Memory and Conflict: Remembering and Forgetting in Divided Societies

Dr. Orli Fridman

Course Description

This course invites students to explore the study of conflict analysis and conflict transformation through a journey in the field of social memory studies. The course will focus on the role of social memory studies for peace and conflict studies students and scholars. More specifically, it will allow students to delve into the analysis of internal dynamics of societies in or after conflict by focusing on the way(s) they negotiate their pasts, presents and futures in the aftermath of war, conflict, repression, dictatorship, genocide and mass atrocities. As such, the course will focus on the role of memory in processes of peacebuilding and reconciliation as well as bottom-up approaches to conflict and its transformation.

The course will introduce students to dynamics and frameworks allowing the social organization of memory, and modes in which entire communities (and not only individuals) preserve and remember the past, commemorate it, deny or obliterate it. Finally, the course will highlight practices related to memory work and memory activism in spaces of conflicts over the narratives and representations of the past.

In order to do so, students will be introduced to some underpinning concepts and theoretical frameworks in social memory studies and in conflict studies. Students will then apply this theoretical knowledge to a few case studies, allowing them to further investigate the role of memory and memory activism in conflict analysis, and think comparatively about mnemonic processes in conflict and post-conflict transformation.

Course Structure:

- Theoretical introduction to social memory studies, conflict analysis and Conflict Transformation;
- Collective Memory and National Calendars: collective memory, community memory, social organization of national memory, commemorative events;
- Memory Work and Memory Activism in and after conflict.

Case studies will include:

- The Memories of 1948 among Israeli & Palestinian Communities;
- Memory, Silence and Denial: The Memories of the Wars of the 1990s in Serbia.

Background readings

This selected list of readings will help you prepare for the course and may be used as entry points to our week’s discussions:
Memory Studies:

Peace & Conflict Studies, Transitional Justice:
- Ramsbotham, Oliver, Woodhouse, Tom & Miall, Hugh. Contemporary Conflict Resolution: The prevention, management and transformation of deadly conflicts. Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2011. Chapter 9 (Peacebuilding); Chapter 10 (Reconciliation).

One of the questions we will raise this week: Does collective remembrance of a troubled past impede reconciliation?

This links may help you in your preparation to discuss this question:
- ICTJ online Debate Does collective remembrance of a troubled past impede reconciliation?
  https://www.ictj.org/news/online-debate-remembrance-reconciliation
  [or a direct link to the panel http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/85630514]
- COURSE OUTLINE BY DAY -

DAY 1

Morning Session

10:00-11:00  Group introduction
            Course introduction

11:15-12:30  **Theoretical Frameworks**: social memory studies, and its meeting points with conflict analysis & conflict transformation

Required readings

Afternoon Session

14:00-16:00  Collective Memory and National Calendars: time, memory and the nation

Required readings

DAY 2

Morning Session

10:00-11:00  **Theoretical Frameworks continues**: Collective memory (silence/obliteration/denial); community memory; social organization of national memory; commemorative events, memory work & memory activism

Required readings

Recommended readings

11:00-12:30  **Film**: A film by Eyal Sivan: *Yizkor: Slaves to Memory* (1991) [98 minutes] [watch part I only]
Afternoon Session

14:00-16:00 Memory, Conflict and asymmetric Power Relations: Introduction to the protracted issues of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict
   - The creation of the states of Israel
   - The Nakba
   - Citizenship & mnemonic communities

Background Readings:
   - Beinin, Joel and Lisa Hajjar. *Palestine, Israel and Arab Israeli Conflict Premier*, Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP).

DAY 3

Morning Session

10:00-12:30 The Hegemonic Memory of 1948 in Jewish Israeli society in Israel
   - Official state commemoration practices
   - Alternative commemorative events & Memory Activism
   - Memory Laws: The law on the Nakba

Required readings

Recommended readings

Film: A film by Yulie Cohen: *My Land Zion* (2004) [60 minutes]

Afternoon Session

14:00-16:00 The memories of 1948 in Palestinian societies (in diaspora, in Israel and Palestine)
   - Commemoration as a form of political protest
   - Memory and minority majority relations
   - Memory in asymmetric conflicts
Required readings


Recommended reading


DAY 4

Morning Session

10:00-11:15 Introduction the Break-Up of Yugoslavia and the Wars of the 1990s; Post-Milošević Fragmented/contested Memories of the 1990s in Serbia

Background Readings YU breakup:

11:30-12:30 Memories of the 1990s in Post- Milošević Serbia: Beyond Transitional Justice
- Mnemonic communities & and mnemonic battles in Serbia [WW2 and the 1990s];
- The Memories of the 1999 NATO Bombing

Recommended readings


Recommended readings

Afternoon Session

14:00-15:00 Group Observations of Belgrade's monuments [as related to politics of memory of the 1990s]

Assigned texts:
- Badescu, Gruia. "'Achieved without Ambiguity?' Memorializing Victimhood in Belgrade after the 1999 NATO Bombing." Sudosteuropa Vol 64 no. 4, 2016.

DAY 5

Morning Session

10:00 – 12:30 Group Presentations and discussions

Afternoon Session

14:00 – 16:00 Memory Activism in Serbia: Intergenerational shifts in Memory Activism: from Not in My Name, to Too Young to Remember Determined not to Forget

Required readings

17:00 Optional: Afternoon Memory Walk of Belgrade

DAY 6

Morning Session

10:00-12:30 Comparative discussion

Afternoon Session

14:00-15:00 Course closure
15:15-16:00 Closing ceremony of the Summer School