Syllabus

Overview:
Thanks to the written records that serve as our cultural memory, we know that memory has been a topic of inquiry at least since those records began. Today’s philosophers, psychologists, and literary scholars are continuing to hone the concept of the self as it was understood by John Locke, David Hume, and Sigmund Freud among others, as a dynamic tension between memory and consciousness. Together this work pursues such questions as “How is memory embodied?” How and why do we forget? What is the connection between memory and the self--and with language and story-telling-- and with moral and ethical reasoning? What events are best forgotten and how do we go about forgetting them? The proliferation of memorials of war and conflict today has led some cultural critics to wonder if so much remembering gums up the salve of forgetting so necessary for the healing process of forgiving. This course is structured around five units: Life Memories, Theories of Mind, The Science of Memory, The Art of Memory, and Collective Memory and the Politics of Forgetting. Reading, Watching, and Listening assignments represent the full spectrum of western thinking about memory, from Plato to memory in a digital world. We hope that in addition to learning a great deal about memory and forgetting as academic topics, you will come away from our course having gained new insights into the workings of your own memories and having developed a personal practice of memory that will serve your growth as individuals long after your memories of the course itself have dimmed.

The course is built with a Scalar Book developed for the course, and with few exceptions the assignments are posted in the Book as web pages or PDFs to allow for annotation with hypothes.is. There are no textbooks for the course.

Course requirements (and weight in grade)
- Attendance and class participation (including attendance of one outside lecture related to the topic of memory) 15%
- Completion of all Individual and Team Assignments 50%
- Contributions to classroom exercises 15%
- Completion of final project 20%

Course Technology

Scalar All the main elements of the course are developed in a Scalar Book, “What is Memory? Multidisciplinary Perspectives”. Students post most assignments in the Book.

Hypothes.is is used throughout the course to annotate web pages and PDFs.
VoiceThread will be used to annotate videos and films.

Storify is used throughout the course to create multimedia essays.

Slack will be the main means of communication and collaboration.

**Grading:**
Depending on the assignment grading will be either Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory S/U or on a scale from 0-4 on the Sample Scale.

**Course policies:**
Carrot and Sticks Attendance Policy: The carrot: you’ll get the most out of this course by arriving to class on time and by attending every single lecture and recitation. Two sticks: #1) you will be responsible for timely contributions to the class Scalar book; #2) more than three unexcused absences from recitation will lower your grade and could cause you to fail the course. If you need to be excused from recitation because of illness or a personal or family emergency, notify one of your instructors in advance of your recitation meeting.

Laptops, Tablets and Smartphones: Devices are permitted in class but may only be used when authorized by the instructor. Unauthorized use of a device during class counts against class participation in grading.

Late assignment policy:
This design of this class is based on the expectation that all students will have completed their required weekly assignments prior to each class meeting. With a few exceptions you will be required to post these assignments on your Individual Page in the Scalar book. Your postings will be monitored by the instructors. Failure to complete a weekly individual assignment in time for class will result in a U or a 0 grade on the Sample scale. If you think you will have trouble meeting a deadline, contact Professor England or Professor Rust in advance about the possibility of arranging an extension.

Plagiarism:
Plagiarizing will cause you to fail that assignment and may cause you to fail the course; in addition, a letter on the plagiarism will be sent to the dean of CAS and will be placed in your file. More than one such letter can result in a semester’s suspension from NYU. Plagiarism: you can’t afford it!
Reading/Watching/Listening Schedule

**January 29:** Autobiographical memory, development of memory in children


*Inside Out* film


**February 5:** The book and writing as memory


Elizabeth Farnsworth, *A Train through Time: A Life Real and Imagined.* 1-75.

**February 12:** Recalling the past, memory and emotion, memory and imagination


Elizabeth Farnsworth, *A Train through Time: A Life Real and Imagined.* 76-156.

Memory Lab “Proustian Moments,” due Friday, February 16

**February 19:** Presidents’ Day, no class

**February 26:** Metaphors of memory, theories of mind

Plato, from *Phaedrus* and *Theatetus* [3 pages]

Sigmund Freud, *A Note Upon the “The Mystic Writing Pad.”* [6 pages]


---

¹ Date shown is when the readings/watchings/listenings, and annotations should be completed.
SD Brown and P Reavey, “Turning around on experience: The ‘expanded view’ of memory within psychology.” Memory Studies 8(2): 131-150.


Jason Kelly’s review of Hindsight. [1 page]

**March 5:** Memory’s foibles: False memories, forgetting, and not forgetting

Jorges Luis Borges, “Funes the Memorious.” [8 pages]

Radiolab S03, episode 4, “Memory and Forgetting” [1 hour]


Elizabeth Loftus, “How Reliable is Your Memory?” [TED talk, 17 minutes]


**March 12** Spring Break, No class

**March 19:** The art of memory, memory palaces, memorization

Michele Lalonde, “Speak White”

Francis Yates, from The Art of Memory, pp. 110-120

Hari Kunzru, Memory Palace [8 pages]

Joshua Foer, Memory Champion Teaches You How to Memorize Anything [5 minutes]

Quintilian, from Institutes of Oratory [7 pages]

Cicero, from On the Ideal Orator [2 pages]

[Cicero], from Ad Herennium [5 pages]

Alison Bechdel, Fun Home, pp. 3-120 Begin Fun Home this week?
**March 26:** Memory and Theater/TV/Film/Photography/Art

Carlson, *The Haunted Stage: The Theater as Memory Machine* Overview and First Chapter. [21 pages]


YouTube video excerpt from *Ibsen’s Ghosts* [5 minutes]

Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home*, pp. 123-232

*[Fun Home* in production [excerpt of play, 3 minutes]

*Term project proposals due Friday, April 13*

**April 2:** Memory in things, places, time

Bell ME and Bell SE, “*What to do with all this ‘stuff’? Memory, family, and material objects.*” *Storytelling, Self, Society: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Storytelling Studies*. 8 (2012): 63-84.


James Joyce, “The Dead.” [45 pages]

**April 9:** Memory in culture, nostalgia, monuments, memorials, museums/algorithms

Michele Lalonde, “*Speak White*”


Maurice Halbwachs, from *The Collective Memory*, pp. 53-83 and 139-43.


*[Carousel scene from Mad Men [5 minutes]*
April 16: Neural networks, the brain, and neuroscience

Lab visit


April 23: Memory in a digital world, digital memory, AI, posthuman memory

Never Let Me Go film 1 hour 45 minutes


Black Mirror S01 episode 3, “The Entire History of You” [1 hour]

April 30: Social construction of memory and forgetting


May 7

Project Presentations
Individual and Collaborative Assignments Schedule:

Unless otherwise stated all individual assignments are due before the class meeting on the date shown. Collaborative assignments are marked with an asterisk and are posted in the Student Team Pages in Scalar. Many of the collaborative assignments will be begun and/or completed in class.

The course is built with a Scalar Book developed for the course, and the assignments are posted in the Book. The schedule of required weekly reading/watching/listening assignments is listed as a separate schedule.

Hypothes.is and VoiceThread Annotation: Hypothes.is annotation will be required for all web-based reading assignments and students will be required to build on each other’s annotations to create discussion threads. Likewise VoiceThread will be used for annotations on audios and videos.

Throughout the entire course students will be required to write a minimum of five “thick” hypothes.is or VoiceThread annotations on each of the weekly Readings/Watchings/Listenings assignments. Instructions and prompts for each set of annotations will be provided. At the end of the course students will submit an abstract and summary of their annotations and replies.

January 29: Autobiographical memory, development of memory in children

Hypothes.is annotations (five each) on Fivush, Fivush et al., and Fernyhough readings.

*VoiceThread annotation of Inside Out film

In Class: autobiographical memory exercises, and introduction to the anecdote.

February 5: The book and writing as memory

*Hypothes.is annotation of Farnsworth reading assignment. Five annotations and five replies for each team member.

Memory Lab: “Memory and Narrative”
With the Bender essay as an example, write a brief anecdote of an early memory. Post as a path on your Scalar home page.
February 12: Recalling the past, memory and emotion, memory and imagination

*Hypothes.is annotation of Farnsworth. Five annotations and five replies for each team member.

Hypothes.is annotations on Proust, Freeman, and Farnsworth reading assignments.

Write a Scalar post on a personal memory and its association with emotion.

Add to that post a memory that mixes the first post with imaginings.

In class: Experimenting with scent and memory, unbidden spontaneous memories.

Memory Lab “Proustian Moments,” due Friday, February 16

February 19: Presidents’ Day, no class

February 26: Metaphors of memory, theories of mind

Hypothes.is annotations on the Freud, Hume, Tatlow, and Brown and Reavey readings.

Use VoiceThread to annotate the Audio “H.M.’s Brain and the History of Memory.”

March 5: Memory’s Foibles: False Memories, Forgetting, and Not Forgetting

Hypothes.is annotation of the Borges and Sacks readings.

*Radiolab S03,, and Loftus.

March 12: Spring Break, No class

March 19: The art of memory, memory palaces, memorization

Memory Lab: Select a poem, soliloquy, or other short piece of writing or spoken word and Storify a memory palace to memorize it.
**March 26:** Memory and Theater/TV/Film/Photography/Art

Annotation of Carlson excerpt, and Greenberg & Gabbard

YouTube video excerpt from *Ibsen’s Ghosts*

* Voicethread annotation of Fun Home

Memory Lab: Post a multimedia essay page on Scalar on an example of memory in theater, film, TV, photography, or art.

**April 2:** Memory in things, places, time

Memory Lab: “Memories in Things”

*Annotation of Bell & Bell, and Nora

*Class collaboration on examples of Kuhn’s observations on Photography and Cultural Memory

**April 9:** Memory in culture, nostalgia, monuments, memorials, museums/algorithms

*Treasure hunt for local formal and informal memorials. Storify photos with commentary on power, status, gender, race, and ethnicity.

*Speak White collaborative exercise.

VoiceThread annotation of Carousel scene from Mad Men.

Memory Lab: Storify with commentary examples of uses of nostalgia in advertising.

**April 16:** Neural networks, the brain, and neuroscience

*Metaphors of mind, brain and memory. Teams scavenger hunt exercise.

*Storify team metaphor finds How Our Brains Make Memories
April 23: Memory in a digital world, digital memory, AI, posthuman memory

Memory Lab: Annotated links to articles on pros and cons of reliance on digital memory. Hypothes.is annotation of one article pro digital memory and one con.

VoiceThread annotations of Black Mirror S01 episode 3. 
Sunspring: Movie written by Algorithm Turns Out to Be Hilarious

*VoiceThread annotations of film Never Let Me Go.

April 30: Social construction of memory and forgetting

Memory Lab: Storify narrative on social construction of remembering or forgetting

*Speak White poem. Each team will annotate one to three stanzas and post in their team pages

Hypothes.is annotation of Fivush, Misztal excerpt, and McElroy.

May 7

Sharing Storifies on the social construction of remembering or forgetting.

Sharing optional projects

*Creation of a class memory using Storify

May 15

Optional Term Projects are due.