

GEOG 420/POLI 432: Memory, Place, and Power*

Fall 2014

Monday 11:35 AM - 2:25 PM
Burnside 308

Prof. Benjamin Forest
Geography
Office: 308A Burnside Hall
Office Hours: Wednesdays 12-1 p.m.
and by appointment
E-mail: benjamin.forest@mcgill.ca

Prof. Juliet Johnson
Political Science
Office: TBA
Office Hours: TBA
and by appointment
E-mail: juliet.johnson@mcgill.ca

This interdisciplinary class explores different conceptions of memory and the relationships among memory, place, and power. The course begins with an introduction to key classical, Enlightenment, and contemporary texts on memory and place-making. It then uses this foundation to examine the symbolic transformation of public space, in particular the construction, alteration, and destruction of monuments and memorials. This approach emphasizes the social quality of memory, rather than psychological or physiological processes. From this perspective, it becomes possible to understand how political interests and social practices can shape something as ostensibly personal and individual as memory.

Course Requirements

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>Date Due</i>
Weekly reading responses	30%	Weekly in class
Seminar Participation	20%	Weekly in class
Research Paper Proposal	10%	November 10
Research Paper	40%	December 16

Note: In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control (e.g., a flu pandemic, sharknado, etc.), the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

Information on university and department policies concerning student assessment can be found at: www.mcgill.ca/geography/studentassessment.

Readings

The majority of readings for the class are in the Course Packet, available at the McGill University Bookstore as a printed copy or as an e-book (www.bookstore.mcgill.ca/textbooks). In addition, there is one required book available at the Bookstore:

Levinson, Sanford. 1998. *Written in stone: Public monuments in changing societies*.
Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

*POLI 432: Selected Topics: Comparative Politics.

Weekly Reading Responses

For every week in which we have readings, you will prepare a short written response that addresses the following four points for *each* assigned reading. Your response to each individual reading should be a maximum of 300 words (about half a page, single-spaced).

- 1) Summarize the most important argument of the reading in one or two sentences. What major point or points is the author trying to make?
- 2) What is the most important insight that you gained from this reading? That is, what do you now understand or know that you didn't before doing this reading? What was most valuable to you about this reading?
- 3) Give at least one major critique of the reading *and/or* compare the reading in some substantive way to another reading we have done (either for this week or in a previous week).
- 4) What key question or questions (maximum three) does this reading raise for you? Think of questions that would be good for class discussion rather than yes/no or strictly factual questions.

These reviews are due *in class* each week, beginning Week 2. They will be graded either “check,” “check-minus,” or “check-plus.” To earn a check, you must address all four points for each reading, and the answers must reflect a solid understanding of the readings (*i.e.*, don't try to do this after skimming the first and last paragraphs of an article). On *rare* occasions, especially thoughtful sets of answers may receive a check plus.

Thoughtful does not mean long – stick to the requested length and observe the rules of grammar. To receive an A for this part of the course, your reviews must average at least a check (*i.e.*, one check-plus will offset one check-minus); your final mark will fall by a half grade for each check-minus that is not offset by a check-plus (*e.g.*, one check-minus results in an A-, etc.). These reviews are meant to encourage you to think about the readings *before* you come to class. You may turn in one review late during the semester without penalty (although it must be handed in before the subsequent week's class). Further late or missing reviews will each count as two check-minuses.

Participation

You should participate actively and regularly in class discussions. Part of this participation will be up to you (offering informed comments and questions during our discussions), and part will be determined by the luck of the draw. When we begin to discuss each individual reading, one student will be chosen at random to start the discussion by giving a short (about 1-2 minute) introduction to the specific work in question, based on your written review. You should be able to remind the class of the author's main arguments and raise a few initial critiques and/or questions for the class to think about. Remember that informed attendance is vital at a once per week seminar that depends upon thoughtful class discussion; missing class will affect your participation grade.

Research Paper Proposal

Research paper proposals are due in class as indicated above. Your proposal should be 1-2 pages long, single-spaced and in 12-point font. It should describe both the proposed topic and argument (*i.e.*, thesis) of the paper, and briefly summarize the kinds of evidence that you will use to support your argument. In addition, please attach a preliminary bibliography with at least 10 *scholarly* sources to your proposal. Proposals that successfully meet all of these criteria will earn an A grade. Please bring five copies of your proposal to class on the date indicated. During class, we will break up into smaller groups to read and discuss each other's proposals.

Research Paper

These papers must be 15-20 pages long (excluding the bibliography), double-spaced and in 12-point font, on a topic approved by the instructors. We will distribute a detailed handout on how to design and write a research paper. These research papers are due by December 16 although we encourage you to submit them earlier if possible. Late papers will receive a maximum grade of B+. Under no circumstances will papers be accepted after December 18.

Grading Scale

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Grade Points</i>	<i>Grade Range</i>
A	4.0	>3.85
A-	3.7	3.51-3.85
B+	3.3	3.16-3.50
B	3.0	2.86-3.15
B-	2.7	2.51-2.85
C+	2.3	2.16-2.50
C	2.0	1.86-2.15
D	1.0	1.0-1.85
F	0.0	<1.0

This course uses the standard 4.0 system for grading. An A on an assignment is worth 4 points, an A- is worth 3.7 points, etc. To calculate your final grade, we will first multiply the grade points you have earned on each assignment by the relative weight of that assignment (e.g., since the weekly responses are worth 30% of your grade, we would multiply your response grade by .3), and then add all of the scores together to get your final grade-point average. That average will determine your final letter grade for the course (refer the grade range column). For example, if your overall grade-point average is a 3.4, you would earn a B+ in the course.

Language Policy

In accordance with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

Academic Integrity

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/integrity for more information).

L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/integrity).

Copyright Notice

© Instructor generated course materials (e.g., PowerPoint slides, handouts, notes, summaries, exam questions, etc.) are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor. Note that infringements of copyright can be subject to follow up by the University under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.

Schedule of Classes

Week 1 (September 8): Introduction

Week 2 (September 15): Memory in Classical Thought

Plato, *Phaedo*, trans. By G. M. A. Grube. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company: paragraphs 70-85 inclusive (pp. 18-36).

Aristotle. 2000. *On Memory and Reminiscence*. J. I. Beare (trans.) *The Internet Classics Archive*. Available at <http://classics.mit.edu//Aristotle/memory.html>

Yates, Frances A. 1966. "Three Latin Sources for the Classical Art of Memory," in *The Art of Memory*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 1-26.

Week 3 (September 22): Social Memory

Halbwachs, Maurice. 1992. *On Collective Memory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 37-53.

Lowenthal, David. 1985. "Reliving the Past: Dreams and Nightmares," in *The Past is a Foreign Country*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press: 3-34.

Misztal, Barbara A. 2003. "Durkheim on Collective Memory" *Journal of Classical Sociology* 3: 123-143.

Week 4 (September 29): Monuments and Memory

Levinson, Sanford. 1998. *Written in stone: Public monuments in changing societies*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Week 5 (October 6): Power and Place

Harvey, David. 1979. "Monument and myth." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 69 (3): 362-381.

Nora, Pierre. 1996. "General Introduction: Between Memory and History," in Pierre Nora (ed.), *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past. Volume 1, Conflicts and Divisions*. New York: Columbia University Press: 1-20.

Osborne, Brian. 1998. "Constructing landscapes of power: the George Etienne Cartier monument, Montreal." *Journal of Historical Geography* 24(4): 431-458.

Thanksgiving (October 13): No Class

Week 6 (October 20): War Memorials as Political Memory

Marshall, D. 2004. Making sense of remembrance. *Social & Cultural Geography* 5 (1): 37-54.

Muzaini, H. 2014. "The afterlives and memory politics of the Ipoh Cenotaph in Perak, Malaysia." *Geoforum* 54: 142-150.

Szpunar, Piotr M. 2010. "Monuments, mundanity and memory: Altering 'place' and 'space' at the National War Memorial (Canada)" *Memory Studies* 3: 379-394.

Week 7 (October 27): Post-Communist Memory and the Soviet Legacy

Guest Professor: Prof. Natalie Koch, Syracuse University

Class will begin with a GeoSpectives lecture by Prof. Koch at 12:00 noon in Burnside Hall 426.

GeoSpectives Lecture: Post-Communist Memory and the Soviet Legacy in Central Asia

Forest, Benjamin, and Juliet Johnson. 2011. "Monumental Politics: Regime Type and Public Memory in Post-Communist States" *Post-Soviet Affairs* 27 (3): 269–288.

Cummings, Sally N. 2013. "Leaving Lenin: Elites, Official Ideology and Monuments in the Kyrgyz Republic." *Nationalities Papers* 41 (4): 606-621.

Šír, Jan. 2008. "Cult of Personality in Monumental Art and Architecture: The Case of Post-Soviet Turkmenistan." *Acta Slavica Japonica* 25: 203-220.

Week 8 (November 3): The Holocaust and the Problem of Memory

Young, J.E. 1999. "Memory and Counter-Memory: The End of the Monument in Germany." *Harvard Design Magazine* 9: 1-10.

Apel, L. 2014. "Stumbling Blocks in Germany." *Rethinking History* 18 (2): 181-194.

Forest, B., J. Johnson, and K. Till (2004) "Post-Totalitarian National Identity: Public Memory in Germany and Russia," *Social and Cultural Geography* 5(3): 357-380.

Jacobs, J. 2014. "Sites of Terror and the Role of Memory in Shaping Identity Among First Generation Descendants of the Holocaust." *Qualitative Sociology* 37 (1): 27-42.

Week 9 (November 10): Research Proposals

Week 10 (November 17): Maya Lin and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

In-class film: Maya Lin: A Strong, Clear Vision

Wagner-Pacifici, Robin and Barry Schwartz. 1991. "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial: Commemorating a Difficult Past." *American Journal of Sociology* 97(2): 376-420.

Week 11 (November 24): Temporary and Virtual Memorials

Doss, Erika. 2006. "Spontaneous Memorials and Contemporary Modes of Mourning in America." *Material Religion* 2(3): 294-318.

Recuber, T. 2012. "The Prosumption of Commemoration: Disasters, Digital Memory Banks, and Online Collective Memory." *American Behavioral Scientist* 56(4), 531–549.

Forest, Benjamin and Juliet Johnson. 2013. "Security and Atonement: Controlling Access to the World Trade Center Memorial." *Cultural Geographies* 20(3): 405-411.

Week 12 (December 1): Memory and Forgetting

Gamboni, Dario. 2007. "The Fall of the 'Communist Monuments'," in *The Destruction of Art: Iconoclasm and Vandalism since the French Revolution*. London: Reaktion Books: 51-90.

Connerton, Paul. 2008. "Seven Types of Forgetting." *Memory Studies* 1(1): 59-71.

Misztal, Barbara A. 2010. "Collective Memory in a Global Age: Learning How and What to Remember." *Current Sociology* 58 (1): 24-44.

Week 13 (December 4): Individual Consultation on Research Papers