

## Communication and Memory

**Dr. Bob Bednar**

**Communication Studies**

**Southwestern University**

**COM 75-444-01 and  
COM 75-444-02**

**Fall 2023**



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**OFFICE HOURS:** Tu-Th 2:30-4:00pm; by appointment using [shared Google doc](#)

**CLASS MEETINGS:** Section 2: Tu-Th, 11:30-12:45 PM, CB 330  
Section 1: Tu-Th, 1:00-12:15 PM, CB 330

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course examines the role of communication in producing, representing, reinforcing, and contesting individual and collective memory at a variety of scales: within individuals as well as in between individuals in interpersonal relationships, families, communities, nations, cultures, and across cultures. The main focus is on learning the central critical theories and methodologies used in the analysis and interpretation of acts, practices, texts, objects, and spaces engaged in communicating individual and collective memory and remembering acts of individual and collective communication. And because collective memory is inseparable from power even in our most intimate relationships, we will examine all of these themes in terms of cultural politics and social justice.

Our central questions will be: How are memories communicated, and how are they remembered? How is memory produced, represented, lived, and contested in texts, objects, performances, and places? How is individual memory related to collective memory? What are the cultural politics and poetics of systematic remembering and forgetting?

**Prerequisites:** none. **Tags:** HUM, SJ.

Can be taken as a Social Justice course as well as either a COM elective within a CommStudies major or minor, a HUM Exploration & Breadth course, or a general elective.

### **REQUIRED TEXTBOOK:**

Michael Rossington & Anne Whitehead, *Theories of Memory: A Reader* (Johns Hopkins, 2007)

*All other readings for the class will be located at our unique course web resource page:*  
**<http://people.southwestern.edu/~bednarb/comm-memory/>**

Please note that I use this customized Course Webpage instead of Moodle, so look there for readings and any agreed-upon updates to the schedule.

**GRADING:**

I design my classes with a number of different kinds of low and high stakes assignments designed to both draw out your strengths and facilitate growth, focusing on different assignment formats to make sure that each student has maximum potential to demonstrate existing skills and knowledge while developing new ones. I go into every class, every assignment, and every student encounter with a growth mindset--the belief that every student is capable of both succeeding and improving--and see that my responsibility is to give you the tools you need to succeed and improve while also being clear about my expectations and evaluations.

Grades are given a lot of power in dominant culture, but it is important to remember that grades are not a reflection of your worth as a person but an evaluation of your performance under a certain set of defined constraints. To level the playing field and fight against a scarcity model of grading that reinforces unearned advantages and inherited cultural power, I do not grade on a bell curve to place your graded assignments or final grade into a pre-determined grade distribution, where only a certain number of students can get an A, B, C, D, or F. The grades I assign reflect my evaluation of your performance within the constraints outlined in the syllabus and in assignment handout rubrics. Grades for particular assignments thus measure your performance on that assignment relative to the requirements of the assignment, not relative to other students, and final course grades measure your performance in the class overall.

Based on my goal to both minimize grade focus/anxiety while also teaching you to be independent thinkers and self-advocates, I do not post grades that are calculated in real-time throughout the semester. Increasingly, students are being trained to expect real-time grades computed as courses unfold, which creates an unbalanced extrapolation of a snapshot of your performance, treating your current performance as a predictor of your final grade. Because the work we do continues to build to higher and higher stakes over the course of the semester, I see grades on smaller assignments along the way as signals to you about what to do in the future, not an accurate representation or prediction of what your final grade will be. The only way they become predictive is if you ignore the feedback you are getting along the way or do not take it as a stimulus for growth.

I myself only compute and report your grade twice: at mid-term and at the end of the course. The only exception to this is if I have specific concerns about your patterns of performance and/or engagement in the class that need to be corrected in order for you to succeed in the class. In that case, I will let you know directly. If the patterns persist, I will create an alert on Nuro, which alerts your academic advisor to follow up with you and helps all of us know whether there are larger student success issues we can help you with.

If you ever want to compute your emerging overall grade average yourself at any point during the semester, here is what you need to know to compute grades yourself in this class. I

assign final course grades a final letter grade based on a range of averages for individual assignments based on a 100-point scale. For example, a final average of 88-89% would be recorded as a B+; a final average of 83-87% would be recorded as a B; and 80-82% would be recorded as a B- (extrapolate from there if it is higher or lower than a B). For the purposes of averaging individual project letter grades into a final grade, I use the following system to assign a numerical grade based on a letter grade on an assignment: B+=88%; B=85%, and B-=82% (and so on). For example, if you got a B- on an assignment that was weighted 25% of the final grade, you would receive 20.5 points for that assignment (or *lose the possibility of receiving* 4.5 points overall). The only exception for that is if you achieve an A+ on an individual assignment, where it will score as a 100% of the available points, where in this example you would receive the full 25 points.

At any point along the way, if you are curious, you can see how your grade is tracking: multiply the score of an individual assignment grade by the percentage it is weighted and that will reveal the total points you have earned for that assignment grade; add it to other determined grades; and then divide it by the highest potential scores for all the completed assignments combined. For grades that are composite, such as graded Classwork, you can calculate it the same way to track your ongoing composite score. If Classwork is determined by completion grades instead of through scoring, you can average that score based on the number of assignments you have completed divided by the ones you have not. Please note that I do not compute cumulative class participation grades until the very end of the semester, so if you want to get a sense of where this score is tracking before that, you will need to discuss it with me. Finally, if you have absences in excess of the stated policy or a pattern of late submissions, you will need to factor them in as well.

If you have questions about this grading system at any time, please consult me.

Here is how each assignment or set of assignments is weighted in this class:

Family Memory Object Presentation	5%
Southwestern Memory Place Presentation	5%
Paper 1: Family Memory Project	15%
Paper 2: Mediated Memory Project	15%
Paper 3: Placing Memory Project	15%
Classwork	15%
Class Engagement	10%
Final Research Project	20%

**COURSE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

The Learning Outcomes for this course focus on developing proficiency with critical/cultural theory, critical methodologies, analysis/interpretation, argumentation, and research that are central to understanding and implementing a social justice framework to communication and memory.

By the end of the course, students will demonstrate:

- Proficiency in understanding memory theories, particularly from contemporary psychoanalysis, collective memory theory, trauma theory, postcolonial theory, feminist theory, queer theory, and critical race theory.
- Proficiency in culturally-oriented research and analytical methodologies, particularly visual analysis, spatial analysis, and material culture analysis.
- Ability to critically engage memory theory and critical methodologies in framing arguments that analyze and interpret particular memory texts, objects, performances, and spaces.
- Proficiency in argumentative writing that has a clear object of analysis and logically and coherently develops a clearly identifiable persuasive thesis.
- Proficiency in developing effective research strategies for identifying primary and secondary sources pertinent to the analysis and interpretation of memory texts, objects, performances, and spaces.
- Proficiency in understanding of how memory artifacts and representations shape perceptions and experiences of place and vice-versa.
- Proficiency in analyzing the way structures and practices of cultural power and privilege are reinforced and contested within collective memory sites, practices, and texts.
- Proficiency in designing and implementing small-scale interdisciplinary research projects, especially in developing effective research strategies for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting primary and secondary sources, particularly Southwestern-focused memory texts, objects, spaces, and/or practices.
- Proficiency in small-scale public-facing content-production on a specific platform.
- Experience in navigating the complex role of a community member who critiques their community while also actively working to improve it from within.

#### **PROCEDURES AND POLICIES:**

We will discuss more specific guidelines for the class assignments as the course progresses, but here is a short outline to help orient you at the outset:

- **PRESENTATIONS:** There are two formal presentations during the semester. They will give you hands-on experience exploring, analyzing, and communicating connections between your own embodied personal and collective experiences of communication and memory by having you do short, 3-minute presentations. The first basically will be a “show-and-tell” about some material object that serves as an object of memory for you and/or your family (however defined), and the second will be a PowerPoint presentation representing your analysis of a memory place on or directly adjacent to campus. These assignments will be evaluated on a 5-point numerical system, and are introduced with a handout included here in the syllabus. There is also a short, informal presentation about your final project on the last day of class that is given a completion grade.
- **INTERMEDIATE PROJECT PAPERS:** The three Intermediate Project papers will apply material covered in discussions and readings to analyze and interpret particular memory texts/objects/spaces/performances chosen by the student. Each concerns a different memory

site: family, mediated memory, and memory place. All of them will give you important experience using the framework of the class to explore connections between individual memories and larger collective memory processes, structures, discourses, and problematics. Each of these three papers will be between 1500-2500 words (5-7 pages double-spaced) and will be evaluated on a plus/minus system; they all are introduced with a handout included here in the syllabus.

- **FINAL RESEARCH PROJECT:** For the Final Research Project, you will produce a more sustained intervention into the interrelation of communication and memory that analyzes and interprets specific memory texts, objects, performances, practices, or spaces. The paper will be at least 3500 words (at least 10 pages double-spaced) and will critically engage at least 8 outside scholarly sources in addition to the materials we study in class. Before the Final Project is turned in, you must first submit a Project Proposal that outlines the project you intend to produce and have it approved (see the due date in the schedule). This assignment will be evaluated on a plus/minus system; the handout for this assignment is focused on the Project Proposal and is included here in the syllabus.

- **CLASS ENGAGEMENT:** In taking this class, you have joined a group, where your peers and I will have expectations about your engagement with the group. We will run this class as a seminar, which revolves around group discussion—not simply witnessing me lecture. In a seminar, daily Class Engagement is imperative for every member of the group. Good Class Engagement means more than merely attending class, which is a given. Minimally, it means reading the assigned course materials and coming to class ready to critically engage them—and actively contributing to the class discussion by speaking *and* listening not only to me, but to your classmates as well. More substantially, it means working to make our class a space of open, inclusive, respectful, responsible, and challenging engagement with ideas, perspectives, and voices both similar to and different from your own. Class Engagement will be evaluated on a 10-point scale.

- **CLASSWORK:** Your Classwork grade will be determined by your completion of daily discussion questions designed to help you prepare to be active participants in our daily class discussions. Every day that we have assigned readings (which is almost every class day), every student will submit "discussion questions" (**DQs**). Each DQ document will include at least two discussion questions, including one question that addresses a specific question for the group focused on a particular reading for the day and one question that uses the day's readings to bring together issues across and in between current and previous readings. The best DQs are *anchored in the readings, interpretive, and open-ended* (e.g., with no pre-determined yes/no answers). More specifically, good DQs start with particular passages from the readings and then end with a question that seeks to *clarify, extend, and/or challenge* the ideas, analysis, and/or interpretive arguments in them. You will prepare these daily DQs in advance, show them to me at the beginning of class, work from them in class, and submit them to me at the end of class for a completion grade and feedback. DQs are recorded as completion grades, meaning that although I will give you a little feedback on your DQs to help you produce effective DQs, you will get credit for submitting them and not get credit if you do not. Note

also that because DQs are designed to facilitate discussion in class, there are NO MAKE-UPS for DQs after we have discussed the material.

- **ATTENDANCE:** Because this is a discussion seminar, it is important that you be prepared and in class every day. Remember that attending class is not just about you and me but about you and your colleagues in the class. We can't work together if we are not together. If you will be absent, for whatever reason--because you are observing a religious or cultural holiday not recognized by the normative University schedule, because you participating in an intercollegiate sport or another activity where you are representing Southwestern, or "just because"--you still are responsible for completing all your assignments by the deadline. More specifically, you are responsible for notifying me of the absence in advance and are responsible for arranging the means of making up and turning in applicable work in advance of the absence. I do not enforce a pre-determined penalty for absences as absences, but if you end up missing more than a couple of days throughout the semester, your Class Engagement grade will suffer accordingly.

- **READING ASSIGNMENTS:** Readings are contained in the required textbook or in the resources linked at the Course Webpage. All reading assignments must be completed before class on the day scheduled for discussion of the readings, and I expect you to have the readings with you in class every day, preferably in paper form or on a tablet. Because we will be facing each other in a discussion class, I prefer to not have to look past open laptop screens as we discuss our course materials.

- **WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:** Unless indicated explicitly otherwise, you should assume that all major writing assignments for this class must be produced and revised using a word processor and submitted by email as a Microsoft Word or PDF attachment or shared as a Google doc. The assignments all carry word limits and page limits. The page limits assume standard 1" margins, double-spacing, and the default of Times 12-point font (though I am open to other fonts). Citations should be rendered in Chicago, MLA, or Harvard format, with in-text citations in the essay and full source citations in a separate "Works Cited" section at the end of the paper. There is no need to put the Works Cited on its own separate page.

- **LATE PAPERS:** Papers are due at the times and days indicated in the schedule. For daily Classwork, I will check to see that you have your DQs with you before we start class and then pick them up after class. Larger paper assignments are due electronically by 10:30 on the dates indicated in the syllabus schedule, emailed to me as Word doc or PDF attachments or shared as Google docs. I will consider a paper late if it is not submitted within 8 hours after the posted deadline, and then take a letter grade off for every 24 hours it is late after that. Any flexibility from me beyond that will be exceptional and will need to be the result of direct negotiations between me and you about the rare circumstances involved, so clear and open communication between us will be key. Either way, getting behind on one assignment will start to put pressure on everything else, so it is important that you make every effort to stay with the schedule, and work with me promptly if you get off track.

• **INCLUSIVITY:** I work hard to create a classroom space that is dynamic, engaging, and inclusive for all students, where we work together from diverse perspectives and diverse ways of doing within fair and clearly-defined expectations for student engagement and performance. Moreover, this is a critical communication studies class, where we are often working with challenging subject matter that cuts to the core of who we are and how we work with each other in the group, so treating each other with respect and communicating sensitively across our differences will be crucial. If at any time you sense a dynamic emerging in our class that makes you feel unsafe or unwilling to engage fully, please reach out to me outside of class, either in-person or by email, so that I can address your concerns. I value direct communication and want your feedback about how things are working for you. Similarly, if I have concerns about your mode of engagement with the class, I will work to address them directly with you. Also, as part of my commitment to inclusivity, I value neurodiversity and make regular accommodations for students with documented learning differences that challenge their ability to have equal access to engage and perform in the course. To arrange documentation for these accommodations, contact the Assistant Director of Academic Success within the Center for Academic Success (Prothro Center room 120; phone 512-863-1286; e-mail [success@southwestern.edu](mailto:success@southwestern.edu)). Students seeking accommodations should notify their office at least two weeks before any services are needed. It is your responsibility to discuss any necessary accommodations with me as well.

• **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** It is your responsibility to understand and live by the Honor System, so it will be a good idea to review the policies and procedures outlined in the *SU Student Handbook*. All assignments are subject to the Honor Code. I do not require a full statement of the pledge on DQs. With major assignments, however, I will assume that anything you turn in that is not accompanied by a full statement of the Pledge and your signature will indicate that you have witnessed an Honor Code violation and wish to pursue it. Any collaborative work must be accompanied by an explicit delineation of specific acknowledgements of any assistance you received in the production of your work. Students who violate University policies on Academic Dishonesty by representing another's work as their own are subject to review by the Honor Code Council, which includes the possibility of academic penalties.

## PLANNED SCHEDULE

Aug	29:	Mapping the Course/Introductions	
	31:	Introduction to Critical Memory Studies	<b>Read: Course Webpage:</b> Ratnam; Rose-Redwood et al.
Sep	5:	Intimate Collective Memories: Material	<b>Read: Course Webpage:</b> Marcoux; Epp & Price
	7:	Intimate Collective Memories: Virtual	<b>Read: Course Webpage:</b> van Dijck, "Memory Matters in the Digital Age"; Walker; Goode

- Sep 12: Individual and/vs. collective memory  
**Read: Course Webpage:** Erll, Ch 2; Erll, 82-94
- 14: Collective Memory Theory  
**Read: Rossington/Whitehead:** Sec 4
- 19: Trauma & Memory  
**Read: Rossington/Whitehead:** Sec 6  
**Course Webpage:** Keightley & Pickering
- 21: “Family Memory Object” Presentations
- 26: Memory, Identity & Culture  
**Read: Course Webpage:** Erll, Ch 4
- 28: The Medium is the Memory  
**Read: Course Webpage:** Erll, Ch 5; Ong; Walter
- 29: *Special Friday Due Date*  
**Due:** Paper #1: Family Memory Project  
[electronic submission by 10:30am]
- Oct 3: Mediated Individual/Cultural Memory  
**Read: Course Webpage:** Sturken; Landsberg; Cole
- 5: Photography and Memory  
**Read: Course Webpage:** van Dijck, "Projecting the Family's Future Past"; Ledezma; Dyer
- 10: {Fall Break—No Class}
- 12: Mediated Memories  
**Read: Course Webpage:** Hales; Brooks
- 17: Collective Memory and Place: Monuments and Memorials  
**Read: Rossington/Whitehead:** Sec 5.3  
**Course Webpage:** Doss; Bednar
- Oct 19: Placing Memory at Southwestern  
{Meet in Library lobby}  
**Read: Course Webpage:** Brasher, Alderman, & Inwood  
**Explore:** *Placing Memory* Website
- 20: *Special Friday Due Date*  
**Due:** Paper #2: Mediated Memory Project  
[electronic submission by 10:30am]
- 24: Analyzing Memory Places  
**Read: Course Webpage:** Smith & Bergman; Ladino
- 26: Remembering Jim Crow  
**Read: Course Webpage:** House; Evans & Gaddie



- Oct 31: {Unity Day—No Class}
- Nov 1: *Special Wednesday Due Date*  
**Due:** proposal for your Placing Memory Project [email by 10:30am]
- 2: Screen *The Neutral Ground* (2021)  
**Read: Course Webpage:** Apel
- 7: Finish watching and discuss *The Neutral Ground* (2021)  
**Read: Course Webpage:** Central Texas Confederate Memorials
- 9: Reckoning with Racial Trauma  
**Read: Course Webpage:** Clint Smith
- 14: Black Lives Matter, Memory, and Place  
**Read: Course Webpage:** Borysovyh et al.; Strauss
- 16: Memory Practices, Publics, and Counterpublics  
**Read: Course Webpage** Kim; Newton-Jackson
- 17: *Special Friday Due Date*  
**Due:** Final Research Project Proposal  
[electronic submission by 10:30am]
- 21: {Research Consultations}
- 23: {Thanksgiving Break—No Class}
- 28: “Southwestern Memory Place” Presentations
- 30: “Southwestern Memory Place” Presentations
- Dec 1: *Special Friday Due Date*  
**Due:** Paper #3: Placing Memory Project  
[electronic submission by 10:30am]
- 5: Counter-memories and World-Making  
**Read: Course Webpage:** McCormack; John & Carlson
- 7: Informal Presentations/Conclusions/Course Evaluations
- Dec 13: (Wednesday): by 5pm  
**Due:** Final Research Project [electronic submission]

### **Bibliography of COURSE READINGS linked at the Course Webpage**

- Apel, Dora, “Why We Need a National Lynching Museum,” in Dora Apel, *Calling Memory Into Place* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2020), pp. 35-76.
- Bednar, Robert M., “Materialising Memory: The Public Lives of Roadside Crash Shrines,” *Memory Connection* 1/1 (2011), 18-33.

- Borysovych, Oksana, Chaiuk, Tetyana, and Karpova, Kateryna, "Black Lives Matter: Race Discourse and the Semiotics of History Construction," *Journal of History Culture and Art Research* 9/3 (2020), 325-340.
- Brasher, Jordan, Alderman, Derek, & Inwood, Joshua, "Applying Critical Race and Memory Studies to University Place Naming Controversies: Toward a Responsible Landscape Policy," *Papers in Applied Geography* 3/3-4 (2017), 292-307.
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- Cole, Teju, "No Photograph Stands Alone, and a Painful One is More Clearly Seen in a Constellation of Other Images," *New York Times Magazine*, March 19, 2017, pp. 14-17.
- Doss, Erika, "Death, Art and Memory in the Public Sphere: The Visual and Material Culture of Grief in Contemporary America," *Mortality* 7/1 (2002), 63-82.
- Dyer, Geoff, "A Family Snapshot, Through its Conjuring of Childhood and Place, Reminds Us That the Found Photo Can Have all the Magic—and the Mystery—of an Artful One." *New York Times Magazine*, January 18, 2017, pp. 14-17.
- Epp, Amber M., & Price, Linda L., "The Storied Life of Singularized Objects: Forces of Agency and Network Transformation," *Journal of Consumer Research* 36 (2010), 820-837.
- Erll, Astrid. *Memory in Culture*. Translated by Sarah B. Young. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011.
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- House, Christopher A., "Remembering Jim Crow in the Age of Trump: An Analysis of the Rhetorical Functions of the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia," *Journal of Contemporary Rhetoric* 7/1 (2017), pp. 1-18.
- Keightley, Emily, and Michael Pickering, "Painful Pasts," in Emily Keightley & Michael Pickering (eds), *Research Methods for Memory Studies*. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2013, pp. 151-166.
- Kim, Jinsook, "Sticky Activism: The Gangnam Station Murder Case and New Feminist Practices Against Misogyny and Femicide," *Journal of Cinema and Media Studies* 60/4 (2021), 37-60.
- Ladino, Jennifer, "Mountains, Monuments, and Matter: Environmental Effects of Manzanar," *Environmental Humanities* 6 (2015), 131-157.
- Landsberg, Alison, "Introduction: Memory, Modernity, Mass Culture," in Alison Landsberg, *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), pp. 1-24.
- Ledezma, Deanna, "Regarding Family Photography in Contemporary Latinx Art," *Art Journal*

- (Fall 2020), 80-89.
- Lloyd, Christopher, "Silent Landscapes, Textured Memory: Keith Morris Washington's Lynching Paintings," *European Journal of American Studies* 36/2 (2017), pp. 105-120.
- Marcoux, Jean-Sébastien, "Souvenirs to Forget," *Journal of Consumer Research* 43 (2017), pp. 950-969.
- McCormack, Michael Brandon, "'Breonna Taylor Could Have Been Me': Bearing Witness to Faith in Black (Feminist) Futurity at the Speed Art Museum's *Promise, Witness, Remembrance* Exhibit" *Religions* 12/980 (2021), pp. 1-17.
- Newton-Jackson, Elizabeth, "Overlooked, Forgotten, Avoided: The LGBT Community and Public Art," *Women's Studies Journal* 34/1-2 (2020), 92-106.
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- Smith, Clint, "Blandford Cemetery," in Clint Smith, *How the Word is Passed: A Reckoning with the History of Slavery Across America* (New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 2021), pp. 118-172.
- Smith, Cynthia Duquette, and Bergman, Teresa, "You Were on Indian Land: Alcatraz as Recalcitrant Memory Space," in Greg Dickinson, Carole Blair, & Brian Ott (eds.), *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010), 160-188.
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- Walter, Tony, "The Pervasive Dead," *Mortality* 24/4 (2019), pp. 389-404.

### **“Family Memory Object” Presentation**

#### **Student Learning Outcome Goals**

This assignment will give you experience articulating your own family memory practices in relation to a physical memory object. This is an important skill to develop in our larger project of becoming more competent as critical/cultural analysts of communication and memory, but it is also a building block for your upcoming Family Memory Project assignment, where material objects play important roles in memory *and* forgetting (see Marcoux 2016) within groups, particularly families.

#### **Format**

This 3-minute presentation involves just you showing and talking about a single memory object: no PowerPoint, and no associated paper to turn in, etc.—just you and the object at the front of the room. It is more than simply show-and-tell, though. You must show what the object is as a physical, material object and show how the object is integrated into your family's dynamic(s) around memory, remembrance, and forgetting.

**To do well on this assignment**, you will need to perform a clearly organized and well-delivered presentation that engages us as an audience, explicitly connects what you are talking about to at least two of the readings we share, and develops a central thesis about both your object and your family's memory politics and practices—all within 3 minutes.

Which part(s) of your family or families you emphasize is up to you, as is how you define family. The object itself can be something that evokes memories of your family for you alone, or for many people in your family. It can be a unique, handmade object, or a mass-produced object that has been “singularized” by you and/or any other member of your family to have distinctive meanings within your family (See Epp & Price, 2010; and Kopytoff 1986). It can evoke a previous home or be waiting for a new home (Ratnam 2018). Perhaps the object evokes a “stored” memory forgotten by one or more of you and needs to be recovered as a “functional” memory object (see Erll 2011), placing it in a new position in the material memory object “network” described by Epp & Price (2010, p. 825), where objects can be incorporated into family memory networks, but also temporarily displaced, re-integrated, or eventually either “re-commodified” or discarded. That means that the object could be an object that was singularized and discarded/re-commodified by someone else before your family came to singularize it, such as a found object, a gift, or an item bought at a garage sale, thrift store, or eBay, and given a “second life” in your memory network.

Whichever object you choose, your job is to make that inanimate physical object communicate its “biography” as an object in ways that it cannot by itself, and to focus on what the memory practices surrounding the object “say” about the ways you and your family “do” (and don't do) memory through communication.

## ***Preparing your Family Memory Project***

Bednar

COM 75:444: Communication & Memory

***Assignment: Think of a SINGLE embodied personal or interpersonal family experience that was and is particularly significant to you and use it as the focus of a narrative-based autoethnographic essay that not only shows us the experience, but also tells us something about the general dynamics in which this experience is remembered (performed, maintained, resisted, contested, etc.) in your family and any other pertinent collectives.***

***Formatting Constraints: 1500-2500 words, or 5-7pp double spaced, 12-point type; directly refer to and cite at least four different sources from our course readings and two outside scholarly sources (cite using Chicago, MLA, or APA format, and include a separate works cited page—not included in the page count).***

All of your intermediary paper assignments for this class apply the course materials to analyze and interpret particular memory texts/objects/spaces/performances. Each project concerns a different memory site: family, mediated memory, and memory place. All of them will give you important experience using the framework of the class to explore connections between individual memories and larger collective processes, structures, discourses, and problematics within a larger social justice framework, which recognizes that communication and memory are everywhere entangled with power, from our most intimate relationships to our largest collectives.

Your most central job for this particular assignment is to tell personal/family stories and critically engage other scholars and theorists of communication and memory to show how communication, memory, and power work in your most longstanding collective: your family (or families) of origin. It is essentially an autoethnography, where you tell your story as a member of a collective that illuminates the collective, and you do so while critically engaging scholarship. You have the choice of expanding from the object you used for your Family Memory Object Presentation or analyzing a totally different memory from your collective.

There are two main writing challenges here: 1) you must be very specific about the story and your understanding about it, and 2) you must build a bridge for us to understand how this one story represents something larger (your family's or families' relationship to memory/forgetting and your role in that relationship). Your thesis should draw the two together, and you should articulate your experience and your ideas in relation to the course materials we are studying. To do this effectively, your paper will need to revolve around a narration of the characters, places, and events involved in ONE specific event/experience, but it should also "digress" to explore how this event and the way it is remembered in your family/families helps characterize your identity in relation to your family experiences and dynamics in general, and your experiences of remembering those experiences and dynamics. Note: If you re-encounter material objects that remind you of the experience or its subsequent remembrance (e.g. photographs, artifacts, journal entries, social media posts, letters, text messages, emails, voice mails, etc.), you will probably do a better job of concretely describing the event AND any tensions between past/present and among the different individuals involved in the story.

As you choose the story you will tell, remember that you must do more than simply therapeutically convey a story that is important to you personally--something that may be cathartic and personally satisfying to you as the writer but does not attempt to meet your reader half way. Unlike a journal, which is written for the writer, this paper is written for a public—written to create a new collective between the writer and the reader, and to communicate ideas, emotions, and information. This is a key problematic in the study of (as well as the performance of) communication and memory.

Finally, another problematic in communication and memory is finding a common language. With this article as well as others in this class, remember this: as you work to “find your voice” and experiment with form, remember that readers will have certain expectations about the conventions of grammar and mechanics (especially spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure). If you break these conventions, it must be clear from the paper that you are doing so consciously and that you are seeking to train readers to see things in new ways; otherwise, readers will assume that you are simply being ignorant or sloppy. I have outlined a set of common grammar and mechanics errors in student writing in the “Crash Course on Grammar and Mechanics” included in the syllabus. Make sure you know what they are and how (and why) to avoid them.

## **Preparing your Mediated Memory Project**

Bednar

COM 75-444: Communication & Memory

***Assignment:*** *Using our readings on mediated collective memory as a frame, analyze some phenomenon of mediated memory that opens into a larger discussion of how individual and/or collective memory works in media texts and discourses.*

***Formatting Constraints:*** *1500-2500 words, or 5-7pp double spaced, 12-point type; directly refer to and cite at least four different sources from our course readings and two outside scholarly sources (cite using Chicago, MLA, or APA format, and include a separate works cited page—not included in the page count).*

All of your intermediary paper assignments for this class apply the course materials to analyze and interpret particular memory texts/objects/spaces/performances. Each project concerns a different memory site: family, mediated memory, and memory place. All of them will give you important experience using the framework of the class to explore connections between individual memories and larger collective processes, structures, discourses, and problematics within a larger social justice framework, which recognizes that communication and memory are everywhere entangled with power, from our most intimate relationships to our largest collectives.

Your most central job for this particular assignment is to show what you think about mediated memory as you analyze a particular case study. I am open to any interpretation of what constitutes a "mediated memory," but I am imagining that projects will take one of three forms:

1) a detailed study of what Erll calls a "memory reflexive" media text (a particular book, film, TV show, magazine article, podcast, website, etc.) that takes memory as its central subject matter (such as *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, *Severance*, etc.) and work to characterize how the text represents memory processes, practices, values, etc., what we would call its "theory of memory"

2) a detailed study of what Erll calls a "memory productive" media text (a particular book, film, TV show, magazine article, podcast, website, etc.) represents significant historical events to a mediated collective and creates collective memory (e.g., a study of a movie such as *Saving Private Ryan* or *Titanic*, or a study of a "true crime" podcast such as *Serial*).

3) a specific case study of mediated memory practices that analyzes how people use certain media technologies to perform memory collectively (such as a case study of specific memory practices associated with family photography, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, Shutterfly, virtual memorials, etc.).

Regardless of the media text, technology, or discourse you choose, you must critically engage at least four different sources from our readings and two outside scholarly sources as you develop your analytical/interpretive argument. Ideally, your essay will include images that show how the medium represents memory in particular ways.

## ***Preparing your Placing Memory Project***

Bednar

COM 75-444: Communication & Memory

***Placing Memory Project Assignment: The main purpose of this assignment is to take what you have learned in the class to produce content for the Placing Memory Project's Story Map Website. Using our readings on the spatial dimensions of individual/collective memory as a frame, you will analyze some phenomenon of collective memory located at a particular place on or immediately adjacent to campus. In developing your project, you must use a direct embodied discovery methodology that is either based in archive research or is performance-based, meaning that you will focus your analysis on encountering materials from the Southwestern archives; do an on-site spatial analysis (of the site itself and/or interactions with the site); do detailed in-person interviews; or do some combination of archive research, site analysis, and/or interviews.***

***Formatting Constraints: This assignment will take two forms: a 3-minute presentation to the class, featuring multiple slides in PowerPoint, Google Slides, Canva, or Prezi, and a 1500-2500 word (5-7pp double-spaced) entry (or set of related smaller entries) formatted to potentially be included in the Placing Memory Project's Story Map Website.***

***For both parts of the assignment, you will refer directly to and cite at least four different sources from our course readings and two outside scholarly sources (cite using Chicago, MLA, or APA format, and include a separate works cited page—not included in the page count). Both forms will convey a clear central thesis about the way memory is or should be located and performed at a specific Southwestern memory place. Please also identify a specific location or locations where your entry or entries could be placed on the Placing Memory map, and include at least one photograph of the person, event, and/or place you are analyzing (more than one photo is better).***

The *Placing Memory* website is a multi-vocal and layered digital map of Southwestern's commemorative landscape that seeks to tangibly represent, interrogate, and revise the patterns of remembrance and forgetting of people and events on campus. It starts with the observation that Southwestern's commemorative landscape is a materialization of the collective memory of the University, and like all collective memories, it is partial and problematic because it is entangled with power dynamics about who and what is remembered and forgotten, why, how, and by whom. The website features location-based entries written by Southwestern students this summer that either analyze and critique existing memory places or advocate for marking new memory places.

Now that the *Placing Memory* project is up and running, I am using this assignment to expand the content of the website. To be viable as potential *Placing Memory* entries, your projects developed for this assignment should fill gaps or add dimension to the work already done instead of repeat it. Therefore, before you start working on your projects, we will look together at the existing *Placing Memory* website so you can see how the existing entries work and show you where the gaps are—in terms of unmarked memory places or in terms of unrepresented perspectives on those memory places. We also have a day in class devoted to a



field trip to the Library to provide you with some introductory training into how to use the archives for your project. Finally, I will need to approve your project topic and concept before you complete it.

When it comes to choosing your Southwestern memory place or places, I am open to any interpretation of what constitutes a "Southwestern memory place," but it must be located on campus or be immediately adjacent to campus and it must be analyzed in terms of the way memory is materialized and/or practiced there—or how it should be if it is not. That is, it can't just be about a place, and it can't just be about a memory, but about how *memory* works (or should work) in that *place*.

Your projects probably will focus on one of the following four types of memory place studies:

- 1) a study of an institutionally produced memory place that focuses on the way memory is materialized or the way people interact spatially with an officially established memory place, such as a named structure, a monument, a memorial plaque (or set of plaques), one of the exhibits in the library, the display cases on the second floor of McCombs Student Center, etc.
- 2) a study of an unmarked memory site that you think the collective should know about (such as a hidden or lost site of trauma or the hidden or lost site of a happier memory that is not currently actively memorialized in material form at a particular place).
- 3) a study of a publicly accessible thing or structure that has developed a collectively known and ritualized set of practices around it, paying attention to whether the institution promotes/manages the practice (such as the Monstrance horse, the seal in front of the chapel, the Cullen tower), or students seem to "own" the practice and place (such as Story Tree, Landrum Fountain, Brown Challenge, Graffiti Bridge, The Tracks, or old One-Joint Road).
- 4) a study of a private memory site that you think the collective should know about (such as a home shrine or a memorial set up in privately controlled space such as a dorm room or campus apartment, or resistive practices such as graffiti or subcultural student spaces).
- 5) archive research and/or oral history interviews about forgotten people, events, or places that you think the collective should know about and encounter at a certain place.

### Preparing Your Final Research Project Proposals

The Final Research Project focuses on developing a specific analytical approach to a particular research object: memory text(s), space(s), performance(s) and/or material object(s). Please note that you have the option of using one of your intermediary projects as a foundation for an expanded research project, but you are not required to do so. Whichever type of research object you choose, all final projects will analyze and interpret particular communicative memory phenomena using a particular theoretical framework and methodology. Implicit in both of these criteria is the need to critically engage not only the common materials from the course but also additional scholarship pertaining to both your phenomena and the theories and methodologies you will mobilize in your project.

At minimum, you will produce a final research paper that is at least 3500 words (or 10 pages long) and a final works cited page of at least 8 outside scholarly sources in addition to the sources we've read and discussed in our class.

Your Formal Project Proposal must address the set of questions below as concretely as possible. As a shorthand, these questions ask you to define: What exactly you will study; how you will analyze it; why you will study it; who cares if you study it; and so what if you study it. Your proposal should be about **1-2 single-spaced pages typed**, and must be **divided into the separate sections outlined below**, and **include a separate additional page listing the current bibliography** of sources you are using, with full citations using a standard citation system, such as MLA, Chicago, or Harvard.

**Topic.** What is your "research object"? That is, what specific memory text(s), space(s), performance(s), and/or object(s) will you analyze? (What?)

**Methodology.** Which memory theories and theorists seem most pertinent to your project and how/why? What specific method of analysis will you use to analyze your research object? Which other scholars from our course readings and your own preliminary research do you see doing similar and different but related work on your topic, and how does your proposed methodology relate to theirs? (How?)

**Motivation.** What is your personal motivation for doing the project? (Why?)

**Audience.** Who is your scholarly target audience for the project and how will you address them? (Who cares?)

**Significance.** How does your project speak from and speak to the more general concerns of this class? (So What?)

**Pronouns and Possessives:**

**its = possessive pronoun**

e.g. the essay's point of view => its point of view

**it's = contraction of it + is**

e.g. It is a fine day. => It's a fine day.

**their = possessive pronoun**

e.g. Hondo and Jo Jo's dog roams the neighborhood. => Their dog roams the neighborhood.

**there = adverb indicating place**

e.g. Their dog usually leaves its mark on that yard over there.

**they're = contraction of they + are**

e.g. Hondo and Jo Jo are looking for the dog that belongs to them. => They're looking for their dog.

**Punctuation/Sentence Structure Problems:**

**fragment (frag)**

A fragment is an incomplete sentence that lacks a subject, a verb, or both.

e.g. Washing the car. (no subject, incomplete verb, and incomplete thought)

**comma splice (cs)**

A comma cannot, on its own, join two independent clauses.

e.g. Jo Jo likes barbecue, Hondo prefers tofu. => Jo Jo likes barbecue; Hondo prefers tofu.  
=> Jo Jo likes barbecue, but Hondo prefers tofu.  
=> Jo Jo likes barbecue. Hondo prefers tofu.

**fused sentence (fs)**

A fused sentence lacks the punctuation necessary to separate two independent clauses.

e.g. Jo Jo likes barbecue Hondo prefers tofu. => (see comma splice corrections above)

**semicolon errors**

A semicolon can only be used in an extensive series or to separate two independent clauses.

e.g. Hondo stumbled; washing the car. => Hondo stumbled; he was washing the car.  
=> While he was washing the car, Hondo stumbled.  
=> Hondo stumbled while he was washing the car.

**run-on**

A run-on sentence proliferates verbs and subjects and objects without attention to grammatical structure.

**awkward (AWK)**

An awkward sentence stumbles over itself as it tries to communicate its point, rendering the writing confused/confusing. Often the fix is to "write to the point" more directly.

**using the word "however"**

The word "however" is not an interchangeable synonym for the word "but" or "although." It cannot be used to indicate contradiction unless you use punctuation to interrupt the flow of the sentence. If a sentence begins with the word, it must be followed by a comma; if a sentence ends with the word, it must be preceded with a comma. If it is used in the middle of a sentence, it must be set apart either with a set of commas before and after it or with a semicolon and a comma (see also **fs**, **cs**, and **run-ons**).

e.g. Jo Jo says they do not know how their dog gets out; however, I know that they do.  
e.g. Jo Jo says they do not know how their dog gets out. However, I know that they do.  
e.g. Jo Jo says they do not know how their dog gets out. I know, however, that they do.

**Apostrophes:**

A singular noun that does not end in "s" takes "'s" to indicate possession.

e.g. the person's dog (the dog belongs to one person)

A plural noun that already ends in "s" takes an "'s" only to indicate possession.

e.g. the boys' dog (the dog belongs to more than one boy)  
e.g. the ladies' house (the house belongs to more than one lady)

A plural noun that does not end in "s" takes "'s" to indicate possession.

e.g. the children's dog (the dog belongs to all the children)  
e.g. the women's house (the house belong to the women)

A singular noun that ends in "s" takes either "'s" or "'s" to indicate possession.

e.g. Charles' spaniel or Charles's spaniel (the spaniel belongs to Charles)

**Punctuating quotes and citations:**

I expect you to critically engage other writers as you develop your own arguments. Document all citations (including direct quotations, paraphrases, and "general indebtedness") using MLA, Harvard, Chicago, or some other standard in-text citation format within the essay and then list all of your cited sources in a Works Cited section at the end of the paper. Notice that the standard format for documenting a quote ends the quote, includes the citation, and only then provides the sentence's end punctuation, as in the following example: As Patrick Phillips argues, "There is a fine line between determining and overdetermining the meaning of a film text" (Phillips, 157).