History 9809A - Social Memory

Prof. Jonathan F. Vance (jvance@uwo.ca)
Lawson Hall 2247
661-2111 ext. 84974

Michaelmas Term
Lawson Hall 2270C
Wednesday 9:30 - 11:30AM

This research course is an introduction to the phenomenon of social memory in various modern societies. It will address such matters as the commemoration of historical events and the meanings conferred on them, conflicts over different versions of history, the construction of collective identities around historical events, and the influence of historical events on modern nationalisms. In each case, there will be an attempt to understand the continuing impact of the past on the present. The seminar readings will be divided into themes, with each week’s readings examining a different case study of the theme.

Texts:
Students are not required to purchase texts for this course. All readings are available on the course website, in the periodicals section of the D.B.Weldon Library, or on two-hour reserve in the D.B.Weldon Library.

Assignments:

Historical anniversary report (due 12 October) 30%
Major research essay (due date TBA) 60%
Participation / Presentation 10%

Historical anniversary report: Students will also write a report on the evolution of a significant historical anniversary or national holiday (ie. Columbus Day, Remembrance Day, the 4th of July, Dominion/Canada Day, Empire Day, Guy Fawkes’ Day, Bastille Day, etc.) based on newspaper reports from one city. You should cover as broad a time span as possible, and trace the changing meanings with which the day has been endowed over time. The report should be 8-10 pages in length, and presented in proper scholarly format. It will be due on 12 October, and is worth 30% of the final course grade.

Major Research Essay: Students will write a major research paper (based on significant work in primary materials) on a topic of their choice, to be arrived at in consultation with the instructor. In selecting an essay topic, you should be as imaginative and innovative as possible while bearing in mind the availability of relevant primary sources and the soundness of the topic in a theoretical sense. The final draft of the paper should be 20-25 pages in length and must be presented in proper scholarly format. The due date will be announced in September. As part of the assignment, a two-page outline must be submitted on 26 October.
Participation / Presentation: The success of the seminar depends on the willingness of students to keep up with the readings on a weekly basis and to take part fully in the discussion. Your participation will be assessed on an ongoing basis throughout the term. In addition, each student will make a short presentation on an aspect of the week’s reading (of no more than 10 minutes – time limits will be enforced). The precise topic will be given to you the week before your presentation. You should sign up on the sheet on my office door for the week of your choice.

Seminar Schedule
14 September - Introduction

21 September - How Societies Remember
Michael Kammen, Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture (1991): 3-14
Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson, eds., The Myths We Live By (1990): 1-22

MEMORY AND THE MARKETPLACE
28 September - The Titanic
Steven Biel, Down With the Old Canoe: A Cultural History of the Titanic Disaster (1996): part II

12 October - Memory and Public History ** Historical anniversary report due **
J. Geraint Jenkins, Getting Yesterday Right: Interpreting the Heritage of Wales (1992): ch. 1
19 October - Touring the Third Reich
Rudy Koshar, Germany’s Transient Pasts: Preservation and National Memory in the Twentieth Century (1998): ch. 6
Brian Ladd, The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape (1997): ch. 4
John Lennon and Malcolm Foley, Dark Tourism: The Attraction of Death and Disaster (2000): ch. 3 & 4
Sharon Macdonald, Difficult Heritage: Negotiating the Nazi Past in Nuremberg and Beyond (2009): ch. 7

CONSTRUCTING IDENTITY
26 October - Gunfighter Nation ** essay outline due **
Randy Roberts and James S. Olson, A Line in the Sand: The Alamo in Blood and Memory (2001): ch. 8 & 9

2 November - Scottishness
Charles Withers, “The Historical Creation of the Scottish Highlands” in Ian Donnachie and Christopher Watley, eds., The Manufacture of Scottish History (1992): 143-56
9 November - French Canada
Daniel Francis, National Dreams: Myth, Memory, and Canadian History (1997): ch. 4

WAR AND MEMORY
16 November - Remembrance Day
Nancy Holmes, “‘In Flanders Fields’: Canada’s Official Poem,” Studies in Canadian Literature 30/1 (2005): 11-33

23 November - Pearl Harbor and 9/11
Emily S. Rosenberg, A Date Which Will Live: Pearl Harbor in American Memory (2003): part II

30 November - Vietnam

7 December - Bad War / Good Warrior?  
Daniel Clayton, “They were soldiers, just like us,” *War, Literature and the Arts* 25 (2013): 1-27  

Please note the University Senate’s statement on plagiarism:  
“Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:  
http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

Health and Wellness  
As part of a successful graduate student experience at Western, we encourage students to make their health and wellness a priority. Western provides several on campus health-related services to help you achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing your graduate degree. For example, to support physical activity, all students, as part of their registration, receive membership in Western’s Campus Recreation Centre. Numerous cultural events are offered throughout the year. Please check out the Faculty of Music web page http://www.music.uwo.ca/, and our own McIntosh Gallery http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca/. Information regarding health- and wellness-related services available to students may be found at http://www.health.uwo.ca/

Students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone they feel comfortable confiding in, such as their faculty supervisor, their program director (graduate chair), or other relevant administrators in their unit. Campus mental health resources may be found at http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/resources.html

To help you learn more about mental health, Western has developed an interactive mental health learning module, found here: http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/module.html. This module is 30 minutes in length and provides participants with a basic understanding of mental health issues and of available campus and community resources. Topics include stress, anxiety, depression, suicide and eating disorders. After successful completion of the module, participants receive a certificate confirming their participation.