

How Societies Remember?

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MW 02:50-04:10P

Bildner Center, 12 College Avenue Room 206

College Ave Campus

Will Count Towards SAS - Jewish Studies & History Major

How do societies establish their collective identities? How do they remember their origins and publicly share important turning points in their history? How are wars commemorated? How do we invent new traditions to memorialize recent events and what makes their memorialization successful? How is the memory of prominent leaders and folk heroes, villains and foes constructed and transmitted to future generations? What happens when memories of specific groups challenge an official narrative about the past? How are collective memories transformed over time? What are the special challenges of immigrants' memories and what is distinct about "heritage tourism"?

These are some of the questions that we will address in this seminar as we explore the ways in which cultural memory is created, transmitted, contested, and reshaped. We will analyze examples of various sites of memory including holidays and memorial days, archeological sites and historical museums, monuments and parks, family albums and films. We will address the impact of technology on the formation of memories of small groups such as a family or high school seniors, and the globalization of memory as occurred in cases such as the Holocaust, the fall of the Berlin Wall, or September 11. Class discussion will draw on the readings representing a wide range of cross-cultural examples, selected films, photographs and on-site visits. Assignments will include students' observations at a site of memory and a research project on a topic related to cultural memory.

Yael Zerubavel is a professor of Jewish Studies and History and is an affiliated faculty of Middle Eastern Studies, Comparative Literature and Women's Studies. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania and later returned to teach there before she moved to Rutgers. The study of collective memory is at the heart of her academic research, and continues to fascinate her. She has published widely on Israeli national memory, national myths, war and trauma, Holocaust memory, Jewish immigrants' memories, and issues of space and memory, using historical and media sources, fiction, and film. Her last article in *History & Memory* (2014) addresses the memorialization of patriotic death in Israel through settlement names that feature the collective number of the dead and the challenges that this commemoration faces.