Mnemonic Battles and Memory Activism in and after Conflict

Dr. Orli Fridman

Course Description

This course invites students to approach the study of conflict analysis and conflict transformation through a journey into the field of Social Memory Studies. The course will focus on the role of social memory studies for peace and conflict studies scholars and allow students to delve into the analysis of internal dynamics of societies in or after conflict and the way they negotiate their pasts, presents and futures in the aftermath of war, conflict, repression, genocide and mass atrocities.

The course will explore 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 (Jelin, 2003).

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

Course Structure

- Theoretical frameworks: social memory studies, conflict analysis and Conflict Transformation
- Case studies: We will devote our in-class discussions to the following main case studies:
  - Collective Memory and National Calendars: collective memory, community memory, social organization of national memory, commemorative events, memory activism
  - Memory, history and asymmetric power relations: the memory of 1948 in among Israelis and Palestinians
  - Memory and Denial: the memories of the wars of the 1990s in Serbia
  - Memory and State-building in Kosovo

Background readings

- 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).
Additional Recommended Background Reading


- Course Outline by Day -

Monday June 29 (day 1)

**Morning class:**
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

**Readings**

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

**Readings**

Tuesday June 30 (day 2)

**Morning class:**
10:00-12:30
  **Theoretical Frameworks continues:** Collective memory (silence/obliteration/denial); community memory; social organization of national memory; commemorative events, memory work & memory activism

**Readings**
- Gutman, Yifat. “Looking Backward to the Future: Counter-memory as Oppositional Knowledge-Production in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,” Current Sociology, 2015 (pp. 1-6)

**Additional readings**

**Film**
A film by Eyal Sivan: Yizkor: Slaves to Memory (1991) [98 minutes] [watch part I only]
Afternoon class:
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 and mnemonic communities

Background Readings
- Beinin, Joel and Lisa Hajjar. Palestine, Israel and Arab Israeli Conflict Premier, Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP). Available on http://www.merip.org/palestine-israel_primer/Palestine-Israel_Primer_MERIP.pdf

Additional readings

Wednesday July 1 (day 3)

Morning Class:
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

Readings

Additional Recommended Reading

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

Background readings


Additional Recommended Reading

- Shehadeh, Raja. Strangers in the House. Selected chapters.

Thursday July 2 (day 4)

Morning class:
10:00-11:15
Introduction the Break-Up of Yugoslavia and the Wars of the 1990s;

11:30-12:30
Beyond the ‘Dealing with the Past’ framework: Anti-War Civil Society and Memory Post- Milošević Fragmented/contested Memories of the 1990s in Serbia
Activism in Serbia
- Mnemonic communities in Serbia
- The memories of the 1999 NATO bombing
- Memory Activism in Serbia: Remembering Srebrenica as a Genocide in Belgrade

Readings

- Fridman, Orli. “Memories of the 1999 NATO Bombing in Belgrade, Serbia.” A paper presented at the workshop The 1999 NATO Bombing: Memories, Narratives and Histories. Center for Comparative Conflict Studies at the Faculty of Media and Communications (FMK), Singidunum University. February 27, 2015.

Background Readings YU breakup

Center for Comparative Conflict Studies, Karadjordjeva 65, 11000 Belgrade, Serbia
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Additional Recommended Readings

Afternoon class:
14:00-16:00
Beyond the ‘Dealing with the Past’ framework: Anti-War Civil Society and Memory Activism in Serbia [continues]

Guest Lecture
The Batajnica Memory Initiative: Sandra Orlović, Executive Director of the Humanitarian Law Center [HLC]

Background Readings

Friday July 3 (day 5):
This day classes will be taught by Dr. Nita Luci from the University of Prishtina

Morning Class:
10:00 – 12:00
Histories and memories of Kosovar independence movements
- Tradition, nation and gender
- Politics of culture
- Ethnography of violence


Afternoon Class:
14:00 – 16:00
Post-War State Building
- International interventions
- The remaking of public space: art and commemoration


Additional Recommended Reading:


Saturday July 4 (day 6)

Morning Class:
10:00-12:30
Students presentations & discussions

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