Communication and Memory

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Southwestern University
COM 75-444-01
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OFFICE HOURS: Mon 2;30-4:30; Tue 4:00-5:00; Th 4:00-5:00; and by appointment
CLASS MEETINGS: Tu-Th, 10:00-11:15 AM, FWO 222

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 theory 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.

Our central questions will be: How are memories communicated, and how is communication 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

REQUIRED TEXTS:
Greg Dickinson, Carole Blair, and Brian Ott, Places of Public Memory (Alabama, 2010)
Astrid Erl, Memory in Culture (trans. by Sara B. Young) (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011)
Michael Rossington & Anne Whitehead, Theories of Memory: A Reader (Johns Hopkins, 2007)

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

Please note that I use the Course Webpage instead of Moodle, so look there for readings and any agreed-upon updates to the schedule.
Grading:
Your overall grade for this class will be determined according to the following weighted percentages and will be evaluated according to a plus/minus system (e.g., 88-89=B+, 83-87=B, 80-82=B-, etc.):

Family Memory Object Presentation 5%
Paper 1: Family Memory Project 15%
Paper 2: Mediated Memory Project 15%
Paper 3: Memory Place Project 15%
Classwork 15%
Class Participation 10%
Final Research Project 25%

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 work in both the Communication Studies major and the Situating Place Paideia Cluster.

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, 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 places of public memory are sites where cultural power and privilege are both reinforced and contested.

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:

- Family Memory Object Presentations: These presentations will give you an early introduction into exploring and analyzing connections between your own embodied personal and interpersonal experiences of communication and memory by having you do a short, 3-minute informal presentation about some material object that serves as an object of memory for you and/or your family. This assignment will be evaluated on a 5-point numerical system.
• **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 cultural processes, structures, discourses, and problematics. All three of these Papers will be 5-7 pages long each and will be evaluated on a plus/minus system.

• **FINAL RESEARCH PROJECT:** For the Final Research Project, you will produce a significant intervention into the interrelation of communication and memory that analyzes and interprets specific memory texts, objects, performances, or spaces. Please note that students in the Situating Place Cluster will focus on researching and analyzing memory places or the memory of places. The paper will be at least 15 pages long, double-spaced and will critically engage at least 10 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 dates in the schedule). This assignment will be evaluated on a plus/minus system.

• **CLASS PARTICIPATION:** We will run this class like a seminar, which revolves around group discussion. In a seminar, daily Class Participation is imperative for every member of the group. Good Class Participation 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, respectful, responsible, and challenging engagement with ideas, perspectives, and voices both similar to and different from your own. Class Participation will be evaluated on a 10-point scale.

• **CLASSWORK:** Your Classwork grade will be determined by your performance on daily discussion questions, reading quizzes, etc. To help you prepare to be active participants in our daily class discussions, every student will produce "daily discussion questions" (DQs) to submit to me every day we have assigned readings. Each DQ document will include at least two discussion questions, including at least one question that addresses a specific question focused on a particular reading for the day and one question that brings together issues across and in between multiple 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 either seek 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. In addition to these questions, we may also have reading quizzes to evaluate your understanding of the readings further. Note that because Classwork is designed to facilitate discussion in class, there are NO MAKE-UPS for classwork after we have discussed the material.

• **ATTENDANCE:** I expect you to be prepared and in class every day, so it is your responsibility to track your absences and negotiate ways of compensating for them.
if you have excessive absences. I will grant two free absences to account for contingencies, but starting with the third, each absence thereafter will cost you five points off of your final grade. If you have excused absences (defined very narrowly at Southwestern as ones that are officially sanctioned by the University, such as representing the University in intercollegiate competitions or observation of a religious holiday), you are responsible for notifying me of the absence in advance and are responsible for arranging the means of making up the applicable work in advance of the absence.

- **READING ASSIGNMENTS:** Readings are contained in the required textbooks 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 do not want you to have to look past open laptop screens.

- **LATE PAPERS:** All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the days indicated in the schedule. If you must turn in a late assignment, email it to me ASAP after you complete it. Late papers will be penalized a letter grade for each 24-hour period that they are late.

- **ACCOMMODATIONS:** Southwestern University will make reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. To arrange accommodations, you should contact the Assistant Director of Access and Academic Resources within the Center for Academic Success (Prothro Center room 120; phone 863-1286; e-mail success@southwestern.edu). Students seeking accommodations should notify the Assistant Director of Access and Academic Resources at least two weeks before 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 in-class and out-of-class assignments are subject to the Honor Code; therefore, I will assume that everything 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. All 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 Student Judiciary, which includes the possibility of disciplinary penalties.

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**COURSE PDF READINGS** linked at the Course Webpage

Bednar, Robert M. "Denying Denial: Trauma, Memory and Automobility at Roadside Car Crash Shrines," in Anne Demo and Brad Vivian (eds), *Rhetoric, Remembrance, and...*


PART I: Memory, Media, and Place

Aug 27: Mapping the Course/Introductions
29: <<Reading Day>>

Sep 3: Introduction to Memory Studies
Read: Erll: "Introduction: Why 'Memory'"
Rossington/Whitehead: "Introduction"
Course Webpage: Buchanan; Ferreday
5: Intimate Memories: Virtual and Material
Read: Course Webpage: Walker; Marcoux; Epp & Price
10: Brief History of Memory Studies
Read: Erll: Ch 2
12: "Family Memory Object" Presentations
17: History and/or as memory
Read: Erll: pp. 38-57
Course Webpage: Texas Ordinance of Secession
19: Social Memory
Read: Erll: pp. 57-66
Rossington/Whitehead: Sec 4
24: Memory, Psychology, and Neuroscience
Read: Erll: pp. 82-94
Due: Paper #1: Family Memory Project
26: Early Memory Theory
Read: Rossington/Whitehead: Sec 3

Oct 1: Memory, Identity & Culture
Read: Erll, Ch 4
3: The Medium is the Memory
Read: Erll: pp. 113-126; 66-82
Course Webpage: Walter Ong; Tony Walter
8: Screen *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (2004) (108 min.)
{special extended class to view entire movie—10:00-12:00}
Read: Course Webpage: Grau; van Dijck, "Memory Matters in the Digital Age"
15: <<No Class--Fall Break>>
17: Mediated Individual/Cultural Memory
Read: Erll: pp. 126-143
Course Webpage: Landsberg; Jakob; Cole

Oct 22: Photography and Memory
Read: Course Webpage: van Dijck, "Projecting the Family's
24: Rhetoric, Public Memory, and Place
   **Read:** Dickinson, Blair, & Ott: Introduction
   **Due:** Paper #2: Mediated Memory Project

29: Cultural Memory and Place
   **Read:** Course Webpage: Sturken; Doss; Paliewicz & Hasian

31: Museums as Memory Places
   **Read:** Rossington/Whitehead: Sec 5.3
   **Dickinson, Blair, & Ott,** Ch. 6
   **Course Webpage:** Gieseking

Nov 5: Resisting Memory Places
   **Read:** Course Webpage: Cotter; Sanchez & Moore
   **Dickinson, Blair, & Ott,** Ch. 7

Nov 7: Recalcitrant Memory Places
   **Read:** Dickinson, Blair, & Ott, Ch. 5
   **Course Webpage:** House; Lloyd

**PART II: Critical Dimensions of Communication & Memory**

12: Trauma & Memory I
   **Read:** Rossington/Whitehead: Sec 6
   **Read:** Course Webpage: Keightley & Pickering

14: Trauma & Memory II
   **Read:** Course Webpage: Kaplan; Bednar
   **Due:** Final Research Project Proposal

19: Gender & Memory
   **Read:** Rossington/Whitehead: Sec 7
   **Read:** Course Webpage: Hirsch & Smith

21: Race/Nation & Memory
   **Read:** Rossington/Whitehead: Sec 8
   **Due:** Paper #3: Memory Place Project

26: <<Research/Writing Day>>

28: <<No Class-Thanksgiving>>

Dec 3: <<Research Consultations>>

5: Informal Presentations/Conclusions/Course Evaluations

Dec 10: (Tuesday): by 5pm
   **Due:** Final Research Project [electronic submission]
Preparing your Family Memory Project
Bednar
COM 75:44: 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 to which you belong.

Formatting Constraints: 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 cultural processes, structures, discourses, and problematics. 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 memory works 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.

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 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. If you re-encounter material objects that remind you of the experience or its subsequent remembering (e.g. photographs, artifacts, journal entries, 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 make a connection 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 and Memory Place Projects

Bednar
COM 75-444: Communication & Memory

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, memory space, and mediated memory. All of them will give you important experience using the framework of the class to explore connections between individual memories and larger cultural processes, structures, discourses, and problematics.

Formatting Constraints for both assignments: 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).

Mediated Memory Project 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.

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 a media text (a particular book, film, TV show, magazine article, advertisement, website, etc.) that takes memory as its central subject matter, much the same way as we studied Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind; 2) a detailed study of how a particular media text represents significant historical events to a mediated collective (e.g., a study of a movie such as Saving Private Ryan as intervention into the "collective memory" of WWII in the U.S.); or 3) a detailed study of how people use certain media technologies to perform memory collectively (such as a study of family photography, facebook, instagram, shutterfly, virtual memorials, etc.). Regardless of the 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.

Memory Place Project Assignment: Using our readings on the spatial dimensions of individual/collective memory as a frame, analyze some phenomenon of collective memory located at a particular place that opens into a larger discussion of how collective/individual memory works. You also must use a performance-based methodology with this assignment, doing either an on-site spatial analysis (of the site itself and/or interactions with the site) or detailed in-person interviews (or a combination of both site analysis and interviews).

Your most central job for this particular assignment is to show what you think about how collective and individual memory is located in particular spaces (and thus times) as you analyze a particular case study. I am open to any interpretation of what constitutes a "memory place," but I am imagining that projects will take one of four forms: 1) a detailed study of an institutional memory place (such as a history museum, civic/state/national memorial, etc.), that focuses on the way memory is materialized or the way people interact spatially with those memory places (or both); 2) a detailed study of a historically significant but "unmarked" memory site (such as a crime scene); 3) a detailed study of a privately built but publicly accessible memory site (such as a roadside shrine or cemetery); or 4) a private memory site (such as a home shrine or a privately controlled space such as a home or farm). Regardless of the site 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.
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). Situating Place Cluster members will focus on analyzing memory places or the memory of places. 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, I expect to see a final works cited page of at least 10 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 specific memory text(s), space(s), performance(s), and/or object(s) are you focusing on? (What?)

**Theory and Methodology.** Which 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 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 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? What is at stake for you and your audience? (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 tree over there.
they’re = contraction of they + are
  e.g. Hondo and Jo Jo are looking for their dog => 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.

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

Apostrophes:
A singular noun that does not end in "s" takes "'s" to indicate possession.
  e.g. the woman’s dog (the dog belongs to one woman)
A plural noun that already ends in "s" takes an "’" 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 "’" 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).