Welcome...

My name is Aránzazu Borrachero (Arancha) and my email is aborrachero@gc.cuny.edu.

Our virtual class meets on Wednesdays at 4:15 PM, online via Zoom. If you’d like to meet during office hours, I’m generally available on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11:00 am-12 noon, via Zoom. It’s always a good idea to let me know in advance that you’re planning to see me in order to avoid overlapping appointments.

Quick links and useful addresses

• Synchronous class Zoom link, ID 732 8410 8372, passcode cZfx0p
• Office hours Zoom link, ID: 722 3547 4533, passcode ABDc9p
• Course group, connected to this website: http://cuny.is/group-digital-memories
• Class E-mail: dmsp21@groups.commons.gc.cuny.edu
• Hypothesis group link (more on this later)

Technical advisors

For the technological aspects of this course, we’re fortunate to count on the expert help of several advisors:

• Micki Kaufman, DH Graduate Advising Fellow: micki.kaufman@gmail.com
• Javier Otero-Peña, Data Vis Graduate Advising Fellow: javo01@gmail.com
• Stephen Zweibel, GC Data & Digital Projects Librarian (see his Analyzing & Visualizing Data guide): szweibel@gc.cuny.edu
• Graduate Center Digital Fellows: for appointments, fill out this form.
• Alejandro Peña, Francisco Onielfa, DH Technologists and Developers: alex@render.es

Course description

Memory Studies, an interdisciplinary field focusing on “how, what and why individuals, groups and societies remember, and forget” (Memory Studies), has experienced important paradigm shifts since its inception in the 1980s. The onset of digital media is responsible for the latest and, arguably, most radical changes.

This course explores how the past is constructed, archived and communicated through digital media from a sociocritical angle:

• What is the potential of digital memory and storytelling projects to change or break power structures?
• Has digital technology opened spaces for contesting traditional narratives of the past?
• Is civic action shaped by digital memory initiatives? Are digital memory initiatives shaped by civic action?

With these questions as a framework, we will analyze key concepts in Memory Studies, such as collective memory (Maurice Halbwachs), cultural memory (Aleida and Jan Assman), transnational memory (Astrid Erll), and postmemory (Marianne Hirsch) –concepts, all of them, interrogated by the emerging field of Digital Memory Studies (Andrew Hoskins). Armed with this theoretical work, we will examine a diversity of digital memory and storytelling projects, from well-established and institutionalized ones (e.g. Imperial War Museums, Forced Labor 1939-1945, Memorial Democràtic) to community-led projects and/or projects explicitly engaged in counter-hegemonic memory-making (e.g. 858 Archive, Documenting the Now, Torn Apart/Separados).
This course utilizes a project-based pedagogical approach to the study of Digital Memory. You will design and develop your own storytelling and memory project guided, step by step, by a team of expert developers of digital tools for cultural heritage and oral history archives. Besides acquiring skills to create narrative projects, you will become acquainted with tools currently used to build digital archives. You will learn project design, content collection, content management and analysis, and online publication.

Learning outcomes

In this course you will have the opportunity to:

• understand the concept of collective memory and its social and political uses, along with its main theoretical reformulations during the last one-hundred years,
• understand the impact of digital technologies on collective memory construction, and the potential of such technologies in mobilizing memories for social and political purposes,
• acquire analytical tools to evaluate digital memory projects and their social and political impact,
• acquire the necessary skills and tools to design, develop and publish a digital memory project, and...
• hopefully, enjoy the journey!

Class materials & class work

Readings

I have posted most readings as pdfs or links on the class website. You and your peers will collectively discuss and annotate them using Hypothes.is (instructions here).

I’d like you to approach the texts with a critical mind and annotate them accordingly. Here are some questions and issues you might be interested in discussing:

• Is this text useful? In relation to other readings, is it repetitive or does it complement other texts we have read?
• Is the writing clear or convoluted?
• Is the argumentation convincing?
• What ideas are provocative? Which ideas don’t make sense?
• “I don’t understand! Help!”
• How does the text connect to political, social, historical, and artistic phenomena?
• What do you want your peers to discuss with you or to respond to?

Every week, one or two students will present in class the highlights of the collaborative online discussion: What are the main points of agreement and disagreement? What comments seem to move the conversation to another level? What did you, as a reader, find particularly helpful in the online conversation with your peers?

As the course moves forward and you begin conducting research for your project, feel free to share with the class those texts that you find worth discussing. As an option, we can replace some of the readings I’ve suggested with some suggested by you, and we’ll post them for collaborative reading as well.

Digital memory projects - Reviews

• An essential objective of this course is to practice the critical appraisal of digital memory projects. To this end, you will team-up with 3 or 4 classmates to evaluate one or two
projects weekly. You may use our site Blog to find peers for your review. Ideally, at the end of the semester you will have worked with everybody in the class at least once.

- You and your group will write and edit your project reviews here. At the end of the semester, we will publish all reviews in Manifold as an open guide for anyone interested in digital memory projects.
- As the course progresses, you will be searching for projects that will guide your own project conceptualization, design and development. Please share with the class those projects you find worth discussing. As an option, we can replace some of the projects I’ve suggested for evaluation with some suggested by you and review them too.

Your digital memory project - Design and development

- We will begin to plan the class projects early in the semester and you will present a project proposal in March. I prefer and recommend that you work on your project with a group (three or four members per group is probably a good group-size), but individual projects are a possibility too. You may use our Blog to communicate your project ideas to your peers and to create a working group.
- For the project design part, Gerard Corbella, past director of Memorial Democràtic, will visit us virtually and provide useful guidelines.
- For the technological part of you project, we’ll count on the expertise of Alejandro Peña (Alex) and Juan Francisco Onielfa (Paco), DH technologists and developers specialized in Intangible Heritage projects. Alex will will train you in the use of Dédalo, an open-source software that he and Paco have been developing for over twenty years. Their work can be seen at Memorial Democràtic and Memories of the Occupation in Greece, among other initiatives.
- If you’re interested in using a tool other than Dédalo –Omeka, WordPress, Scalar, etc.–, you are more than welcome to do so. In this case, our advisory fellows (M. Kaufman, J. Otero-Peña) will provide technological support. Additionally, any student or group may, at any point, reach out to the Graduate Center Digital Fellows to discuss ideas for projects, possible technological resources and general project development.

The Manifold review-archive

If any student or pair of students is interested in organizing, supervising and curating the collection of project reviews, and publishing it in Manifold, this would be her/his/their course project. I’ve written a “job description” here. Let me know if you’d like to be our digital archive curator and publisher!

Assessment

Your final grade will reflect both your own evaluation and my evaluation of your work. This grading method is my novice experiment in “ungrading,” an approach to educational assessment that I’m interested in exploring more. If you’re curious about it, check Jesse Stommel’s site, an educator and writer whose reflections have helped me.

Self-evaluations

You will conduct two self-evaluations of your work and progress in the class, one around mid-semester and one in May. I will take your honest self-evaluation very seriously in my own evaluation of your work.

Grading

1. The following class components are worth 40% of your final grade:
   - Overall active participation
   - Reading discussions
• Class presentation on reading discussion
• Digital project reviews
• Project proposal

2. Your digital memory project is worth 60% of your final grade.

A note on participation

It is through collaboration and scaffolding that learners move forward in the learning process. In the classroom, this applies to students and instructors equally. Thus, we are all responsible for our own and our peers’ learning, and we should make every effort to be present in all aspects of the course. Because a lot of the work will happen in small groups, make sure you alert your group members if any incidence delays your contribution to the task.

Accounts

You will need…

• a CUNY Commons account (once you have your account, you will receive an invitation to join the group and the class website),
• a Hypothes.is account to annotate and discuss class readings with your peers (follow these instructions to open an account and begin annotating),
• a Google Docs account to write project reviews with your group and work on other assignments.

Accessibility

Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the manager of Student Disability Services, located in Student Affairs, room 7301, or call 212-817-7400 as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. While offices are operating remotely, email Clare Wilson at cwilson1@gc.cuny.edu or visit the SDS website, cuny.is/disabilityservices.

Academic integrity

If you are unsure about how to properly acknowledge the work of others in your own work, here is an excellent guide prepared by the Graduate Center. For additional information, penalties for academic dishonesty and protocols, please read here.

Health & Wellness Center

Last, but not least, we’re living challenging times and it’s good to know that there is a Health & Wellness Center to go to in case of need.

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Schedule

This calendar has a list of suggested readings and activities. As we move forward and discuss needs and interests, we may introduce changes: Did you come across an article that you would really like to discuss with the class? Let’s add it or replace one of my suggested readings. Did you find or do you know of a digital memory project that you’d like to discuss with your peers and me? Bring it to our attention and we’ll make room for it in the syllabus. Do you think that the
topic organization can be improved? We can move things around. [The (L) at the end of a reading indicates that the whole book is available online within the CUNY library system]

Document links for groups and presentations:

- Choose a day here to present one class reading discussion.
- Choose your projects for review and your groups here.
- Write your reviews here.

Preparation for our first class, February 3

Complete one of these two tasks before our first class (or both, if you wish):

- Follow the instructions to open your Hypothesis account and annotate this text:
  - Introduce yourself in our Blog and explain whether you already have an idea for a digital memory project, a preferred topic, an approach or an on-going project that you'd like to develop or continue developing in this class. State whether you would like to recruit some peers to work with you. Engage in dialogue with other bloggers as much as you wish.

February 3- Introductions

In class

- Introductions
- Discussion of syllabus and class dynamics

After class: Contexts, frameworks

1- Read Winter, Hoskins and one of the two remaining articles (total of three). Annotate two of them with Hypothesis by Feb. 9, 4 pm:

A “memory boom”?


The politics of memory:


2- Familiarize yourselves with the following guidelines to review digital memory projects (complete these activities before our next class):

- Watch Miriam Posner’s video “How did you make that?”
• Read and add comments (if you’d like) to this set of “Precepts” that Roopika Risam and her students have developed to evaluate digital projects.
• Check the following “projects of projects,” which contain review samples:
  • Around DH in 80 days
  • Vectors

**February 10- Contexts, frameworks**

*In class*

• Presentation by student: highlights of reading annotations
• General discussion: readings, precepts, etc.

*After class: Oral History*

*Note: I’m introducing the topic of oral history earlier than I normally would because it’s closely related to IRB matters, which we must begin to consider now, and to the visit of Rebecca Bachnik (Director of the Human Research Protection Program at the GC) on Feb. 24.*

1- Read Thomson, Boyd and two of the three remaining articles (total of four). Annotate two of them with Hypothesis by Feb. 16, 4 pm:


*Additional resources:*

- International Oral History Association– resources page

2- With 3-4 partners, review one of the oral history projects that appears at the end of Sullivan & Schreine’s article under “Additional resources.” Use Posner’s video and Risam’s “Precepts”, and the review samples listed under Feb. 3 (part 3) as guides for your review. Work on Google Docs and finish your draft before our next class. I say “draft” because your reviews are a work-in-progress and you can go back and revise them as often as you and your group want.

**Wednesday, Feb. 17- Oral history matters**

*In class*

• Presentation by student: highlights of readings and comments
• Groups for projects?
After class: History matters

1- Let’s discuss groups for projects. Check our Blog. If you didn’t blog about an idea for a project yet, do so now or reply to a peer who has an idea that interests you. Can you join in that idea? Or perhaps you’re interested in curating the Manifold review archive? Blog about it.

2- Read the 5 project reviews in our shared Google Doc. Write comments (Google Doc’s “comment” function) about:

- what are some probable audiences for our project-review publication?
- which information you think should be present in all reviews?
- which type of information is interesting but optional (may or may not be present in the reviews)?
- which format you think is best? Should it be homogeneous across reviews?
- other suggestions

3- Rebecca Banchik (Director of the Human Research Protection Program at the GC) will visit our class next week to answer IRB-related questions. Before our next class, read the documents that she has prepared for the GC community and watch her presentation (it’s all in this dropbox link). Try to formulate questions you will need her to clarify for your memory project.

4- Read Hoskins, Risam and one other article (total of three). Annotate two with Hypothesis by Feb. 23, 4 pm:

Memory and history:

- Confino, A. (2011). History and memory. In A. Schneider and D. Woolf (Eds.), The Oxford history of historical writing: Vol. 5. Historical writing since 1945 (pp. 36-51). Oxford UP. (L)

A postcolonial approach to digital history and memory:


Wednesday, Feb. 24- History matters

In class

- Presentation by student: highlights of readings and comments
- Guest: Rebecca Banchik (4:30 pm)

After class: Media, memory; Spain’s “historical memory”

1- Read Assman, Aguilar and one of the two other articles (total of three). Annotate two with Hypothesis by March 2, 4 pm:
Historical context for March 3 guest speakers’ topics:

- Assmann, A. (2012). To remember or to forget: Which way out of a shared history of violence? In A. Assmann & L. Shortt, Memory and political change (pp. 53-71). Palgrave Macmillan. (L)

And, since we are reading about media and memory:


2- With 3-4 partners, review one of the oral history projects mentioned in Risam’s chapter (“The postcolonial digital cultural record”) or one of the projects developed by Gerard Corbella and/or the Dédalo team (Alejandro Peña and Francisco Onielfa). As with the last review, follow Posner’s and Risam’s guidance. Work on our Google Doc and finish your draft before our next class. See the links to the projects below:

- Early Caribbean Digital Archive
- R-Shief
- Livingstone online
- Colored conventions
- Memorial Democràtic
- Memories of the Occupation in Greece

Wednesday, March 3 Media, Spanish “historical memory;” project design and digital tools

In class

- Presentation by Gerard Corbella: “Historical memory” in Spain; project design
- Presentation by Alejandro Peña: development of digital tools for “Intangible Heritage” projects; Dédalo
- Presentation by student: highlights of reading annotations

After class: Memory in the digital ecosystem

1- Read Burkey, Birkner and one of the two remaining articles (total of three). Annotate two of them with Hypothesis by March 9, 4 pm:

• Reading, A. (2013). Europe’s other world. Romany memory within the new dynamics of the globital memory field. In E. Rutten et al. (Eds.), Memory, conflict and new media: Web wars in post-socialist states (pp. 21-31). Taylor & Francis. (L)

2- Let’s begin to think about your project design. Here is a project proposal or, rather, a series of questions that you can use as your project proposal.

Here’s a short thesis about curating digital memory projects that might also help:


And don’t forget our Resource page if you need help with this or any other part of the proposal.

**Wednesday, March 10- Memory in the digital ecosystem**

*In class*

• Presentation by student: highlights of readings and comments
• Group projects’ progress

*After class: Cultural, transcultural, transnational memory*

1- Read Assman or Erll, and choose two articles of the remaining three (total of three). Annotate two of them with Hypothesis by March 16, 4 pm:


2- With your group or alone, finish writing your project proposal and share it with me via Google Drive before March 16, 11.59 pm. Your proposal is a work-in-progress, but it should show deep thinking, good planning, and awareness of available resources.

**Wednesday, March 17- Cultural, transcultural, transnational memory**

*In class*

• Feedback on project proposals
• Presentation by student: highlights of readings and comments

*After class: Case studies: Cultural, transcultural and transnational memory*

1- Read all three articles and annotate two with Hypothesis by March 23, 4 pm:

2- With 3-4 partners, review one of the following projects (work on our Google Doc and finish your draft before our next class):

- **858**
- **Imperial War Museums**
- **Around DH in 80 days**
- **The Valley of the Shadow**
- **Virtual Tourism**
- **Projects included in Preserving memory in the digital age. Curatorial practices of 9/11 digital archives:**
  - September 11, 2001 Documentary Project
  - Wherewereyou.org
  - Voices of 9/11: Here is New York
  - Sonic Memorial Project

3- Prepare a draft of your thesaurus. Here are some guidelines.

**Wednesday, March 24- Case studies: Cultural, transcultural and transnational memory**

**In class**

- Presentation by student: highlights of readings and comments
- Presentations by groups: evaluation of digital projects
- Practice with Dédalo
- Thesaurus
- Discuss progress in projects' first phase

**After class: Gender, feminism and memory**

1- Read Roopika, Reading (2014) and one of the three remaining articles (total of three). Annotate two of them with Hypothesis by April 6, 4 pm:


2- Digital projects. With 3-4 partners, review one of the following projects (work on our Google Doc and finish your draft before our next class):

• #Metoo
  o Optional related article: Caplan-Bricker, N. (March 11, 2019). The challenge of preserving the historical record of #Metoo. The New Yorker.
• Signs at 40
• Parramatta Female Factory Precinct Memory Project
• Peña Grande, la maternidad de los horrores que sobrevivió a Franco: “Las monjas nos exponían como ganado” [Peña Grande: The maternity clinic that lived beyond Franco: “The nuns would exhibit us like cattle”]
• Black Women’s Suffrage Collection
• The Fragen Project

3- Complete your midterm self-evaluation.

Wednesday, March 31-- SPRING BREAK

Wednesday, April 7 - Gender, feminism and memory

In class

• Presentation by student: highlights of readings and comments
• Presentations by groups: evaluation of digital projects
• Group projects: general discussion, problem solving

After class: Postmemory, intergenerational memory

1- Read Hirsch, Spencer and one of the two remaining articles (total of three). Annotate two of them with Hypothesis by April 13, 4 pm:


2- Digital projects. With 3-4 partners, review one of the following projects (work on our Google Doc and finish your draft before our next class):
Wednesday, April 14- Postmemory, intergenerational memory

In class

- Presentation by student: highlights of readings and comments
- Group project progress

After class: Trauma, violence, memory

1- Read Olick, Kansteiner and one of the four remaining articles (total of three). Annotate two of them with Hypothesis by April 20, 4 pm:


2- Digital projects. With 3-4 partners, review one of the following projects (work on our Google Doc and finish your draft before our next class):

- Slave Voyages
- The Texas After Violence Project
- Community-Based Database of Missing and Murdered Women in Canada
- 1947 Partition Archive
- Race riots in Chicago in 1919

3- Continue working on your group project.

Wednesday, April 21- Trauma, violence, memory

In class

- Presentation by student: highlights of readings and comments
- Presentations by groups: evaluation of digital projects
- Group project discussion

After class: Forgetting

1- Read and annotate in Hypothesis by April 27, 4 pm:

• Hoskins, A. (2014). The right to be forgotten in post-scarcity culture. In Ghezzi, A. et al., The ethics of memory in a digital age: Interrogating the right to be forgotten (pp. 50-64). Palgrave Macmillan, (L).

2- Digital projects. With 3-4 partners, review one of the following projects (work on our Google Doc and finish your draft before our next class):

• Chicana por mi raza
• The real face of white Australia
• Performing Archive: Curtis and the "Vanishing Race"
• Papakilo database
• The Guantanamo Effect

3- Continue working on your group project.

Wednesday, April 28- Forgetting

In class

• Presentation by student: highlights of readings and comments
• Presentations by groups: evaluation of digital projects

After class: Archives

1. Read Baines, Peters and one of the three remaining articles (total of three). Annotate two of them with Hypothesis by May 4, 4 pm:


2- Digital projects. With 3-4 partners, review one of the following projects (work on our Google Doc and finish your draft before our next class):

• DocNow
• Mukurtu
• Um’O’Ho Indian Heritage
• The Atlas Group
• The History Harvest
Wednesday, May 5- Archives

In class

- Presentation by student: highlights of readings and comments
- Presentations by groups: evaluation of digital projects
- Group projects: progress, problem solving

After class: Games, maps and "Other" ontologies

1. Read Chapman, Duarte and one of the three remaining articles (total of three). Annotate two of them with Hypothesis by May 11, 4 pm:


2. Digital projects. With 3-4 partners, review one of the following projects (work on our Google Doc and finish your draft before our next class):

   - Torn apart/Separados (Volume 1, Volume 2)
   - Slave revolt in Jamaica, 1760-1761
   - Borderlands Archive Cartography
   - Mapping Police Violence