Cultural Memory in Urban Space
FTRS 3785
New York City, Jan 6-20, 2013
Maximum: 12 students

http://culturalmemoryurbanspace.wordpress.com/

Dr. Devin Zuber, M.A., M.Phil.
Pacific School of Religion
Graduate Theological Union at Berkeley
dzuber@psr.edu
http://tinyurl.com/bwyw2o4

Office: PSR Holbrook 126
(510) 849-8280

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 10:00-12:00 and by appointment

Description: This two week immersion trip explores the contested ways public memory is (re)constructed in urban space. With the streets of New York City as our laboratory, we will explore various cultural institutions (museums, historic houses) and memorials (the African Burial Ground Monument, the Irish Hunger Memorial) to investigate how various religious and ethnic communities have chosen to inscribe themselves into the city. Special attention will be given to the fraught layers of memory surrounding the 9/11 Memorial in lower Manhattan.

Students must attend two long preparatory sessions in the fall 2012 semester in advance of the trip (November 9th and November 30th, from 1:00 to 5:00 pm) that will provide a theoretical context for approaching urban space and concepts of cultural memory. There will be required reading, student-lead discussions, and blogging before and during the immersion. A final integration paper will be due in February after the trip commences. Students will also prepare site-specific presentations on particular locations of contested memory, and amplify how the locations provide opportunity for deeper theological reflection.

Required Texts:

1) Print-ups of all readings made available on-line via the course blog
2) Teju Cole, Open City (Random House)
3) Course Reader (available first week of December in local Berkeley copy shop)
Student Learning Outcomes

After successfully completing this course with a grade “B” or better, students taking this class can expect to:

1) have gained familiarity with the interdisciplinary field of memory studies, and to understand the different discourses and methodologies that have shaped the field: from anthropology to urban planning, literary theory to social psychology.

2) critically reflect on the ways that public memory is constructed by questions of race, gender, and class, and how this intersects with larger cultural frameworks of identity, such as religion and the nation.

3) have a conceptual toolbox of ideas, tested out in New York City streets, for reading and interpreting various sites of collective memory, and to situate these ideas within a broader process of theological reflection and personal spiritual growth.

4) have successfully worked in collaborative teams on site-specific presentations in New York, and produced creative content for the seminar blog (text, photos, video).

5) become fluent in intercultural competency, and be sensitized to the density and complexity of New York City’s diverse communities; to be able to utilize this intercultural competency within other urban and multifaith contexts.

Assessment and Course Requirements

Students enrolled in the class will be expected to attend and participate in all pre-trip sessions (Nov. 9th and Nov. 30th), and to be in New York City for the duration of immersion period. Students will be graded upon:

- **active course contributions** through class participation and posting comments, questions and observations on the course blog (15%)

- producing a **site-specific presentation** in a team with two other peers (selected by the instructor), and creating a subsequent page on the course blog with appropriate text and images (25%)

- writing a **final reflection paper** upon commencement of the trip (65%), precise length t.b.d. (to be determined)
The site-specific presentations will variously focus on **four related groupings of sites in New York City that have constituted spaces of ritualized remembrance and/or representations of collective memory:**

1) **Immigrant Memory** (Ellis Island Immigration Museum, Tenement Museum, Museum of the Chinese American, the Jewish Museum of New York)

2) **African-American Cultural Memory** (Schomberg Center, Harlem Studio Museum, Louis Armstrong House & Museum, African Burial Ground National Monument)

3) **Traumatic Memories** (Reflecting Absence, Living Holocaust Memorial Museum, Irish Hunger Memorial).

4) **Queer Urban Space** (Alice Austen House, Museum of Reclaimed Urban Space, George Segal's *Gay Liberation*, St. Mark’s Poetry Project Archive, Herstory Lesbian Archives)

---

Guerilla street art campaign originating in NYC, from Paul Chan’s *Baghdad Snapshot Action Team* (2002-2003)
CALENDAR – tentative

November 9th: Introduction to Memory Studies and „Memorial Mania“

- Kerwin Lee Klein, „On The Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse“ (blog)
- Pierre Nora, „Between Memory and History“ (blog)

November 30th:

- Anna Deveare Smith, excerpts from *Fires in the Mirror* (blog)
- Teju Cole, *Open City*
- Walt Whitman, “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry” (blog)

Site-specific readings in NYC, t.b.d., including:

1) Immigrant Memory

- Leo Spitzer, “Back through the Future: Nostalgic Memory and Critical Memory as a Refuge from Nazism” in *Cultural Memory in the Present*
- t.b.d. – [chapter from Julia Creet’s *Memory and Migration: Multidisciplinary Approaches to Memory Studies*]

2) African-American Cultural Memory

- Ira Berlin, “American Slavery in History and Memory and the Search for Social Justice,”
- Harvey Young, from *Embodying Black Experience: Stillness, Critical Memory, and the Black Body*

3) Representations of Cultural Trauma

- Marita Sturken, from *Tourists of History: Memory, Kitsch, and Consumerism*
- James Young, from *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*

4) Queer urban space

- Sarah Schulman, from *Gentrification of the Mind: Witness to a Lost Imagination*
- Judith “Jack” Halberstam, from *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*
- Daniel Kane, “St. Mark’s Poetry Project” from *All Poets Welcome: Lower East Side Poetry Scene in the 1960’s*
Working Bibliography


