Course Objectives

“The fighting had been like work, only a lot of people got killed and a lot of things got destroyed. It was not work that made much of anything. You and your people intended to go your way, if you could. And you wanted to stop the other people from going their way, if you could. And whatever interfered you destroyed. You had a thing on your mind that you wanted, or wanted to get to, and anything at all that stood in your way, you had the right to destroy. If what was in the way were women and little children, you would not even know it, and it was all the same. When your power is in a big gun, you don’t have any small intentions. Whatever you want to hit, you want to make dust out of it. Farms, houses, whole towns – things that people had made well and cared for a long time – you make nothing of.” Wendell Berry, *Fidelity: Five Stories* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1992), p. 86.

War is a strange, compelling, and common human activity. It destroys individuals and community memory, but also compels us to discover new ways of remembering people and preserving societal memory. Our initial sense is to accept that war and its destruction is bad for cultural institutions such as archives, museums, and libraries. After all, these institutions are prominent symbols of particular communities and cultures and are often targeted for destruction by the enemies of these groups. Yet, war also generates the creation of archives, museums, libraries, monuments, and historic sites. In this contradiction may be found the critical elements for understanding why the archival impulse, the effort to save evidence and information documenting the past, is both so important to society and often
difficult to understand. This seminar explores the rich scholarly and other literature grappling with the meaning and impact of war and considers what war suggests about archives and society. We consider the meaning of war, the archival mission, war memorials and commemoration as archives, the preservation of personal papers and artifacts and the meaning of the fragility of war documentation, government and the making of official war archives, cemeteries as archives, terrorism and new challenges to remembering war, the future of archives in war and memory, and the sometimes strange relationship between technology, war, and memory.

This seminar is part of the new focus on “Working Memory” in the LIS doctoral studies program approved by the faculty last fall. In the original proposal for this (authored by Geoffrey Bowker, Bernadette Callery, Richard J. Cox, and the late Leigh Star), we state, “For nearly half a century scholars, social pundits, and corporate ventures in the information technology arena have discussed, debated, and dissected the notion of an Information Age. As digital technologies have expanded both in their power and ubiquity, other dimensions of information become fragile—evidence, partly due to legal and accountability issues, knowledge, as the potential loss of human expertise and culture is threatened, and records, due to habitat erosions such as lost languages and lands – and have become the topic of interdisciplinary inquiry. Memory has become one of the most important and engaging topics, one that knits together technology, people, community, and culture. The fundamental issue is that libraries, archives, data repositories and the social study of science and technology – once four separate specialties – are beginning to speak to each other in new and exciting ways. We intend to strengthen this convergence by providing cross-disciplinary training for a new cohort of PhD students.” For more about the “Working Memory” focus, visit http://www.ischool.pitt.edu/memory/working-memory.php.

This is also an exploratory seminar. It builds on the instructor’s interest in archives and memory, dating back more than two decades, and reflects the instructor’s growing interest in the impact of war as the scholarship has shifted to focus in various ways on the intersection of these three topics. He is working on a brief monograph intending to explore the rich scholarly and other literature grappling with the meaning and impact of war and to consider what war suggests about archives and society. There will be discussion about the meaning of war and the archival mission, building off of the themes outlined below. These themes are not exhaustive, but they represent where scholarship has clustered or how the instructor perceives the research can be organized. In this sense, this course is, as most doctoral seminars should be, collaboration between the instructor and students carving out new, useful, and provocative research themes and agendas. As the themes should suggest, many are not only relevant to the field of archival studies but to the array of disciplines and research reflected in the notion of I-Schools.

The purposes of this course are threefold. First, students will be immersed into the
research literature concerning war, memory, and archives, with a particular focus on how these intersect. Each week students will be responsible for reading a small set of required reading or readings in common, selecting a book of their choice from the recommended readings and participating in class discussion about the book, and participating in the CourseWeb discussion board, supporting continuing discussion of the various themes of the course as outlined in the syllabus. Second, students will learn about multi-disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary research approaches and their relevance in archival studies and other aspects of the information professions. Third, the course will contribute to a framework for enabling doctoral students to consider their own interests in and aspirations for academic teaching and research careers.

A fourth potential purpose is to build a conceptual model for understanding how archives and recordkeeping in general are affected by war and how war is remembered with or without such records. The instructor is presently focused on the contradictions posed by warfare’s simultaneous destruction and creation of records and recordkeeping systems. However, there are many other ways of examining the relationship between war, memory, and archives.

**Course Requirements**

Doctoral students taking this course are required to attend all class sessions, do the assigned readings, participate in class discussions, and prepare a 25 to 35 page paper on some aspect of the course’s theme. The paper can be a critical literature review, a case study, or a research paper based on archival materials (we will discuss these various approaches early in the course). The topic can be of the student’s choosing as long as it fits into the course theme of war, memory, and archives. The paper is due on the last day of class. Each student will present (fifteen minutes) about their paper on the last class session. The Instructor will post the papers (submitted as a Word document attachment to email to the Instructor) on CourseWeb for everyone’s review. The paper should conform to the recent, 16th edition, of the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

Each week will feature some readings to be done in common by all students. Apart from these common readings, each student will be expected to select one book from each week’s bibliography and to be prepared to discuss it in class. These readings do not constitute a comprehensive bibliography on war, memory, and archives; instead, these readings reflect a representative range of research studies about these topics selected by the seminar instructor. If a doctoral student has an alternative monograph or publication he or she wants to read and discuss, the student can make such a request for the instructor’s approval.

Each student discussing a book will be expected to highlight aspects of the readings relevant to the understanding of the education of information professionals. In preparation for leading the class, the student is expected to do literature searches related to the publication’s topic and to comment on other relevant readings (especially identifying sources available on the World Wide Web). The student should post to the discussion board a list of other sources a day or two before the class session for the use of
all the other students in the course (along with at least one discussion question related to their reading).

Attendance at seminar class sessions is mandatory. Absences will necessitate documentation produced by the student or prior consultation with the instructor. Two unexcused absences will result in the lowering of the grade by one letter grade; more than two unexcused absences will result in a failing grade.

The course grade will be based on a 50/50 weighting for the papers and the class discussions of the readings and commentary on the discussion board. Due dates for various assignments are listed in the syllabus below and can be found on CourseWeb (the only significant due date, beyond weekly assignments, is the last class session and the handing in of the final paper). No incompletes will be given (except for personal emergencies) and a final due date will be negotiated.

Academic Integrity: Students in this course will be expected to comply with the University of Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity. This may include, but is not limited to, the confiscation of the examination of any individual suspected of violating University Policy. Furthermore, no student may bring any unauthorized materials to an exam, including dictionaries and programmable calculators.

Disabilities: If you have a disability that requires special testing accommodations or other classroom modifications, you need to notify both the instructor and the Disability Resources and Services no later than the 2nd week of the term. You may be asked to provide documentation of your disability to determine the appropriateness of accommodations. To notify Disability Resources and Services, call 648-7890 (Voice or TTD) to schedule an appointment. The Office is located in 216 William Pitt Union. Students who must miss an exam or class due to religious observance must notify the instructor ahead of time and make alternative arrangements.

Materials used in the course may be protected by copyright. United States copyright law, 17 USC section 101, et seq., in addition to University policy and procedures, prohibit unauthorized duplication or retransmission of course materials. See Library of Congress Copyright Office and the University Copyright Policy.

The Course

Week One. January 10, 2011 Introduction to the Course and Course Requirements

January 17, 2011 is a holiday, and there is no class.

Week Two. January 24, 2011 The Meaning of Memory
“We use memory in a double sense: to refer to what people remember – or more accurately, what they think they remember – and to describe efforts by individuals, groups, and states to foster or impose memory in the form of interpretations and commemorations of their country’s wartime role and experience.” Richard Ned Lebow, in Lebow, Kansteiner, and Fogu, eds., The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe, p. 7.

**Required Readings**


**Recommended Readings**


Kate Darian-Smith and Paula Hamilton, eds., Memory and History in Twentieth-Century Australia (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1994)


**Week Three. January 31, 2011. War, Memory, and Its Meaning**

While “war dominates culture, distorts memory, corrupts language, and infects everything around it,” war also provides meaning to our lives and society. “Even with its destruction and carnage it can give us what we long for in life,” Hedges suggests. “It can give us purpose, meaning, a reason for living.” Hedges even believes, “war fills our spiritual void.” Hedges, War Is A Force That Gives Us Meaning, pp. 3, 158.

“Moral witnesses speak to us from the other side of a veil. They have seen radical evil and have returned to tell the tale. They embody memory of a certain kind, and remind us that remembering the cruelties of the past is not a choice but a necessity. They are part of the archive. They demand that we face them. Their plea for recognition, for active knowledge, or acknowledgement, is at the heart of the memory boom.” Jay Winter, Remembering War, p. 271.
Required Readings


Recommended Meanings


Victor Davis Hanson, *The Father of Us All: War and History, Ancient and Modern* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2010).


Michael Ignatieff, *Virtual War: Kosovo and Beyond* (New York: Picador USA, 2000).


Alfred E. Young, *The Shoemaker and the Tea Party: Memory and the American
"History – what trained historians do – is a reasoned reconstruction of the past rooted in research; it tends to be critical and skeptical of human motive and action, and therefore more secular than what people commonly refer to as memory. History can be read by or belong to everyone; it assesses change and progress over time, and is therefore more relative, more contingent upon place, chronology, and scale. Memory, however, is often treated as a sacred set of potentially absolute meanings and stories, possessed as the heritage or identity of a community. Memory is often owned; history, interpreted. Memory is passed down through generations; history is revised. Memory often coalesces in objects, sacred sites, and monuments; history seeks to understand contexts and the complexity of cause and effect. History asserts the authority of academic training and recognized canons of evidence; memory carries the often more powerful authority of community membership and experience. David Blight, *Beyond the Battlefield*, pp. 1-2.

**Required Readings**


**Recommended Readings**


John R. Neff, Honoring the Civil War Dead: Commemoration and the Problem of Reconciliation (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005).


**Week 5. February 14, 2011. 9/11 and Memory: Another Case Study**

“And as the smoke cleared in those very early days, those sixteen acres downtown were being asked to do the impossible: to make sense of the senseless; to extol the dead even as they were being exhumed; to transform victims into heroes and heroes into gods; to find meaning in the squalor of real-time mass murder.” Phillip Nobel, Sixteen Acres, p. 22.

“In almost every imaginable way, 9-11 shocked, mesmerized, and electrified the world – abetted by technologies of mass communication that were undreamed of in 1941. Apart from a few photographs of dark clouds of smoke billowing from crippled warships, no one outside Pearl Harbor itself really ‘saw’ the attack. Even later ‘documentary’ film footage, such as in John Ford’s 1943 Academy Award-winning December 7ty, was mostly contrived. By contrast, almost everyone in the developed world was able to bear eyewitness – over and over and over again – to September 11.” (Dower, Cultures of War, p. 53).

**Required Reading**


**Recommended Readings**


**Week 6. February 21, 2011. Targeting Culture, Looting the Past (and Memory)**

“The book is the double of the man, and burning it is the equivalent of killing him.” Lucien X. Polastron, *Books on Fire*, p. x.

**Required Readings**


**Recommended Readings**


Week 7. February 28, 2011. Collecting, Documenting, and Remembering War

"Archives are not just the bare bones of history for future generations; they are part of the history-making process. Archives are not neutral, nor are their creation impartial." Tim Cook, *Clio's Warriors*, p. 38.

Required Readings

Recommended Readings


**SPRING BREAK. March 7-11, 2011. Have a nice break!**


“‘Look at these buttons,’ one soldier said, fingering his gray wool jacket. ‘I soaked them overnight in a saucer filled with urine.’ Uric acid oxidized the brass, giving it the patina of buttons from the 1860s. ‘My wife woke up this morning, sniffed the air and said, ‘Tim, you’ve been peeing on your buttons again.’” Tony Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic*, p. 7.

**Required Reading**

Recommended Readings


Gary R. Edgerton, Ken Burns’s America (New York: Palgrave, 2001).


Christopher R. Leahey, Whitewashing War: Historical Myth, Corporate Textbooks, and Possibilities for Democratic Education (New York: Teachers College/ Columbia University, 2010).


The “most lasting legacy of the [Holocaust-era declassification] effort [he] led was simply the emergence of the truth. . . . Historical facts can be suppressed, but eventually they bubble to the surface. What started as a tiny trickle from long-buried U.S. archives became a torrent of information that helps provide a final accounting for World War II.” Eizenstat, Imperfect Justice, p. 346.

Required Reading

**Recommended Readings**

Kai Bird and Lawrence Lifschultz, eds., *Hiroshima's Shadow* (Stony Creek, Conn.: The Pamphleteer’s Press, 1998).


**Week 10. March 28, 2011. The Holocaust as Memory Industry; Yet Another Case Study**

“From a position of relative ignorance about the Holocaust on the part of non-survivors and relative silence about the Holocaust on the part of survivors, the Holocaust has emerged – in the Western World – as probably the most talked about and oft-represented event of the twentieth century.” Tim Cole, *Selling the Holocaust*, p. 190.

“The annihilation of Jewish communities was accompanied by the destruction of photographs, letters, and diaries . . . . This asymmetry in historical records persisted in accounts written after the war . . . . Historical research into the Holocaust lagged behind scholarly investigation into the military history of World War II. Even today it is hard to imagine what a full account of the Shoah might be, since the destruction of the accounts of the victims is so vast. The exceptional fact of the murder of the majority of Jews in Europe created silences that are difficult to gauge. The disparity in the ability to bear witness – this, too, was part of the German empire” (Peter Fritzsche, *Life and Death in the Third Reich*, pp. 153-154).

**Required Reading**

Recommended Readings


Week 11. April 4, 2011. Reparations and Justice

The reports on the looted assets of Holocaust victims “could not have been written by mobilized federal historians and researchers without the enthusiastic support and full resources of the National Archives, which became the headquarters of the international research in Holocaust-era assets” (William Slany in Bazyler and Alford, eds., *Holocaust Restitution*, p. 35).

“The war ended without an accounting or acknowledgment of the war crimes they witnessed. Their retelling comes at an equally important time when, having failed to address the past, we’re destined to repeat it” (Deborah Nelson, *The War Behind Me*, p. 5).
**Required Readings**


**Recommended Readings**


**Week 12. April 11, 2011. The Citizen, the Soldier, and the Experience of War**

“Throughout our country, old war letters are regularly being destroyed, misplaced, lost to fire and water damage, or thrown away. These letters are the first, unfiltered drafts of history. They are eyewitness accounts that record not only the minute details of war but the personal insight and perspective no photograph or film reel can replicate. And each one represents another page in our national autobiography. Millions of these letters – maybe more – remain tucked away in attics, basements, and closets in every community in America. It is exhilarating to think of what is yet to be uncovered. But it is equally as discouraging to consider, if these letters are neglected, what may be lost forever.” Andrew Carroll, *War Letters*, p. 36.

**Required Reading**
Pursue the Legacy Project website: “Founded in 1998, the Legacy Project is a national, all-volunteer initiative that encourages Americans to seek out and preserve the personal correspondence of our nation’s veterans, active-duty troops, and their loved ones. No one can tell the stories of these men and women better than they can, and we believe that their sacrifices, humanity, and experiences are best recorded in their own words—the letters and e-mails they have written in times of war.” The website is available at t http://warletters.com/.

Recommended Readings

Veterans History Project, About the Project, http://www.loc.gov/vets/about.html


**Week 13. April 18, 2011. Monuments, Memorials, Cemeteries, Museums, and the War Archive**

“The rhetoric of Civil War mortality statistics provided the language for a meditation on the deeper human meaning of the conflict and its unprecedented destructiveness, as well as for the exploration of the place of the individual in a world of mass – and increasingly mechanized – slaughter. It was about what counted in a world transformed.” Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering*, p. 265.

**Required Readings**


**Recommended Readings**


**Week 14. April 25, 2011. Presentation and Discussion of Student Papers.**