

Anthropology of Memory, Trauma and Commemoration

Dr. Carol Kidron

4 weekly hours per semester.

Course Description:

The commemoration of the past plays a central role in the personal-private and public-collective work of culture. Traumatic memory has especially attracted attention in academic discourse as well as in everyday popular culture and mental health settings. Despite this growing interest, there have been few anthropological and ethnographic studies undertaken to explore the processes and practices of personal and collective trauma related memory work. In order to explore basic themes relating to the anthropology of memory, traumatic memory and commemoration, the course will examine the following key concepts: representation, history, genocidal trauma, personal and collective memory, testimony and witnessing, and survivorhood.

Holocaust memory and commemoration will be explored as a contemporary case study of Israeli trauma related memory work. The course will critically evaluate a variety of forms of Holocaust testimony, representation and commemoration and Holocaust trauma related therapy all of which sustain the presence of the past in everyday Israeli life. Cultural practices and sites of memory will be explored including: Holocaust memory in the private sphere, monumental Holocaust commemorative sites and ceremonies, cinematic representations of traumatic memory, and the politics of genocide in Israel. Expanding upon the case study of Holocaust memory, class discussion and student presentations will also examine war-related and terror-related traumatic memory work, bereavement and the politics of memory. The course will also expand upon the Holocaust case study by examining Holocaust memory and commemoration by comparatively exploring other case studies of global mass violence, trauma, and genocidal commemoration.

Course Requirements:

In an attempt to define the parameters of an Anthropology of Memory, Trauma and Commemoration students will be asked to go out into the field of Israeli culture in order to seek out sites of memory and trauma related identities where the personal and/or collective traumatic past is made present and commemorated. Students will be asked to undertake interviews and/or participant observation at sites of memory and to write an empirical research paper (20-25 pages) that presents qualitative data and a sociological and or anthropological analysis unpacking the processes and practices of memory work. Your analysis must utilize relevant academic literature appearing in the reading list below and of course in the academic literature in the fields of anthropology, sociology, and Holocaust and Genocide Studies.

Students will be asked to submit a 1-2 page proposal outlining their research topic, research site, tentative research questions and reading list (15 references). You may begin working on

your research paper only after you receive my authorization of the proposal. Submission date for the proposal and final paper will be determined during the semester.

In addition all students will be requested to select an article or book chapter on a topic of interest from the reading list of recommended readings and present a 10-15 minutes talk in class summarizing and analyzing the research in question. Presentations may be made jointly by 2 students.

Finally, you will be asked to submit 5 reading reports, one page long each, including a brief summary of the reading and a quote of your choice with an analysis of the quote. Reports must cover required readings and be submitted prior to the lecture in which the topic will be discussed.

Attendance is mandatory.

Grade breakdown: 80% - Empirical research paper, 10% Class presentation, 10% reading reports.

Lecture Topics and Reading List:

Meeting 1:

Introduction: Diverse Representations of the Traumatic Pasts in Everyday Life

- What is commemoration of the past? How for example is the Holocaust made present in everyday life? Can the topic of Genocide and Trauma be deconstructed despite its sanctity, and unspeakability?
- Diverse forms of Holocaust representation in everyday life: History, Witnessing, Testimony, photographic representation, Icons, Cinema, Ritual, Silence, Violence, Metaphor, Art, Literature, Revisionist performance.
- What is Anthropology's contribution to an understanding of Holocaust and Genocide and its aftermath? How might one create an Anthropology of the Holocaust and Genocide and what would its contribution be?

Meeting 2:

In search of Authentic Representation/Commemoration of the Past:

History vs. Memory

- History – Positivist Legacy and the Limits of Holocaust Representation. Are all forms of presence legitimate? Are all forms of history authentic?
- Memory – Witnessing, Authenticity, Subjectivity, Authentic Reenactment vs. Distortion, Personal Lived Memory vs. Collectively constructed memory.
- The Transformation of Personal memory into Collective memory – history and historicity.
- History and the Representation of the Holocaust and Genocide

Required Reading:

Friedlander, S. (1992) "Introduction" in *Probing the Limits of Representation*. Press. S. Friedlander (ed.)
Cambridge: Harvard University Pp. 1-8

Schudson, M. (1997) "Dynamics of Distortion in Collective Memory" in *How Minds, Brains and
Societies Reconstruct the Past*. D.L. Schacter (ed.) Pp. 346-351

Meeting 3:

Transformation of Personal Memory into Collective Memory

Required Reading:

Nora, P. (1989) "Between Memory and History". *Representations* 26: 7-25. (7-16)
OR in Hebrew

נורה פ. (1993) בין זיכרון והיסטוריה: מחוזות הזיכרון. *זמנים* 45: 5-19.
New York: Harper Colphson Books. *The Collective Memory* (Halbwachs, M. (1980)
.Pp. 68-87

Friedlander, S. (1998) "The Shoa: Between Memory and History" in: *Breaking
Crystal: Writing and Memory after Auschwitz*. E. Sicker, (ed.) Urbana: University of
Illinois Press. Pp. 345-359.

Film: Night and Fog

Meeting 4:

Saving Images of the Holocaust Past:

Photographs, images, documentary footage – the iconic presence of the past

:Required Reading

Brink, C. (2000) "Looking at Photographs from Nazi Concentration Camps". *History and
Memory* 12:135-150.

Zelizer, B. (1998) *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory Through the
Camera's Eye*. University of Chicago Press. Pp. 1-15-

Hirsch M. (2000) "Surviving Images: Holocaust Photographs and the Work of Post
Memory" in B. Zelizer ed. London: Athlone Press. 215-246

Meeting 5:

-

Memory as Testimony

- First Hand Witnessing: Survivorship, Authentic Witnessing, Testimony as Narrative

Required Reading:

Schudson, M. (1997) "Dynamics of Distortion in Collective Memory" in *Memory Distortion: How Minds, Brains and Societies Reconstruct the Past*. D.L. Schacter (ed.) Pp. 351-364.

Young J. E. (1990) *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust: Narrative and the Consequence of Interpretation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. Pp. 1-25.

Levi, Primo (1986) *If this is a Man*. Summit Books.

לוי, פ. (1989) *האם זה אדם? תל אביב: עם עובד*.

Recommended Reading:

Langer, L. L. (1991) *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Pp1-38.

Ballinger, P. (1998) "The Culture of Survivors: Post-traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Memory". *History and Memory*, 10:99-132.

Handelman, D. (1997) "Absence Rising: Telling Little Holocaust Stories in Israel". Unpublished Manuscript. Pp. 1-17

Film: Truth and Lies

Meeting 6:

Memory as Testimony – Second Hand Witnessing

- Transmitted Traumatic Legacies and the constitution of Witnesses once removed, second and third generation survivors, and vicarious witnessing
- Private-familial memory, mementos from the past and person-object interaction

:Required Reading

Kidron, Carol A. (2003) "Surviving the Distant Past: A Case Study of the Cultural Construction of Trauma Descendant Identity". *Ethos*, 31:513-544. (Hebrew Translation Available)

Berger, A.L. (1997) "Introduction" in *Children of Job: American Second-Generation Witnesses to the Holocaust*. Albany: State University of New York Press. Pp. 1-12.

Recommended Reading

Kidron, Carol A. (2009) "Toward an Ethnography of Silence The Lived Presence of the Past among Holocaust Trauma Descendants in Israeli." *Current Anthropology* 50:1, 5-27.

ורדי, ד. נושאי החותם: דיאלוג עם בני הדור השני לשואה. ירושלים: כתר.
עמ' 17-47

Film: Because of that War

Meeting 7:

Harnessing Memory: The Presence of the Holocaust as National, Political or Personal Symbolic Capital

1. Constructing Collective Memory

- Nationalization and the Enlistment of Personal Memory and the Construction of Collective Memory, Ideological Framing of Collective Memory. Holocaust as National Mythic Narrative and Civil Religion
- Memory as Symbolic Capital – the Politics of Memory

Required Reading:

Yablonka, H. (1998) "The Formation of Holocaust Consciousness in the State of Israel: The Early Days". in *Breaking Crystal: Writing and Memory after Auschwitz*. E. Sicker, (ed.) Urbana: University of Illinois Press. Pp. 119-136.

Zerubavel, Y.(1994) The Death of Memory and the Memory of Death: Masada and the Holocaust as Historical Metaphors" . *Representations* 45:72-100.

Schwartz, B. (1996) "Memory as Cultural System: Abraham Lincoln in World War II" *American Sociological Review*, 61:908-927.

Meeting 8:

-

1. 2.Commemorative Rituals, Museums, Monuments, and Pilgrimages to the Past
- Commemorative Rituals – Reenactment in the Service of the State
 - Museums and Monuments – Institutionalizing and Grounding the Past in Space and Time
 - Pilgrimages and Youth Trips - Reenacting Jewish/Israeli Key Scenarios

Required Reading:

Friedlander, S. (1994) "Memory of the Shoah in Israel" in *The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History*. James Young ed. Prestel, Munich & New York: Prestel. Pp. 149-157

Young, J. E. (1990) When a Day Remembers: a Performative History of Yom Ha-Shoah. *History and Memory* 2:54-75.

Recommended Reading:

Handelman, D. (1990) *Models and Mirrors - Towards and Anthropology of Public Events*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp.202-233.

Meeting 9:

Commemorative Rituals continued

Required Reading:

Handelman, D. and Shamgar-Handelman, L. (1997) "The Presence of Absence: The Memorialism of National Death in Israel" In: E. Ben-Ari and Y. Bilu eds. *Grasping the Land: Space and Place in Contemporary Israeli Discourse and Experience*. New York: State University of New York Press. Pp. 85-128.

Azoulay, A. (1993) "With Open Doors: Museums of History in the Israeli Public Space." *Theory and Criticism* 4: 79-95. (Available in Hebrew)

Feldman, J. 2002. Marking the boundaries of the enclave: Defining the Israeli collective through the Poland 'experience'. *Israel Studies* 7: 85-114.

Recommended Reading:

Young J. E. (1988) *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust: Narrative and the Consequence of Interpretation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. Pp. 172-189.

Film: Yizkor: Slaves to Memory

Meeting 10:

-
Rewriting Memory or Representing the Presence of Lost Memory

- Narratives, Scenarios, and Changing Images – Holocaust Representation as a Prism of Changes in Israeli Society
- From Silence and Univocal Nationalism to Empathy and Multivocality – from "Shoa and Redemption/Heroism, and Sheep to the Slaughter to the "Heroism of Perseverence"

Required Reading:

Zerubavel, Y. (1995) "Conclusion" in *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of National Tradition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pp. 214-237.

Lentin, R. (2000) Introduction. In *Israel and the Daughters of the Shoa: Re-occupying the Territories of Silence*. New York: Berghahn Books.

Meeting 11:

Revisionist Presence: Resisting and Challenging the Myth

- The Emergence of Personal Voice
- Alternative Holocaust Ceremonies
- Shoa Business: Banalization of the Holocaust
- Holocaust Humor: Bad Taste or Resisting the limits of Representation
- Holocaust as Metaphor for Human Suffering – Universalizing the Holocaust

Required Reading:

Bauman, Z. (1998) 'Hereditary victimhood: the Holocaust's life as a ghost. *Tikkun*, 13: 33-38.

Linn, R. (1996) "Conscience in War: The Israeli Soldier as a Moral Critique" in *Criticism and Culture From Collective Memory to Voice*. Albany: SUNY Press. Pp. 137-165.

Recommended Reading:

דרטל, ע. (2002) *אומה והמוות*. תל-אביב: דביר. 225-284.

Spiegelman, A. (1987) *Maus: A Survivor's Tale I: My Father Bleeds History*. Harmondsworth Penguin Books.

Feldman, Y. (1998) Whose Story Is It Anyway? Ideology and Psychology in the Representations of the Shoa in Israeli Literature" in *Probing the Limits of Representation*. Press. S. Friedlander (ed.) Cambridge: Harvard University Pp. 223-239.

Meeting 12:

The Limits of Representation Revisited: Summary of the Course

- Loosing the Monopoly on Suffering and Victimhood – The concept of Genocide, Politics of Victimhood and Humanitarian Intervention
- Limited Presence or the Limits of Construction
- Temporality or the Framers as Limiting Presence

Required Reading:

Levy, D. and N. Sznajder. 2002. Memory Unbound: The Holocaust Formation of Cosmopolitan Memory. *European Journal of Social Theory*. 5: 87-105.

Alexander J. C. 2004. 'Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma', in J. C. Alexander, R. Eyerman, Berkeley: *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, (B. Geisen and P. Sztompka (eds). University of California Press. pp. 1-30

Appendix

Case Studies of Genocide and Commemoration of Traumatic Pasts – for class presentation and/or empirical papers:

- Memory and commemoration of Wars in Israel
- Bereavement in Israel
- Rabin Assassination
- Palestinian private and public memory and emergent forms of commemoration
- Gypsy Genocide
- Armenian Genocide
- Hiroshima and Nagasaki as Contested Memory
- Cambodia – Auto Genocide
- Remembering and Forgetting in Argentina
- Vietnam – from Forgetting to Multi-vocal Memory
- Globalization of Trauma: Humanitarian Global Intervention and the constitution of Truth Tribunals

Reading List for Class presentations and Empirical papers:

Hinton, A.L. 1998. A Head for an Eye: Revenge in the Cambodian Genocide. *American Ethnologist* 25: 352-377.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/645789>

Hughes, R. (2003) "Nationalism and Genocide at the Tuol Sleng Museum of Genocide Crimes." *In Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory*. Katherine Hodgkin and Susanna Radstone, eds. Pp. 175-207. New York: Routledge.

Hayden, R.M. (2007) "Moral vision and impaired insight." *Current Anthropology* 48:105-131. (Genocide and Western Intervention in the Balkans)

Jackson, Michael (2004) "The Prose of Suffering and the Practice of Silence." *Spiritus* 4: 44-59. (Genocide in Sierra Leone)

Khalili, Laleh (2004) "Grass-roots Commemoration: Remembering the Land in the Camps of Lebanon." *Journal of Palestine Studies* 34: 6-22.

Zolberg, V.L. 1998. Contested Remembrance: The Hiroshima Exhibit Controversy. *Theory and Society* 27:565-590.

Di Paolantonio, M. 2000. Loss in Present Terms: Reading the Limits of Post-Dictatorship Argentina's National Conciliation. *In Between Hope and Despair: Pedagogy and the Remembrance of Historical Trauma*. R. I. Simon, S. Rosenberg & C. Eppert, Eds. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield. 153-186.

Wagner-Pacifici, R. and Schwartz, B. 1991. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial: Commemorating a Difficult Past. *American Journal of Sociology* 97:376.

Vinitzky Seroussi, V. 2001 Commemorating a Difficult Past: The Yitzhak Rabin Memorial Day in Israeli Schools. *Qualitative Sociology* 24: 245-268
<http://www.springerlink.com/content/w701544653780507/>

Wilson, R. 2001. Introduction: Human Rights and Nation Building. *In* *The Politics of Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa*. Pp. 1-32.

Auron. Y. 2005 *The Banality of Denial: Israel and the Armenian Genocide*.