Department of Sociology and Anthropology, BGU

Course: Sites and Rites of Israeli Collective Memory

BA lecture – 2nd - 3rd year. 4 Credits

Taught 2007-2008

Lecturer: Dr. Jackie Feldman

Description: The seminar will deal with the dynamic relations between space, ceremony and memory in Israel from a comparative perspective. Among the questions we shall discuss are: How do practices of commemoration reflect and construct changing historical understandings in Israeli society? To what extent do forms of memory embody long-standing religious paradigms and/or changing conceptions of the self? Are all rememberers equal? How do various interpretations and bodily actions of founders of sites and participants engaged in commemoration lend meaning to a site or rite? What is the importance of oral narrative or written text in the formation of sites of memory? To what extent do ceremonies and commemorative sites express hegemonic forces in society? Has the nature of memory changed in postmodernity? How do subaltern groups express their resistance through the materialization of conflicting memory at the sites?

During the first semester we will provide various definitions of collective memory, discuss the relation between personal and collective memory and between collective memory and history. We will also introduce themes from the anthropology of space and place.

In the second part of the first semester and the first part of the second, we will devote lessons to the various sites and rites of memory in Israel: cemeteries and monuments, settlement museums, archaeological heritage sites, Holocaust monuments and museums, monuments to terror victims, the fallen and the Holocaust, and visit to Palestinian remains of 1948. We will also discuss religious collective memory.

To broaden our understanding of the Israeli phenomena, we will read articles dealing with general discussion of collective memory as well as similar phenomena in other societies.

Course Requirements:
1. Obligatory attendance and class participation (10%).
2. In the course of the year, each pair of students will select a topic and present an oral exposé (20-30 minutes) and a written paper (5 minutes) based on reading of required and optional articles on a particular topic (25%).
3. Exam at the end of the first semester.
4. Final exam (50%).
Reading List:

Pierre Nora, "Between History and memory – The Lieux de Memoire", in *Zemanim* 45 (Summer 1993), pp. 2-19 (Hebrew).
Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, University of Washington Press, 1982, Chapter 1.
Saul Friedlander with Adam Seligman, “Memory of the Shoah in Israel: Symbols, Rituals and Ideological Polarization”, in Young, ed., *Art of Memory*, pp. 149-158.


Ariella Azulai, "Open Doors: History museums in Israeli Space", Theory and Criticism 4, Fall 1993, pp. 79—95 (Hebrew).


Avner Ben-Amos and Ilana Bat-El, "Ceremonies, Education and History: Holocaust Memorial Day and Memorial Day in Israeli Schools", in Education and History: Cultural and Political Contexts, Rivka Feldhai and Emmanuel Etkes, eds., Merkaz Shazar, Jerusalem, 1999, pp. 457—479 (Hebrew).


Michael Feige, "Yitzhak Rabin, His Commemoration and the commemoration of his Commemoration", in Memory in Dispute: Myth, Nationalism and Democracy; Investigations following the Murder of Yitzhak Rabin, Lev Grinberg, ed., Ben Gurion University, Beersheba, 2000, pp. 39—64 (Hebrew).


