*

**Week 10**
**Tue 11/8**
Further readings on repatriation (handouts)

*Essay #2 due. Please hand in your draft along with your completed essay.*

*Writing assignment: work on your research paper sketch.*

**In-depth Research and Writing**

**Thur 11/10**

*In-class workshop of research paper sketch. See assignment sheet for details.*

**Week 11**
**Tue 11/15**
Library visit. Class meets at Bobst Library, classroom #619.

*Writing assignment: work on your annotated bibliography.*

**Thur 11/17**
Class cancelled.

**Week 12**
**Tue 11/22**

*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 11/24**
Thanksgiving recess

**Week 13**
**Tue 11/29**
In-class work on Essay #3

**Th 12/1**
Draft of Essay #3 due in class for exchange with group members.

**Week 14**
**Tue 12/6**
Assignment TBA

**Th 12/8**

*Responses to Essay #3 due.* We meet in groups to discuss.

**Week 15**
**Tue 12/13**
Legislative day – no class meeting

*Writing assignments: continue to work on your essay, and update your ePortfolio (#3) with a reflection on your courses.*

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

Course objectives: During this course, students will ideally improve their critical reading and thinking skills; increase fluency through regular writing practice; sharpen their research techniques and knowledge of NYU’s bibliographic resources; refine their editing skills through peer workshops; deepen their 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 Thursdays 3:30 – 4:30, and my office is 429, 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.
Online discussion via forums on our Classes site: You will be asked to do some kind of writing for this course every week. Frequently, this will include posting to a forum and then responding to your classmates’ posts. Our syllabus outlines the schedule for each assignment, but the topics are generally open. I will provide a handout that describes these 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:

- Online discussions: 10%
- Essay 1: 20%
- Essay 2: 25%
- Essay 3 (research paper): 35%

E-Portfolio: You are among the first to participate in Gallatin’s new ePortfolio program. You will be asked to add content to your ePortfolio three times this semester and are encouraged to maintain your ePortfolio through the rest of your time at Gallatin. For example, you might want to show your adviser your ePortfolio during advisement sessions to demonstrate your progress. You should have already received instructions via email on how to access and use your ePortfolio. Please note that students are expected to adhere to NYU’s Code of Conduct (https://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/compliance/code-of-ethical-conduct.html) and must comply with NYU Web Publishing’s Terms of Use (https://wp.nyu.edu/terms-of-use/). Any questions about the ePortfolio program can be directed to gallatin.edtech@nyu.edu.

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