

FORMS OF JUSTICE LEARNING COMMUNITY, SPRING 2019

History 493

Repairing the Past: Readings in Historical Justice

Mondays, 2:30-4:20, Wednesdays 7:00-9:00pm

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Wednesdays, 1:30-4:00
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(and by appointment)

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Since the end of World War II and especially in the last thirty years, demands for recognition of historical wrongs and redress for past grievances have proliferated in communities and countries around the world. We live in an era when states have begun making official apologies for all kinds of old wrongs, when a growing number of nations have offered some kind of monetary reparations for state violence or persecution, when decades-old historic wrongs have found their way back into courtrooms, and when more than thirty countries have created truth commissions to try to repair damage caused by past injustice.

The Forms of Justice Learning Community will use the lenses of history, international politics, and cultural analysis to explore the legacy of and response to violence in many different places around the world—especially in Spain, Latin America, and the United States. The base course, “Repairing the Past” focuses on initiatives for historical redress that have taken place since WWII, examining the philosophical, historical, and political questions that arise from demands for justice for historic wrongs. Questions we will consider include: What explains the emergence of a worldwide movement for historical justice in the post-WWII era? What are the benefits or limitations of the many different mechanisms that nations have used to try to redress historical injustice? What burdens should or does the past impose upon the present? What are the dangers of focusing on past grievances or alternatively, of trying to silence discussion of the past? Can a community or nation suffer collective trauma, and if so, how can that trauma be repaired?

We will read works by historians, political scientists, philosophers, and legal scholars that grapple with these questions as we examine the work of historical repair being done by truth commissions, material and symbolic reparations, public apologies, criminal trials, monuments, and museums. Our Monday seminar meeting will be supplemented by a Wednesday evening session where the learning community will hear guest speakers, watch films, and work on the required group project. There is one required field trip to visit the May 4 Visitor’s Center at Kent State University on Saturday, May 4th.

Required Texts: Books are available at the bookstore and on reserve at Mudd Library. All other readings are posted on the course blackboard site. Full citations are available on blackboard.

- Al Brophy, *Reconstructing the Dreamland: The Tulsa Riot of 1921* (2003)
- Mary Fullbrook, *German National Identity after the Holocaust* (1999)
- Antjie Krog, *Country of My Skull: Guilt, Sorrow, and the Limits of Forgiveness in the New South Africa* (2000)
- Sanford Levinson, *Written in Stone: Public Monuments in Changing Societies* (1998)
- Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (1987)
- Renee Romano, *Racial Reckoning: Prosecuting America’s Civil Rights Murders* (2014)
- Amy Sodaro, *Exhibiting Atrocity: Memorial Museums and the Politics of Past Violence* (2018)
- Richard Vernon, *Historical Redress: Must We Pay for the Past?* (2012)

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the emergence, scope, and significance of the historical repair phenomenon
- Develop and defend own position on whether, how, and why the past matters in the present
- Analyze benefits and limitations of different modes of social repair
- Learn to read quickly for argument, content, and use of evidence
- Identify, summarize, explain, and critique arguments in readings from different disciplines
- Develop skills synthesizing different scholarly works
- Improve written and oral communication skills
- Develop collaborative skills in working on a substantial group project

Course Requirements: Your grade in History 493 will be based on the following assignments and requirements. Please note that all assignments must be completed to receive credit for the class.

1) Participation, attendance and weekly blackboard posting (30% of final grade):

Repairing the Past is a discussion-based seminar with a heavy reading load (typically 200+ pages of reading a week). Please leave yourself time to prepare adequately for class and come see me if you need help with developing strategies for staying on top of the reading. Students are expected to arrive at class having read the material carefully and ready to engage thoughtfully and respectfully in a discussion of with classmates. Student participation is vital to the success of the class. I consider the ability to express oneself in discussion as important as written expression. If for any reason you are uncomfortable speaking in class, please come to see me at the beginning of the semester to talk about strategies for becoming an active participant in class. Attendance is mandatory. Any unexcused absences will lead to a deduction of three points from your final grade in the class. Absences will only be considered excused in case of illness, family emergency, or other valid reasons.

As part of your weekly participation, every student is expected to post to the course blackboard site every week. Student discussion leaders will post questions for discussion by 5pm on Sunday; other students must post a paragraph response to one of the questions raised by student discussion leaders by Monday at noon. Please look over the postings of your peers before coming to class, if possible. These postings will not be formally graded but will factor into your course participation grade.

2) Leading a class discussion (5% of final grade)

Once during the semester, you and a partner will be responsible for leading at least the first half hour of class discussion on the assigned readings. Discussion leaders must meet with either me or course assistant Kira Felsenfeld in advance of the class session to discuss their strategy. They will also be responsible for posting reading questions to the blackboard site by **5pm on Sunday** before their Monday class session. These questions should focus on issues that you want other students to consider before they come to class.

3) Two short reading response/connection papers (15% each of final grade)

Twice during the semester—once before spring break and once after—each student must write a paper of approximately 1500 to 2000 words (5-6 pages) that analyzes and explores the course readings for a particular week. Papers are due at the Wednesday evening session (so if you choose to write about the readings assigned for March 4th, the paper is due at the Wednesday evening session on March 6th). You may choose which weeks to write about as long as one paper focuses on readings from before break and one on readings after break. You may, but are not required, to write the paper for the week in which you are a discussion leader. These papers should not simply summarize the readings for any given week. Instead, you should aim to identify important themes and arguments in the readings, to draw connections and comparisons between different readings, and to consider these readings in light of past class discussions and readings.

4) Group Project and Presentation—Due May 12th (35% of final grade)

For the final assignment for the Forms of Justice cluster, students will work in groups of three or four to do an original and creative project that draws on the material from different courses in the cluster. The project will count for the final grade in both History 493 and for one of the other cluster courses (either Professor Mani's or Professor Faber's course). For this project, groups have a good deal of freedom to define what they would like to explore; the only requirements are that: 1) all projects must include some kind of written component and some kind of creative component; 2) all groups must include at least one student who is enrolled in POLT 244 and one student who is enrolled in HISP 357; and 3) all projects must be approved by all three course cluster instructors. Groups should think creatively and boldly because the possibilities are many. Your group could choose an instance of historical injustice and design (or redesign) a museum exhibit with the goal of fostering repair or reconciliation; you could assess existing efforts at repair in a specific instance and write a proposal suggesting other possibilities that should be considered; you might choose to do a podcast or documentary that compares different initiatives by universities to address the history of slavery; you might decide to do a policy brief that proposes or critiques a particular type of redress or that outlines steps countries should take when they grappling with historical injustice. You could do a project that seeks to document the effect of historical trauma on a particular group. The project will require lots of research, lots of collaboration, and lots of creativity; Kira Felsenfeld will be available throughout the semester to consult with groups as they work on their projects.

Five of our Wednesday evening sessions have been set aside specifically for group work and there will be lots of opportunities for feedback and discussion along the way.

February 20: Brainstorming ideas for group projects

March 20: Group meetings with instructors to report on their progress

April 10: Group work time

May 1: Group work time

May 8: Group presentations

Final projects are due at the time of our regularly scheduled final exam, on Saturday, May 12th by 9:00pm.

COURSE POLICIES:

Classroom Conduct: Please come to class on time and once you are in class, please do not leave to go get a drink or use the restroom unless it is absolutely necessary. We will take a short break every class session. Because I want everyone to be focused on the classroom discussion, there will be no note taking on computers in the classroom unless necessary for reasons of accommodation.

Oberlin Honor Code: All work for this course must be done in compliance with the Oberlin Honor Code, which means that it must be your own. Any cases of plagiarism will be dealt with immediately according to the letter of college policy. You must acknowledge when you use the ideas of other people (whether that be other students or published materials from websites, books, the media, etc.). If you have questions about citations, academic honesty, or the acceptability of collaborations, please see me. You should include the honor code ("I affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code on this assignment") on all the written work you hand in for this class.

Educational Access: I am committed to creating inclusive learning environments and to designing a course in which all students can learn. If any aspects of the instruction or design of the course result in dis/ability-related barriers to your participation, please let me know. If you receive any specific accommodations, please provide documentation from the Disability Service Office.

Difficult Topics: Please be forewarned that a course on redressing historic violence will necessarily cover disturbing topics such as genocide and mass killings, sexual and racial violence, and torture. If you have concerns about the course content, please come meet with me.

Extra Help: There are two Writing Associates who are assigned to the History Department this term and either of them (Juna Keehn or Grace Winters) can assist you with the writing assignments for this class. To set up an appointment with either, email at jkeehn@oberlin.edu or gwinters@oberlin.edu. Kira Felsenfeld, our StudiOC cluster assistant, is also available to discuss readings, facilitating discussion sessions, or your papers. I am happy to meet students any time, whether you are seeking guidance on assignments or you want to discuss the reading or other topics of interest to you. Drop in to my office hours anytime or email to schedule a specific appointment.

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTIONS

Monday, 2/4: Introduction to History 493

Wednesday, 2/6: Introduction to the Forms of Justice Learning Cluster

WEEK 2: THE ETHICS AND POLITICS OF RETROSPECTIVE JUSTICE

Do we have a duty to address past injustices? If so, why? Is there a danger in too much remembrance? How have philosophers answered the question of whether and why historical justice matters? Do societies have a responsibility to revisit and redress collective trauma? What duty do we have to the dead and to those affected by the memory of past violence?

Monday, February 11

- Richard Vernon, *Historical Redress* (entire)
- David Rieff, “The Cult of Memory: When History Does More Harm than Good,” *The Guardian*, March 2, 2016

Wednesday, February 13, 7pm

- Film Screening and Discussion: *The Memory of Justice* (excerpts), 1976

WEEK 3: WHY HISTORICAL JUSTICE? THE RISE OF HISTORICAL REDRESS

Why does historical justice emerge as a global phenomenon? What factors help explain an interest among nations in revisiting the past? What different interpretations and explanation do these authors put forth to explain the popularity of historical justice? What's the difference between historical justice and transitional justice?

Monday, February 18

- John Torpey, “An Avalanche of History: The ‘Collapse of the Future’ and the Rise of Reparations Politics” (2009), 21-38
- Pierre Hazan, *Judging War, Judging History*, Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2, pp. 7-62
- Elazar Barkan, “Restitution and Amending Historical Injustices in International Morality” (2003), 91-102
- James Campbell, “Settling Accounts: An Americanist Perspective on Historical Reconciliation,” (2009): 963-977

Wednesday, February 20, 7pm

- Brainstorming Group Project Topics

WEEK 4: SETTING PRECEDENTS: 'WIEDERGUTMACHUNG' IN GERMANY

How do nations that have engaged in horrific acts move forward and construct a national identity? Is it possible for the nation responsible for the Holocaust to craft a positive national identity? Why did West and East Germany adopt different approaches to "overcoming the past?" Who should be considered responsible for the Holocaust? How does the response of the governments in East and West Germany to the Holocaust compare to the Spanish government's response to Spain's wartime historical atrocities?

Monday, February 25

- Mary Fulbrook, *German National Identity after the Holocaust*, Chapters 1-6, 9 (pp. 1-178, 232-240)
- Leonid Bershidsky, "Why Germany Welcomes Refugees," *Bloomberg News*, Sept. 9, 2015
- Jake Goodwill, "I Can't Move Past the Holocaust and that's why I won't become a German Citizen," *The Guardian (London)*, November 3, 2016

Wednesday, February 27, 7pm

- Film Screening and Skype discussion with filmmakers: *The Silence of Others*

WEEK 5: UNDERSTANDING HISTORICAL TRAUMA

How do historical injustices affect individuals and how do they continue to affect later generations? Can trauma be passed from generation to generation? Can a community suffer historical trauma? How does trauma differ on an individual versus communal level? Are there certain histories that are so traumatic that they cannot be documented or represented using traditional historical methods? How might art or literary representations offer different ways to address intergenerational trauma?

Monday, March 4

- Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (entire)
- Ricardo Ainslie, "Trauma, Community, and Contemporary Racial Violence: Reflections on the Architecture of Memory," in *The Ethics of Remembering and the Consequences of Forgetting* (2015), 309-32
- Cindy George, "Do You Have Post-Traumatic Slave Syndrome?" *Ebony*, September 1, 2015

Wednesday, March 6

- Film Screening and Discussion: *Dodging Bullets: Stories from Survivors of Historical Trauma*

WEEK 6: THE ROLE AND CHALLENGE OF FORGIVENESS

What does forgiveness mean in relation to historical wrongdoing? Who has the right to forgive? Is their power in extending or withholding forgiveness? How does political forgiveness differ from individual forgiveness?

Monday, March 11

- Martha Minow, Chapter 2 in *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness*, 3-29
- Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, "What Does it Mean to be Human in the Aftermath of Historical Trauma: Re-envisioning The Sunflower and why Hannah Arendt was Wrong," 2016
- Mona Weissmark, excerpts from *Justice Matters: Legacies of the Holocaust and World War II* (Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 38-54, 65-78, 163-180
- June O'Connor, "Fostering Forgiveness in the Public Square: How Realistic a Goal," *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 22 (2002): 165-182

Wednesday, March 13, 7pm

- Guest Lecture: Alicia D'Addario, Equal Justice Initiative Senior Staff Attorney, "Mass Incarceration: Excessive Sentencing and the Legacy of Slavery," Hallock Auditorium, 7pm

WEEK 7: MODES OF HISTORICAL REPAIR—APOLOGIES

Can apologies offer a meaningful form of redress for past injustice? What makes an apology meaningful versus simply ceremonial? When are states willing to offer apologies? What makes them reluctant to do so? Can a collective like a state express meaningful remorse?

Monday, March 18

- Melissa Nobles, *The Politics of Official Apologies*, Chapters 1, 3-5, pp. 1-41; 71-154
- Jean-Mark Coicaud and Jibecke Jonsson, “Elements of a Road Map for a Politics of Apology,” in *The Age of Apology*, 77-91
- “The Apology Broker,” Rough Translations Podcast, June 13, 2018, 41 minutes
- U.S. House of Representative Apologies for Slavery and to the People of Hawaii

Wednesday, March 20

- Each group will meet individually with the cluster instructors to report on their ideas for their project

WEEK 8: SPRING BREAK

WEEK 9: MODES OF HISTORICAL REPAIR—TRUTH COMMISSIONS

Why are truth commissions such a popular mechanism among societies seeking to come to terms with their past? How should we measure the success or failure of truth commissions? What does the South African TRC illustrate about the benefits and limitations of truth commissions? What did the TRC offer to the victims of apartheid? What did it offer to the perpetrators? How did the TRC process affect South African culture and society?

Monday, April 1

- Onur Bakiner, “Promoting Historical Justice through Truth Commissions: An Uneasy Relationship” in *Historical Justice and Memory* (2015), 146-165
- Antjie Krog, *Country of My Skull*, Introduction, Chapters 1, 2, 5, 8, 11-12, 15 (v-viii, 3-33, 74-88; 103-127; 150-172; 201-232)
- Watch “Long Night’s Journey Into Day?” available on Kanopy Streaming

Wednesday, April 3

- Guest Lecture: Manuela Nilsson, Peace and Development Studies at Linnaeus University and participant in post-conflict peace building in Nicaragua from 1991-2005, Hallock, 7pm

WEEK 10: MODES OF HISTORICAL REPAIR—MONETARY REPARATIONS

Is monetary or some other kind of material compensation a reasonable response to historical injustices? When are reparations feasible or necessary? Do reparations represent an unseemly commodification of suffering? What are barriers to reparations? Are they a “noble lie”?

Monday, April 8

- Alfred Brophy, *Reconstructing the Dreamland* (entire)
- Angelika von Wahl, “The Politics of Reparations: Why, When, and How Democratic Governments Get Involved,” in *Historical Justice in International Perspective*, 39-65
- Gary Bass, “Reparations as a Noble Lie,” *Nomos* 51(2012): 166-179

Wednesday, April 10

- Group Work Time: by the end of this session, groups should have a rough outline and bibliography for their project

WEEK 11: MODES OF HISTORICAL REPAIR—CRIMINAL TRIALS

What kinds of redress of historical injustice are possible through a criminal trial? How does the law shape the process of historical redress? What brings a historical injustice back into the courtroom? What do civil rights trials tell us about how the United States reckons with its history?

Monday, April 15

- Renee Romano, *Racial Reckoning* (entire)
- Martha Minow, Chapter 3, “Trials” in *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness* (Beacon Press, 1998), 25-51

Wednesday, April 17

- Guest Lecture: Hank Klibanoff, Founder of Georgia Civil Rights Cold Case Project and Professor of Journalism at Emory University, “Unburying the Truth: Civil Rights Cold Cases and Why They Matter,” Craig Auditorium, 7pm

WEEK 12: MODES OF HISTORICAL REPAIR—MONUMENTS

How does historical injustice affect the landscape? How should communities deal with monuments that commemorate a history of persecution or oppression? To what extent can a monument shape historical consciousness or serve as a site of social repair? How should we think about public space in considering repair from historic violence?

Monday, April 22

- Sanford Levinson, *Written in Stone* (entire)
- Cheryl Jimenez Frei, “Towards Memory, Against Oblivion: A Comparative Perspective on Public Memory, Monuments, and Confronting a Painful Past in the United States and Argentina,” *The Public Historian*, Special Virtual Issue on Monuments (2017)
- *Whose History? The Reckoning over Confederate Monuments and the Racial Terror of Lynching*, America Divided, Season 4, Episode 2, streaming on Kanopy

Wednesday, April 24

- Film Screening and Discussion with filmmaker: *Granito; How to Nail a Dictator* (2011)

WEEK 13: MODES OF HISTORICAL REPAIR—MUSEUMS AND EDUCATION

Monday, April 29

- Amy Sodaro, *Exhibiting Atrocity: Memorial Museums and the Politics of Past Violence* (entire)
- Jonathan Capeheart, ““Bryan Stevenson wants us to confront our country's racial terrorism and then say 'Never Again,'" *Washington Post*, April 24, 2018
- Elizabeth Cole and Karen Murphy, “History Education Reform, Transitional Justice, and the Transformation of Identities,” *ICTJ Research Brief*, October 2009

Wednesday, May 1

- Group Work Time: Check in on progress with cluster instructors

Saturday, May 4

- Required Field Trip to Kent State University for May 4th Commemoration and Museum Visit (We will leave campus at approximately 8:45am and return by 4:00pm at the latest)

WEEK 14: KENT STATE CASE STUDY AND CONCLUSIONS

Monday, May 6

- Debrief Kent State Visit, Conclusions

Wednesday, May 8

- Group Presentations

Saturday, May 12

- Group Projects due by 9:00pm