MHIS750
Remembering Trauma in the 20th Century
S1 Day 2016
Dept of Modern History, Politics & International Relations

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## General Information

**Unit convenor and teaching staff**

**Convenor**
Margaret Sampson  
[margaret.sampson@mq.edu.au](mailto:margaret.sampson@mq.edu.au)

Contact via email
Weekly session Friday 4:00pm- 6:00pm Y3A 218 Tutorial Rm

**Administrator for Modern History**
Jackie Anker  
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Contact via 02 9850 8879  
W6A 400

**Credit points**
4

**Prerequisites**
Admission to MRes

**Corequisites**

**Co-badged status**
MHPG850

**Unit description**
This unit considers how collective traumas were remembered in the 20th century. It examines how individuals, communities, nations and societies have remembered events like the Holocaust, colonialism, genocide, wartime slaughter and epidemics. This involves investigating how various artefacts of trauma (such as memorials, reconciliation commissions, testimonies and political protests) attempt to make sense of the past for particular political and psychological affect. In so doing, the unit explores how collective dynamics of remembrance and/or forgetting sustain and disavow identities, shape and challenge political movements and impact everyday lives.

## Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at [https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates](https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates)

## Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:
Understand and evaluate the category of trauma in historical analysis
Critically evaluate the use of interdisciplinary approaches in historical research
Identify, critically analyze and discuss the major debates and controversies involved in this subject
Understand and explain why different scholars interpret sources differently, and how they construct their arguments
Devise, plan and execute an original piece of historical research
Identify the most creative and appropriate strategies to conduct research that will solve these research problems or generate new knowledge
Evaluate existing historical evidence and construct your own critical, scholarly interpretation of the key issues involved in researching an episode of historical trauma
Evaluate the utility of trauma as a category to conduct historical research

**General Assessment Information**

**Referencing**

All essays should comply with the MQ Modern History style guide. This is available online [http://www.modhist.mq.edu.au/writingessays.html](http://www.modhist.mq.edu.au/writingessays.html)

**Assignment Submission**

You must submit all your assignments via turnitin assignments on ilearn.

**Extensions and Penalties**

Late essays will be penalized 2% per business day. Extensions, if required, must be requested with supporting documentation before the due date.

**Returning Assignments**

Assessment will be returned (except the take-home synoptic paper) within 3 weeks.

### Assessment Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion leadership one week</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>week 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seminar participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>week 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary Research Exercise</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>week 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Essay</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>week 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synoptic Paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>week 13</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Discussion leadership one week
Due: week 12
Weighting: 10%
Each student will launch discussion of one week’s topic to be allocated in the first week of discussions

On successful completion you will be able to:
• Critically evaluate the use of interdisciplinary approaches in historical research
• Understand and explain why different scholars interpret sources differently, and how they construct their arguments

Seminar participation
Due: week 12
Weighting: 10%
Weekly seminars are compulsory. Students will be assessed on their active participation in weekly discussions.

On successful completion you will be able to:
• Understand and evaluate the category of trauma in historical analysis

Preliminary Research Exercise
Due: week 4
Weighting: 10%
1,000 words This exercise will provide students with the opportunity to submit a brief paper that explores some of the questions about their major research essay and introduces the literature.

In this assignment you must:
1. Compile a reading list and describe how at least three secondary sources will assist you to answer the question.
2. Describe the history of your chosen artifact and what questions it raises about trauma and memory

On successful completion you will be able to:
• Critically evaluate the use of interdisciplinary approaches in historical research
• Identify, critically analyze and discuss the major debates and controversies involved in this subject
• Devise, plan and execute an original piece of historical research
• Identify the most creative and appropriate strategies to conduct research that will solve these research problems or generate new knowledge

• Evaluate existing historical evidence and construct your own critical, scholarly interpretation of the key issues involved in researching an episode of historical trauma

Research Essay

Due: week 10
Weighting: 40%

2,500 words Students will devise and complete a research essay that investigates the historical remembrance of an episode of collective trauma

Answer one of the following questions with reference to one artifact of trauma (such as a memorial, government commission, film, memoir, object etc) OR devise an essay topic of your own concerning an episode of remembering trauma in the 20thc. The topic must be passed by the convenor first and must not be work that you have submitted elsewhere.

1. Did telling the truth in South Africa’s TRC (Truth and Reconciliation Commission) alleviate the trauma of apartheid?


2. Did the AIDS quilt dull the political edge of the HIV/AIDS crisis in the US?


3. How did the apology by the Rudd government recognise the trauma of the stolen generations? Was it (psychologically or politically) adequate?


4. Why did soldiers struggle to articulate the trauma of WWI?


5. Does testimony ever do justice to the trauma of the Holocaust?


6. How has a unified German state attempted to come to terms with the Holocaust?

https://unitguides.mq.edu.au/unit_offerings/60645/unit_guide/print

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Understand and explain why different scholars interpret sources differently, and how they construct their arguments
- Devise, plan and execute an original piece of historical research
- Identify the most creative and appropriate strategies to conduct research that will solve these research problems or generate new knowledge
- Evaluate existing historical evidence and construct your own critical, scholarly interpretation of the key issues involved in researching an episode of historical trauma

**Synoptic Paper**

**Due: week 13**  
**Weighting: 30%**

2,000 words. The question for this assignment will be posted online. You will not be required to complete any further research.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Understand and evaluate the category of trauma in historical analysis
- Critically evaluate the use of interdisciplinary approaches in historical research
- Identify, critically analyze and discuss the major debates and controversies involved in this subject
- Evaluate the utility of trauma as a category to conduct historical research

**Delivery and Resources**

**Required and Recommended Resources**

A book of required readings is available from the beginning of the ilearn site—some further useful (but not compulsory) titles have been listed below.

May additional resources are available online on our ilearn site.


Unit Schedule

Week 1- Introduction: Trauma as a category of historical analysis

Essential Readings


Further Readings


Questions
• How might we define and discern collective historical trauma?
• In what ways can past trauma intrude upon the present?
• Is a traumatised relationship to the past ahistorical?
• Do traumatic experiences forge collective identities?

Week 2 - Collective Memory and Identity

**Essential Readings**


**Further Readings**


**Questions**

• What is ‘collective memory’?
• What can this reveal about the societies in which it emerges?
• What kinds of groups “possess” collective memories?
• Why has there been a boom in the study of memory in late modernity?
Week 3 - WWI: Psychoanalysis and the discovery of trauma

**Essential Readings**


**Further Readings**


**Questions**

- What were the connections between new ways of understanding trauma and the characteristics of modernity?
- Was the advent of modernity itself traumatic?
- Did psychiatrists reveal or invent the category of trauma in their treatment of shell-shock?
- How did the trauma of soldiers reverberate in the post war years?

Week 4 - Holocaust I: Experience and Testimony
Essential Readings


Further Readings


Questions

• Does the testimony of trauma always have an imagined witness?
• What does Laub mean when he describes the holocaust as an event without a witness?
• How does the way historians feel about historical trauma affect the way they write?
• Should we test traumatic testimony for its historical accuracy?

Week 5 - Holocaust II: Popular Culture
**Essential Readings**

Watch either:

or excerpts from
[widely available online]

And read either:

or

**Further Readings**


**Questions**

- Why has the Holocaust taken so much space in public memory?
- Can film adequately represent the trauma of the Holocaust?
Do you think film provides a mechanism for the trauma of the Holocaust to be experienced by subsequent generations?

Was Benigni’s film dishonest?

Week 6 - Holocaust III: The trauma of perpetrators

Essential Readings


Further Readings


Harris, Cecily. “Germany Memory of the Holocaust: The Emergence of Counter-Memorials.” Penn History Review 17, 2 (Spring 2010): 34-59.

Questions

• According to the Mitscherlichs, why and how did West Germans deny their Nazi past in the post-war decades?

• What historical factors complicate or undermine the Mitscherlich’s psychological thesis of
collective German guilt?
- What do conventional memorials to the Holocaust silence?
- How do counter-memorials attempt to change the ways Germans engage with their Nazi past?

**Week 7 - Northern Ireland: Contested Sites of Commemoration**

**Essential Readings**


**Further Readings**


**Questions**

- How is trauma manifested in Northern Ireland?
- What is post-memory?
- How is trauma attached to place?
- How have commemorative sites in Northern Ireland repeated the troubled politics of Northern Ireland?
Week 8 - Historical Truths and the “Working Through” of Colonial Wounds

**Essential Readings**


**Further Readings**


**Questions**

- According to Chakrabarty, what historical conditions provide the mechanism for the recognition of historical wounds?
- Why is this recognition important? And, what are its effects?
- Does telling the truth about a traumatic episode necessarily produce useful historical and psychological outcomes?
Week 9 Reading Week

Week 10: HIV/AIDS

**Essential Readings**


**Further Readings**


**Questions**

- Who experienced the AIDS crisis as traumatic? Who didn’t?
- How did the AIDS quilt politicise grief during the 1980s and 1990s?
- Do types of traumas deserve specific types of memorialisation?
- Why are some traumas granted national recognition and others not?
Week 11 - The Stolen Generation

**Essential Readings**


**Further Readings**


Questions

- Who remembers the trauma of the stolen generations?
- Why was the settler state unwilling to apologise for so many years?
- Have other events provided the framework for the remembrance of colonial wounds?

Week 12- The Trauma of 9/11

**Essential Readings**


Sturken, Marita. “Tourism and Sacred Ground: The Space of Ground Zero.” In *Tourists of*
**Further Readings**


**Questions**

- Why is Marshall Clark optimistic about the potential of oral history? Do you agree?
- How might oral testimony draw on wider cultural frames of remembrance?
- Are there any ethical problems with interviewing traumatised subjects?
- What does Sturken’s study of tourism suggest about the political effects of trauma?

**Week 13 - Conclusions**

**Essential Readings**


**Further Readings**


Kansteiner, Wulf. “Genealogy of a category mistake: a critical intellectual history of the cultural


**Questions**

- Are there dangers in using psychological categories to investigate the past?
- Do you think that a wider culture of “victimhood” has emerged in late modernity?
- Should we draw differences between the types of trauma people experience? How might we do so?

**Policies and Procedures**

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:


In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs) of Policy Central.

**Student Code of Conduct**

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: [https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/)

**Results**

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your
Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit http://students.mq.edu.au/support/

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- Workshops
- StudyWise
- Academic Integrity Module for Students
- Ask a Learning Adviser

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the Disability Service who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University’s IT, you must adhere to the Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy. The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

PG - Capable of Professional and Personal Judgment and Initiative

Our postgraduates will demonstrate a high standard of discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgment. They will have the ability to make informed choices and decisions that reflect both the nature of their professional work and their personal perspectives.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Identify the most creative and appropriate strategies to conduct research that will solve these research problems or generate new knowledge
- Evaluate existing historical evidence and construct your own critical, scholarly
interpretation of the key issues involved in researching an episode of historical trauma

• Evaluate the utility of trauma as a category to conduct historical research

PG - Discipline Knowledge and Skills
Our postgraduates will be able to demonstrate a significantly enhanced depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content knowledge in their chosen fields.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

• Understand and evaluate the category of trauma in historical analysis
• Critically evaluate the use of interdisciplinary approaches in historical research
• Evaluate existing historical evidence and construct your own critical, scholarly interpretation of the key issues involved in researching an episode of historical trauma
• Evaluate the utility of trauma as a category to conduct historical research

PG - Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking
Our postgraduates will be capable of utilising and reflecting on prior knowledge and experience, of applying higher level critical thinking skills, and of integrating and synthesising learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments. A characteristic of this form of thinking is the generation of new, professionally oriented knowledge through personal or group-based critique of practice and theory.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

• Identify, critically analyze and discuss the major debates and controversies involved in this subject
• Understand and explain why different scholars interpret sources differently, and how they construct their arguments
• Evaluate existing historical evidence and construct your own critical, scholarly interpretation of the key issues involved in researching an episode of historical trauma
• Evaluate the utility of trauma as a category to conduct historical research

Assessment task

• Synoptic Paper

PG - Research and Problem Solving Capability
Our postgraduates will be capable of systematic enquiry; able to use research skills to create new knowledge that can be applied to real world issues, or contribute to a field of study or practice to enhance society. They will be capable of creative questioning, problem finding and
This graduate capability is supported by:

**Learning outcomes**
- Devise, plan and execute an original piece of historical research
- Identify the most creative and appropriate strategies to conduct research that will solve these research problems or generate new knowledge

**Assessment tasks**
- Preliminary Research Exercise
- Research Essay

**PG - Effective Communication**
Our postgraduates will be able to communicate effectively and convey their views to different social, cultural, and professional audiences. They will be able to use a variety of technologically supported media to communicate with empathy using a range of written, spoken or visual formats.

This graduate capability is supported by:

**Learning outcome**
- Devise, plan and execute an original piece of historical research

**Assessment tasks**
- Discussion leadership one week
- Seminar participation
- Research Essay
- Synoptic Paper

**PG - Engaged and Responsible, Active and Ethical Citizens**
Our postgraduates will be ethically aware and capable of confident transformative action in relation to their professional responsibilities and the wider community. They will have a sense of connectedness with others and country and have a sense of mutual obligation. They will be able to appreciate the impact of their professional roles for social justice and inclusion related to national and global issues.

This graduate capability is supported by:

**Learning outcome**
- Evaluate the utility of trauma as a category to conduct historical research

**Assessment task**
- Synoptic Paper