

# HISTORICAL MEMORY AND SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION

INDS502c/SOWK570k  
Winter 2015



*In the aftermath of state repression, war, displacement or disaster, how do people reconstruct their social worlds? What are the ways in which memory is mobilized by various social groups to confront oppression and the serious violations of their human rights? In what ways and by what expressive practices individuals, communities and societies make sense of the past and engage in actions towards change?*

Through critical reading, presentations, activities, guest speakers and debates, we will examine these questions focusing on the relationship between *memory and social reconstruction*. Students will explore the complex tensions, agents and social disputes on memory in societies undergoing crisis, recovering from disaster, in transitional periods or in communities seeking to come to terms with systemic state abuse, repression and the breakdown of their social worlds.

Readings for this seminar come from various fields and disciplines (anthropology, oral history, cultural studies, transitional justice, memory studies) and genres (mostly academic articles but also comic book journalism; plays, nonfiction literature, movies and importantly storytelling and personal testimonies) and cover several case studies on mass violence, state repression, colonialism and disaster from Canada, Latin America, Africa, Europe and the Middle East.

**Format:** The seminar will consist of lectures, guest lectures/presentations, in class discussions and debates, movie reviews and in class activities.

## COURSE TOPICS

The art and performance of memory: mapping the field

Remembering, Forgetting and social reconstruction

Sense of place, memoryscapes and displacement

Time, history(ies) and nostalgia for the light

Witnessing, testimony and the archive

Shades of Grey and changing locations: victims, bystanders, resisters and/or perpetrators

Occupied by memory: generational and embodied works of memory

The skin of memory: Gendered memories and social suffering

Memory Soundscapes: Voicing memory, performing biography

A necessary trilogy? Truth, justice and reconciliation.

Memory Traces: A walkabout

Social repair and the everyday: the textures of resistance

Politics of reconstruction: Neighbours, intimate enemies and citizens

If you are interested, please contact the instructor Pilar Riaño-Alcalá  
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