

**Remembering, Repeating and Working through the Past:
The Crisis of Memory in Postwar German Literature and Visual Culture
GEW6735/GEW 4731
Spring 2018**

Instructor: Eric Kligerman
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Meeting Time: Mon, periods 9-11
Place: Walker Hall 201
Office Hrs: Mon 6th, Tues 4th period

This seminar, which centers on the transformation of German memory culture in relation to the catastrophic events surrounding the Second World War, is comprised of two parts. The central question of this interdisciplinary course, “How have Germans come to terms with their recent history?” will be read alongside other spaces of traumatic memory, including the legacy of Hiroshima and America’s war in Vietnam.

Through an analysis of postwar German literature, philosophy and visual culture, we will investigate the attempts by German writers and filmmakers to confront the traumas surrounding World War Two, the Holocaust and the legacy of the National Socialist Past. By reading novels, short stories, philosophical texts, historical studies, and viewing films, we will examine the *Opferdebatte* (victim’s debate), that is, how has the question of German suffering—such as the bombing of German cities, the sinking of refugee ships, the division of Germany, the dead of Stalingrad---been represented over the past six decades. What problems do German artists face in representing the Nazi past, and how do these representations function as interpretations to the catastrophic history? What are the potentialities and limitations of different media (photography, film, painting, literature) aesthetic styles (realism, modernism, postmodernism) or genres (melodrama, documentary, reportage) as made apparent in their memorializations of traumatic events? In addition to reading texts from Jaspers, Adorno, Heinrich Böll, Gunther Grass, W.G. Sebald and Uwe Timm, we will view *Murderers are Among Us*, *Night and Fog*, *Deutschland*, *Pale Mother* and *Little Dieter Needs to Fly*. Finally, our analysis of Germany’s engagement with its traumatic past will be read alongside other representations of catastrophic history, including Resnais’ *Hiroshima mon Amour* and Michael Herr’s *Dispatches*.

Texts: 1. *I will be sending to you PDFs for articles and essays that we will cover in class.*

2. Michael Herr, *Dispatches*
3. Gunter Grass, *Crabwalk (Im Krebsgang)*
4. W.G. Sebald, *On the Natural History of Destruction (Luftkrieg und Literatur)*
5. Uwe Timm, *In my Brother’s Shadow (Am Beispiels meines Bruders)*
6. Bernard Schlink, *The Reader (Der Vorleser)*

Grading:

Final Research Paper (15 pages)	75%
participation 20% (including in-class presentation)/attendance 5%	25%

Students taking the class for German major or minor credit at the 4000 level are strongly encouraged to read the novels in German. When available, I will provide handouts of texts in German.

1) Students are allowed 3 unexcused absences. 1 point will be deducted from your final grade for each unexcused absence thereafter. If you miss 5 classes in the semester, you will automatically fail the course. Participation will play a major part of the final grade and students are expected to partake and contribute daily to class discussions. If you do not bring to class the text we are discussing for that day, you will be marked as absent.

2) There will be final research paper on topic of choice selected by the student in consultation with me. **The final paper is due 4/20/18. Late papers will not be accepted.**

Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students who enroll at the University commit to holding themselves and their peers to the high standard of honor required by the Honor Code. Any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the Honor Code is bound by honor to take corrective action. Violations of the honor code include, but are not limited to: plagiarism, cheating, bribery, misrepresentation, fabrication, and conspiracy. Such violations may result in the following: lowering of grades, mandatory 0 on assignments, redoing assignments, a final failing grade in the course, expulsion from the course, referral to the student-run Honor Court. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: *On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.* For more information, refer to: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/>

Students with Special Needs:

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

Syllabus subject to change:**Week 1**

What is *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*?

—Review timeline on German history (Moeller);

--Read/discuss Robert Moeller's essay, "Germans as Victims? Thoughts on a Post-Cold War History of World War II's Legacies" (PDF)

--Read/discuss Frank Trommler, "Stalingrad, Hiroshima, Auschwitz: The Fading of the Therapeutic Approach" (PDF)

---Freud's essay "Remembering, Repeating and Working Through" (PDF, recommended)

Week 2

Karl Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt* (PDF)

Week 3

Screening of *Murderers are Among Us*; Read Shandley, "Coming Home through Rubble Canyons" (PDF)

Weeks 4 and 5

Read Heinrich Böll's "Über die Brücke" ("Across the Bridge") (PDF)

Screening *Night and Fog*

Discussion of *Night and Fog* and Böll

Adorno "What does Coming to terms with the Past Mean?" (PDF)

Week 6

Screening Resnais, *Hiroshima mon Amour*

Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: "Literature and the Enactment of Memory: Duras,*

Resnais, Hiroshima mon Amour" (PDF)

Week 7

Read Bernard Schlink's *Der Vorleser (The Reader)*

Week 8

Screen *Germany, Pale Mother*; read beforehand Kaes' essay on film, "Our Childhood, Ourselves" (PDF)

Week 9

Discuss *Germany, Pale Mother* and Kaes' essay

Week 10

Sebald, *On Natural History of Destruction*

Week 11

Screening of Werner Herzog's film *Little Dieter Needs to Fly*

Discussion of Herzog and Sebald

Week 12

Michael Herr, *Dispatches*

Week 13

Uwe Timm, *In My Brother's Shadow*

Froma Zeitlin, "New Soundings in Holocaust Literature: A Surplus of Memory" (PDF)

Weeks 14 and 15

Gunther Grass, *Crabwalk*

Final Paper Due 4/20/18