Sites and Rites of Memory in Israel: Holocaust, Independence, Heritage
Fall Semester
13-5-4007

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Course Description:

How do present-day Israelis choose to remember (or forget) the past? How do memory practices reflect changing historical narratives, political opinions and social identities? How do such practices endow sites with new meanings?

In this course, we will explore the dynamic relations between space and memory in Israeli sites and rituals. The sites and rites include: Holocaust monuments and ceremonies, archaeological and heritage sites, military cemeteries, museums and monuments, Knowledge of the Land hikes, roots tours and more. These sites of memory will be analyzed through sociological and anthropological tools and compared with American and other cases. By examining how key past events such as the Biblical past, the Holocaust, the Independence War and Rabin's assassination are represented, we will gain new insights into how present-day Israelis understand their past and themselves.

Course Objectives:

To acquaint students with the variety of Israeli understandings of the past that impact on the present. To encourage a critical reading of Israeli civil sites and rituals, by examining their ideological claims, agents and changing performative contexts. To insert the Israeli politics of representation within larger worldwide processes and theories, and encourage students to reflect on their own collective myths and identities.

Main Disciplines: Anthropology, Israel studies, Religion, History

Course Structure:
Lecture: 2 hour lecture each week – one semester
Total # of Credits: 2
ECTS (European Credit Transfer System): 3

Teaching Method:

The course will be conducted through lectures and class discussions on weekly reading assignments. Students will be given guiding questions for each reading and be expected to post a short answer to those questions by two days before class. Students will also be encouraged to browse the internet to bring articles up to date by tracking current practices. A tour to sites of memory in Jerusalem will be integrated into the program. In the course of the semester, students will write a term paper incorporating archival or fieldwork elements; the research will also be the subject of a class presentation or intermediate assignment.

Course Requirements

Compulsory attendance YES
Pre-requisites: none

Structure of Final Course Grade

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Participation, responses to reading, analysis of tour</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Midterm Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<td>3. Final Paper</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<td>4. Student presentation or written assignment</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
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Note:
- Work handed in late, will not be graded!
- Students will have their final grade lowered an entire grade level if they miss more than 2 class meetings unexcused)
- Language of instructions is English

Course Schedule Layout:

Required readings are marked with an asterisk*. The others are recommended.

Week 1: What is collective memory?

Week 2: Jewish and Zionist memory paradigms

**Week 3: Cult of the fallen in Israel – monuments, cemeteries, memory books**

**Week 4: Commemoration of Yizhak Rabin**
*Vered Vinitzky-Saroussi, "Jerusalem Assassinated Rabin and Tel Aviv Commemorated Him", *City and Society*, 1998: 183-204.

This unit may be moved to another week so that students can include their observations of current commemorations of the memorial day for Rabin.

**Week 5: Collective memory of the Holocaust in Israel**


**Week 6: Holocaust monuments and commemorative rites in Israel**

**Week 7: Trip to Mt. Herzl national and military cemetery and Yad Vashem**
Please browse the Yad Vashem website and compare it with that of another Holocaust museum (Los Angeles, New York, Berlin, Washington, Ghetto Fighters Museum, Budapest, Sydney...).

**Week 8: Youth voyages to the concentration camps in Poland**
Film: *Defamation or Yizkor: Slaves of Memory*

**Week 9: Archaeology as Israeli national practice**

Please browse the City of David website as well as the alternative archaeology website *Emek Shaveh*.

**Week 10: Museums as national heritage sites**
Film: "Here it all began".

**Week 11: Land of Israel hikes: conquering contested land with one’s feet.**
Week 12: Roots trip of Israelis and Palestinians – a comparison
Film: Raanan Alexandrovich, Hatiyul Hap‘nimi

Week 13: Roots Trips 2/ Conclusion: Israeli Collective Memory – Present and Future