



Course and Examination Fact Sheet: Spring Semester 2025

8,667: Kulturen/Cultures: How Do We Remember? The Anthropology of Memory and Forgetting

ECTS credits: 3

Overview examination/s

(binding regulations see below)

decentral - Written work, Digital, Individual work individual grade (70%)

Examination time: Term time

decentral - Presentation, Analog, Group work group grade (30%)

Examination time: Term time

Attached courses

Timetable -- Language -- Lecturer

[8,667,1.00 Kulturen/Cultures: How Do We Remember? The Anthropology of Memory and Forgetting](#) -- English -- [Kesselring Rita](#)

Course information

Course prerequisites

None

Learning objectives

Students

- have a differentiated idea of sociological and anthropological approaches to memory and can put it in context to other – more historical and textual – approaches.
- can explain theories of memories with concrete examples from across the world.
- can apply theories of memory on a specific case.

Course content

Memory studies, an interdisciplinary field, has long focused on collective, ritualized remembering such as national remembrance. Since the 1990s, the focus has shifted to more mundane, everyday forms of memory. As part of the post-modernist attempt to deconstruct much of how the social sciences have approached their subject, the interest in reliability of information was replaced by an interest in how memory is lived and acted upon. Memory, it is argued, is close to experience. In other words, memory is the lived past.

In this course, we learn how anthropology and related disciplines approach memory not as static, but as something that is made and re-made, and that is contested. We read and discuss anthropological texts that deal with a variety of ways how we remember: bodily, silently, individually, collectively, through other people and objects. The seminar is based on a close reading of primary texts and concrete examples (colonial restitution, repression, testimony, silence, mourning, violence, digitization).

The seminar is meant for students who are interesting in the notion of memory – what is it, how do people remember, how do societies remember? – but who also have an interest in looking at these questions from a theoretical and empirical perspective. The seminar focuses on historical, sociological and anthropological literature and does not include psychological perspectives on the topic.

Course structure and indications of the learning and teaching design



The course starts with an introduction into the classics in memory studies where we debate the difference between individual and collective memory. How do these two relate? Is there something like a societal memory, and how is it transmitted across generations? We then proceed to concrete anthropological and more contemporary research in different parts of the world (Burundi, China, Germany, India, Israel, South Africa) on memory's relationship with the past, the body, critique, place, life stories and forgetting. The seminar is set up as an interactive space where the lecturer and students have a dialogue.

Contextual Studies are considered part of **Contact Learning**; thus, taking part properly implies **regular attendance**. It is the students' own responsibility to ensure that there is **no timetable clash** between the courses they have chosen. A detailed course outline and all relevant documents will be made available on **StudyNet**. Only the current timetable as published on **Courses** does apply.

Course literature

Appadurai, Arjun. 1981. "The Past as a Scarce Resource." *Man* 16: 201–219.

Assmann, Aleida. „Re-framing Memory. Between Individual and Collective Forms of Constructing the Past". In *Performing the Past: Memory, History, and Identity in Modern Europe*, edited by Frank van Vree, Jay M. Winter, und Karin Tilmans, 35–50. Amsterdam University Press, 2012.

Connerton, Paul. 2008. "Seven Types of Forgetting." *Memory Studies* 1(1): 59–71.

Halbwachs, Maurice. 1980. "Individual Memory and Collective Memory". In: *The Collective Memory*. New York: Harper&Row Colophon Books: 22-47 (first published in French in 1950)

He, Rowena Xiaoqing. 2014. *Tiananmen Exiles: Voices of the Struggle for Democracy in China*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. (one chapter, tbc)

Kesselring, Rita. 2017. "Embodied Memory and the Social". In: *Bodies of Truth: Law, Memory and Emancipation in Post-Apartheid South Africa*. Stanford Series in Human Rights. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press: 77–110.

Kidron, Carol A. 2009. "Towards an Ethnography of Silence: The Lived Presence of the Past in the Everyday Life of Holocaust Trauma Survivors and Their Descendants in Israel." *Current Anthropology* 50(1): 5–27.

Malkki, Liisa Helena. 1992. "National Geographic: The Rooting of Peoples and the Territorialization of National Identity Among Scholars and Refugees." *Cultural Anthropology* 7(1): 24–44.

Pentzold, Christian. 2009. „Fixing the Floating Gap: The Online Encyclopaedia Wikipedia as a Global Memory Place". *Memory Studies* 2(2): 255–72.

Additional course information

Rita Kesselring is Associate Professor of Urban Studies. She has extensive ethnographic research experience in Southern Africa with a focus on Zambia and South Africa. Her work covers a variety of themes such as urbanization, mining, local administration, corporate governance, legal redress, memory, civil society, global interdependencies, and urban dwelling and placemaking.

Examination information

Examination sub part/s

1. Examination sub part (1/2)

Examination modalities

Examination type	Written work
Responsible for organisation	decentral
Examination form	Written work
Examination mode	Digital
Time of examination	Term time
Examination execution	Asynchronous
Examination location	Off Campus
Grading type	Individual work individual grade
Weighting	70%
Duration	--

Examination languages



Question language: English

Answer language: English

Remark

--

Examination-aid rule

Free aids provision

Basically, students are free to choose aids. Any restrictions are defined by the faculty members in charge of the examination under supplementary aids.

Supplementary aids

--

2. Examination sub part (2/2)

Examination modalities

Examination type	Presentation
Responsible for organisation	decentral
Examination form	Oral examination
Examination mode	Analog
Time of examination	Term time
Examination execution	Asynchronous
Examination location	On Campus
Grading type	Group work group grade
Weighting	30%
Duration	--

Examination languages

Question language: English

Answer language: English

Remark

--

Examination-aid rule

Free aids provision

Basically, students are free to choose aids. Any restrictions are defined by the faculty members in charge of the examination under supplementary aids.

Supplementary aids

--

Examination content

1. Presentation (30%): Students will be asked to give an interactive presentation in one of the seminar's sessions. Presentations will be given in groups and based on a mandatory text and some further research.
2. Paper (70%): The max. length of seminar paper will be 12'000 characters including spaces, excluding references etc. The paper will be written at home during the term and during the two weeks following the end of the seminar. For the paper, students will be expected to draw on all course material – texts, discussions, presentations. They can choose their topic.

Examination relevant literature



See Course-Literature.

Please note

Please note that only this fact sheet and the examination schedule published at the time of bidding are binding and takes precedence over other information, such as information on StudyNet (Canvas), on lecturers' websites and information in lectures etc.

Any references and links to third-party content within the fact sheet are only of a supplementary, informative nature and lie outside the area of responsibility of the University of St.Gallen.

Documents and materials are only relevant for central examinations if they are available by the end of the lecture period (CW21) at the latest. In the case of centrally organised mid-term examinations, the documents and materials up to CW 13 (Monday, 25 March 2025) are relevant for testing.

Binding nature of the fact sheets:

- Course information as well as examination date (organised centrally/decentrally) and form of examination: from bidding start in CW 04 (Thursday, 23 January 2025);
- Examination information (supplementary aids, examination contents, examination literature) for decentralised examinations: in CW 12 (Monday, 17 March 2025);
- Examination information (supplementary aids, examination contents, examination literature) for centrally organised mid-term examinations: in CW 14 (Monday, 31 March 2025);
- Examination information (regulations on aids, examination contents, examination literature) for centrally organised examinations: two weeks before ending with de-registration period in CW 15 (Monday, 07 April 2025).