

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
Centre for Comparative Literature
Fall 2013

COL 5027HF – Memory, Trauma, and History

Instructor: Thomas Lahusen
Seminar: Tuesdays, 1-3
Room: Centre for Comparative Literature Seminar Room
Isabel Bader Theatre, 93 Charles Street West, 3d Floor

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This seminar will explore methods of analyzing narratives of survival which emerged out of experiences of repression in different historical and cultural contexts, such as the Holocaust, the Soviet Gulag, the Chinese system of "reeducation through labor" (laogai) and "thought reform" (sixiang gaizao), as well as trauma as a result of slavery, and domestic violence. Various theoretical and methodological approaches will be engaged to examine how diaries, memoirs, literary works, and film confront past and present.

Reading Assignments (ordered at the UofT bookstore)

- Dorothy Allison, *Bastard out of Carolina* (Plume, 1993)
- Cathy Caruth (ed.), *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (Johns Hopkins UP, 1995)
- Dominick LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma* (Cornell, 1996)
- Thomas Lahusen, *How Life Writes the Book: Real Socialism and Socialist Realism in Stalin's Russia* (Cornell UP, 2002) [electronic copy available]
- Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (Vintage, 2004)
- Varlam Shalamov, *Kolyma Tales* (Penguin Classic, 1994)
- Art Spiegelman, *Maus : A Survivor's Tale* . Vol. 1: My Father Bleeds History (1986); Vol. 2: Here My Troubles Began (1991)
- Bernhard Schlink, *The Reader* (Vintage, 1999)
- & articles and book chapters (see course schedule)

Most readings for this course are on short-term loan at Robarts Library. A number of articles and book chapters will be made available during the semester (see course schedule).

COURSE ORGANIZATION, REQUIREMENTS, GRADE CALCULATION

The readings for all sessions are required. Presentations: one or several students are responsible for facilitating the discussion along with the instructor. The presenters prepare discussion questions on the readings, to be sent by e-mail to the entire class at least 2 days before the discussion. In the week of the presentation the presenters should be the experts on the assigned readings and should be among the most active participants.

The grade will be calculated as follows:

1. Regular attendance and active participation in discussions (20% of grade).
2. One presentation / moderation (30% of grade)
4. A final 25-30-page research paper (50% of grade). The topic for the final paper is to be chosen in consultation with the instructor. It should relate to the topic of the course and to its main theoretical readings. All sources must be documented. Non-referreed webpages are not acceptable. A bibliography (1 page list) and outline of the paper (1 page) must be submitted no later than week 9 of the course. Due date of paper: December 10 in both printed and electronic format. Please slide the paper copy under my office door (319N Munk School). If late, make sure to have it stamped by the receptionist in the South House of the Munk School. DO NOT submit the paper to Complit or the receptionist in the History Department.

Format of papers: Chicago Manual of Style (Humanities style).

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 : Sept. 10 INTRODUCTION. Organizational meeting.
Format of class and class requirements.

Week 2 : Sept. 17 HISTORY AND MEMORY

Reading:

- Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire." *Representations*, 26, Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory. (Spring, 1989): 7-24;
- Kerwin Lee Klein, "On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse." *Representations* 69 (Winter 2000): 127-150;
- Susan Crane, "Writing the Individual Back into Collective Memory," *The American Historical Review*, 102: 5 (December 1997): 1372-1385;
- Alon Confino, "Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method." *The American Historical Review*, 102: 5 (December 1997): 1386-1403;
- Elie Wiesel, "Trivializing Memory," *From the Kingdom of Memory: Reminiscences* (New York: 1995), 165-172;

- "A Controversy about the Historicization of National Socialism: Martin Broszat / Saul Friedländer," *New German Critique* (Special Issue on the Historikerstreit) 44 (Spring-Summer 1988): 85-126.

The articles by Nora, Confino, Crane, and Broszat/Friedländer can be accessed electronically and/or are available on Blackboard (Content).

Week 3 : Sept. 24 WITNESSING: THE GULAG

Reading:

- Varlam Shalamov, *Kolyma Tales*
- Ruth Leys, "Freud and Trauma," in Ruth Leys, *Trauma: A Genealogy* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 2000), 18-40. Available on blackboard.
- Cathy Caruth, "Introduction" (pp. 3-12); Shoshana Felman: "Education and Crisis, or the Vicissitudes of Teaching"; Dori Laub: "Truth and Testimony: The Process and the Struggle" (pp. 61-75), in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth.

Week 4 : Oct. 1 MEMORY: RECAPTURING
VS CONSTRUCTING THE PAST

Reading:

- Thomas Lahusen, *How Life Writes the Book*.
- Cathy Caruth, "Introduction" in: *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth (pp. 151-157); Dori Laub, "Bearing Witness, or the Vicissitudes of Listening" (pp. 57-74) in: *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (Routledge, 1992).

Week 5 : Oct. 8 WITNESSING: THE HOLOCAUST

Reading:

- Bernhard Schlink, *The Reader*.
- Primo Levi, "Shame." In: *The Drowned and the Saved* (Vintage Books, 1989), 70-87.

Week 6 : Oct. 15 TRAUMA ON SCREEN I

Reading:

- Dominick LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma*.
- Ruth Leys, "The Pathos of the Literal: Trauma and the Crisis of Representation" in: Ruth Leys, *Trauma: A Genealogy* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 2000), 266-297. Available on Blackboard.

Screening: Elem Klimov, *Come and See* (1985). Screening to be arranged prior to class meeting.

Week 7 : Oct. 22

REPRESENTABILITY

Reading:

- Art Spiegelman , *Maus : A Survivor's Tale*.

Vol. 1: My Father Bleeds History (1986); Vol. 2: Here My Troubles Began (1991)

- Art Spiegelmann "Getting in Touch with My Inner Racist."

<http://motherjones.com/politics/1997/09/getting-touch-my-inner-racist>

- Andreas Huyssen, "Of Mice and Mimesis: Reading Spiegelman with Adorno," *New German Critique*, 81 (Fall 2000). Available on Jstor.

Week 8 : Oct. 29

LAOGAI: DISCIPLINE AND PUNISH

Reading:

- Zhang Xianliang, *Grass Soup* (David R. Godine Publisher, 1995).

- Laura Engelstein, "Combined Underdevelopment: Discipline and the Law in Imperial and Soviet Russia" and other articles on the applicability of Foucault in different contexts. *The American Historical Review*, 98: 2. (Apr., 1993): 338-53; 354-363; 364-375; 376-381.

Week 9 : Nov. 5

REMEMBERING SLAVERY

Reading:

Toni Morrison, *Beloved*

Nov. 11 – 12 FALL BREAK

Week 10 : Nov. 19

TRAUMA AND DOMESTIC ABUSE

Reading:

- Dorothy Allison, *Bastard out of Carolina*

- Laura S. Brown, "Not Outside the Range: One Feminist Perspective on Psychic Trauma" in: *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth (pp. 100-112).

- Dorothy Allison, "A Question of Class"; "Shotgun Strategies." In: *Skin: Talking About Sex, Class & Literature* (Ithaca, NY: Firebrand Books, 1994), 13-36; 51-56. Available on Blackboard.

- Deborah M. Horvitz, "Freud and Feminism in Gayl Jones's *Corregidora* and Dorothy Allison's *Bastard out of Carolina*." In: Deborah M. Horvitz, *Literary Trauma: Sadism, Memory, and Sexual Violence in American Women's Fiction* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), 39-55. Available on Blackboard.

Week 11: Nov. 26x

PRESENTATION OF STUDENTS' PROJECTS.

Week 12 : Dec. 3

PRESENTATION OF STUDENTS' PROJECTS.
GENERAL DISCUSSION.

Final papers due: Dec. 10