

FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ENGLISH 607.01 (Topic 38)
COURSE TITLE: REPRESENTING HISTORICAL TRAUMA

FALL 2013

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Office hours: Wednesday 2 to 3 pm and by appointment

Calendar description: English 607 Theoretical and Cultural Studies may be repeated for credit.

Course description: English 607.01 (Topic 38)

The language of trauma is central to 20th and 21st century explorations of historical memory, and has produced numerous representations of historical trauma in fiction, memoir, graphic novel, and film. Yet questions about how and why we write and read about historical trauma continue.

One question we might ask is what we mean by trauma, for as Ruth Leys demonstrates "from the moment of its invention in the late nineteenth century the concept of trauma has been fundamentally unstable." A second question would interrogate the term "historical trauma." Does the term describe the trauma an individual experiences because of historical devastation or does it refer to an event, for example, the Holocaust or 9/11? A third question, raised by many historians, would be to consider whether we really can transpose psychological terminology used by scientists about individuals to nations and communities. A fourth question would be to ask why many academics value representations that, according to Dominick LaCapra, render traumatic experience a negative version of the sublime, in sharp contrast to the representations often endorsed by popular culture.

Representing Historical Trauma will begin by tracing trauma's genealogy, beginning with the nineteenth-century shift from trauma as a medical term referring to a physical wound to trauma as a psychological concept. Because the representation of the Holocaust is so important to trauma studies, we will pay particular attention to the theoretical issues raised by Holocaust representation. We will also examine representations of historical trauma related to the Vietnam War, First Nations/American Indian experience, the memoirs of child soldiers, and 9/11. However, students will have the opportunity to write research papers on other representations: for example, historical trauma in depictions of African-American slavery, and Hiroshima. Any list is partial, for today we find it hard to imagine an historical event today outside the discourse of trauma. In Patricia Yaeger's words, "we inhabit an academic world that is busy consuming trauma." One of the course goals will be to consider the ethics of our endless desire for representations of trauma.

Texts and readings: Items with *are available electronically through U of C library holdings. Other scholarly readings are in the course pack. All texts, including the course pack are available in the University of Calgary Bookstore. See the separate book order for recommended editions.

THEORIES ABOUT TRAUMA

Sept. 11: Aleida Assmann, "From Collective Violence to a Common Future: Four Models for Dealing with a Traumatic Past" (course pack);

Excerpt from Dominick LaCapra, "Trauma, Absence, Loss" (course pack);

Schedule film viewings and sign up for presentations that start October 2

Sept. 18 Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (course pack);

Neil J. Smelser, "Psychological Trauma and Cultural Trauma" (course pack)

Sept. 25 Trauma Theory: Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*;

Susannah Radstone, "Trauma Theory: Contexts, Politics, Ethics." *Paragraph* 30.1 (March 2007): 9-29.*

REPRESENTING HISTORICAL TRAUMA

Oct. 2 Charlotte Delbo, *Auschwitz and After*:

The Delbo presentation will focus on **either** "None of Us Will Return" or "Useless Knowledge"; **or** "The Measure of Our Days";

Dori Laub, "Truth and Testimony: The Process and the Struggle." (course pack)

Oct. 9 Tim O'Brien, *In the Lake of the Woods*;

Richard J. McNally, "Debunking Myths about Trauma and Memory." *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry* 50.13 (2005): 817-22.*

Recommended Reading: "Posttraumatic Stress Disorder." *DSM IV-TR* (2000) 309.81*;

Oct. 14: Thanksgiving

Oct. 16: Tomson Highway, *The Kiss of the Fur Queen*;

Kristina Fagan, "Weesageechak Meets the Weetigo: Storytelling, Humour, and Trauma in the Fiction of Richard Van Camp, Tomson Highway, and Eden Robinson." *Studies in Canadian Literature* 34.1 (2009): 204-26.*

Oct. 23 Joseph Boyden, *Three Day Road*;

Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart, "The Impact of Historical Trauma: The Example of the Native Community." *Trauma Transformed: An Empowerment Response* ed. Marian Bussey and Judith Bulla Wise. New York: Columbia UP, 2007. 176-93.*

TRAUMA AND CHILDHOOD

Oct. 30: *Pan's Labyrinth* (film);

Roger Luckhurst, "Beyond Trauma: Torturous Times." *European Journal of English Studies* 14.1 (April 2010): 11-21.*

Nov. 6: Ishmael Beah, *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier*;

Robert Eaglestone, "'You Would Not Add to My Suffering if You Knew What I have Seen': Holocaust Testimony and Contemporary African Trauma Literature." *Studies in the Novel* 40.1 and 2 (Spring and Summer 2008): 72-85.*

Nov. 9-12: Reading Days

TRAUMA AND 9/11

Nov. 13: Jonathan Safran Foer, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*;
Allen Meek, "Virtual Trauma: After 9/11" (course pack)

POSTMEMORY

Nov. 20 *Maus I*;

Marianne Hirsch, "The Generation of Postmemory." *Poetics Today* 29.1 (Spring 2008): 103-28.*

Nov. 27 *Maus II*;

Wulf Kansteiner, "Genealogy of a Category Mistake: A Critical Intellectual History of the Cultural Trauma Metaphor." *Rethinking History* 8.2 (2004): 193-221.*

Dec. 4 *Ararat* (film);

(*Ararat: The Shooting Script* is available online)

Egoyan, Atom. "In Other Words: Poetic Licence and the Incarnation of History." *University of Toronto Quarterly* 73.3 (Summer 2004): 886-905.*

Recommended Reading: Jonathan Markovitz. "Ararat and Collective Memories of the Armenian Genocide." *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 20.2 (Fall 2006): 235-55.*

Assignments and Evaluation:

Two presentations worth 20% each = 40%. At least one of the presentations must be on a scholarly article. (See sign-up sheet.)

One function of the presentations is to give you practice in presenting conference papers. In your planning of your presentation, think of it as a conference paper; i.e., your presentation will have a thesis and an argument that can be delivered in 20 minutes (and just as at conferences, I will give you a 2 minute warning that time is nearly up, and then ask you to stop). Just as at a conference, people will delay their questions until you have completed the presentation.

Prior to the presentation, please submit your written script to the instructor.

Cathy Caruth essay: 20%; due Oct. 9; 1500 words

Topics for this short essay will be distributed following our class on Caruth, Sept. 25. Cathy Caruth's work is constantly cited in humanities scholarship on trauma; the purpose of this assignment will be to deepen your understanding of Caruth's work.

Research paper: 40%; due Dec. 9; 3500 words

The topic must be approved by November 8. I encourage you to schedule an appointment to discuss possible topics. If you want to write your research paper on a work that you presented on, the topic must differ significantly from the focus of your presentation, and should also address works that you did not present on.

Total: 100%

English 607 does not have a registrar-scheduled examination. It also does not have a separate participation mark since participation in a graduate seminar is assumed.

Assignments must not be submitted electronically. Please make every effort to submit assignments directly to the instructor. If it is not possible to do so, take your assignment to SS 1152 and put it in the dropbox. Your assignment will be date-stamped and placed in the instructor's mailbox. It is your responsibility to keep a copy of all assignments in case of loss by any cause. Assignments cannot be returned by staff in the Department office.

Grading system:

Grades are calculated according to the 4 point scale used in the *Graduate Calendar*:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/grad/current/gs-e-1.html>

Grade	Grade Point Value	Graduate Description
A+	4.00	Outstanding
A	4.00	Excellent-superior performance showing comprehensive understanding of the subject matter
A-	3.70	Very good performance
B+	3.30	Good performance
B	3.00	Satisfactory performance
B-	2.70	Minimum pass for students in Faculty of Graduate Studies
C+	2.30	All grades below B- are indicative of failure at the graduate level and cannot be counted towards Faculty of Graduate Studies course requirements.
C	2.00	
C-	1.70	
D+	1.30	
D	1.00	
F	0.00	

Split grades on assignments are also calculated according to the *Graduate Calendar* grading system, e.g., an A/A- is a 3.85; a B/B- is a 2.85. Also note that the *University Calendar* states that the instructor has the "discretion to round off either upward or downward to determine a final grade when the average . . . is between two letter grades."

Although the A+ is solely an honorific that entails no additional points in the four-point system, the course instructor will employ this mark to distinguish superlative work that exceeds expectations in style, correctness, intellectual depth and breadth, sophistication, and originality.

Plagiarism:

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possible suspension or expulsion from the university. Please refer to the following information and make sure you are familiar with the statement below on plagiarism.

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-2-1.html>

English Department Website:

For more information about courses, programs, policies, events and contacts in the Department of English, please go to our website at <http://english.ucalgary.ca/graduate>. Please note that the course outlines posted on the English Department website constitute the official course outline for purposes of appeals. Students should verify any hard copies against this posted version. For courses which employ numerical grades, the official departmental percentage to letter grade conversion scale is also posted on the department website.

Writing support:

The Student Success Centre offers both online and workshop writing support for U of C students.
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

Follow the Department of English on Facebook & Twitter:**Academic regulations and schedules:**

Consult the Department of English's graduate website for courses, departmental deadlines, and other related program information at <http://english.ucalgary.ca/node/245>. Consult the Faculty of Graduate Studies Calendar for university and faculty regulations, dates, deadline, fees, and schedules, student, faculty and university rights and responsibilities. The homepage for the Faculty of Graduate Studies Calendar is <http://grad.ucalgary.ca>.

For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Barbara Howe at 403 220 5484 or visit her in Social Sciences Tower 1148 in the first instance.

For program planning and advice, contact Barbara Howe at howe@ucalgary.ca to make an appointment with Dr. Jacqueline Jenkins, Graduate Program Director.

Guidelines on e-mail Etiquette:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/it/help/articles/email/etiquette>

Grade appeals:

Consult the following University Calendar link and request advice from the English Department office, SS 1152. Please note that "mere dissatisfaction with a decision is not sufficient grounds for the appeal of a grade or other academic decision."

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i.html>

Deferral of term work and final examinations:

Should you require an extension for completion of term papers or assignments beyond the deadline of five days after the end of lectures, an Application of Deferment of Term Work form must be completed. The University also has regulations governing the deferral of final examinations. See Calendar:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html>,

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>.

Academic Accommodation:

It is the students' responsibility to request academic accommodations. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodations and have not registered with Student Accessibility Services, please contact them at 403-220-6019. Students who have not registered with Student Accessibility Services are not eligible for formal academic accommodations. More information about academic accommodations can be found at www.ucalgary.ca/access.

Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>;

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/legalservices/foip/>

“Safewalk” Program:

Campus Security will escort individuals day or night: call 220-5333 for assistance. Use any campus phone, emergency phone or the yellow phone located at most parking lot pay booths.
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/safewalk/>

Contact for the Graduate Student Association: <http://gsa.ucalgary.ca/>

Contact for Students Ombudsman's Office: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds>

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is an extremely serious offence. Please read the following information carefully. The penalty routinely recommended by the English Department for documented plagiarism is failure of the course in which the offence occurred; academic probation is also routinely applied at the Faculty level. Suspension or expulsion can result from severe or repeated plagiarism.

The University Calendar states:

1. Plagiarism - Essentially plagiarism involves submitting or presenting work in a course as if it were the student's own work done expressly for that particular course when, in fact, it is not. Most commonly plagiarism exists when:

- (a) the work submitted or presented was done, in whole or in part, by an individual other than the one submitting or presenting the work (this includes having another impersonate the student or otherwise substituting the work of another for one's own in an examination or test),
- (b) parts of the work are taken from another source without reference to the original author,
- (c) the whole work (e.g., an essay) is copied from another source, and/or,
- (d) a student submits or presents work in one course which has also been submitted in another course (although it may be completely original with that student) without the knowledge of or prior agreement of the instructor involved.

While it is recognized that scholarly work often involves reference to the ideas, data and conclusions of other scholars, intellectual honesty requires that such references be explicitly and clearly noted.

Plagiarism occurs when direct quotations are taken from a source without specific acknowledgement, or when original ideas or data from the source are not acknowledged. Citing your sources in a bibliography is not enough, because a bibliography does not establish which parts of a student's work are taken from other sources. MLA (Modern Language Association) documentation or other recognized forms of citation must be used for this purpose. Advice on adequate documentation can be found at the following web sites:

<http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/>

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STATEMENT ON PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT

According to the University Calendar, (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/j.html>) "The University of Calgary community has undertaken to be guided by the following statements of purpose and values: to promote free inquiry and debate, to act as a community of scholars, ..., to respect, appreciate, and encourage diversity, [and] to display care and concern for community". The Department of English, like the university as a whole, is committed to a "positive and productive learning and working environment." This environment is characterized by appreciation and encouragement of diversity and respect for the dignity of all persons: students, support staff, and faculty. The department will not tolerate unacceptable behaviour, such as threatening gestures, threatening or abusive verbal or written communication (including e-mails), or any conduct that "seriously disrupts the lawful education and related activities of students and/or university staff". Any cases of such misconduct should be reported immediately to the department Head, who, depending on the nature and severity of the incident, may then take further appropriate action.