Syllabus of the course: “Historical Memory and Narratives of Identity”
Master’s program “Applied and Interdisciplinary History «Usable Pasts»”

Government of the Russian Federation
National Research University Higher School of Economics
Saint-Petersburg School of Social Sciences and Humanities

Syllabus of the course:

**Historical Memory and Narratives of Identity**

Master’s program «Applied and Interdisciplinary History «Usable Pasts»»

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Head of the program: Julia Lajus (signature)

18 September 2015
Course type: compulsory, key course

The prerequisites for this course include introductory-level familiarity with modern history and critical and social theory.

Russian Summary/Аннотация

Курс представляет собой введение в проблематику исследований исторической памяти как социально и культурно укорененного нарратива идентичности. Он построен как серия отдельных случаев, иллюстрирующих как различный эмпирический материал в этой области, так и различные теоретические вопросы, вытекающих из ключевых слов названия данного курса: Каковы основные подходы к социальной и культурной памяти? Какая именно, и чья, история является предметом памяти и её нарративного воспроизведения? Как понимается идентичность? Курс рассматривает такие модальности социальной организации исторической памяти как национализм, империю, (пост)социализм и неолиберализм и др., а формы, способы и места памяти, от нарративных (исторический текст, архив, блог) до невербальных (аффект, тело), культурного наследия и материальных объектов, включая архитектуру.

Abstract

This course is to introduce students to methodologies that are required for understanding history as a multiple, layered, and contested set of representations. The course is built as an in-depth series of case studies, with the aim of bringing together three distinct areas of analytical questions that are implied by its title’s key terms: “history”, “memory” and “identity”: What are main approaches to social and cultural memory? What, and whose history is being remembered and narrated? How identity is understood?

1. Memory. This course gives a thorough grounding in classic work on memory from Durkheimean, psychoanalytical and Marxist perspectives, including Maurice Halbwachs and Pierre Nora, and contrasting it with the studies that draw on post-structuralist and cognitive approaches, as well as theories of affect and subjectivity.

2. History. The course asks what can be learned about societies from ways in which they are concerned with history. What are some of the types of historical consciousness and cultural notions of history, of lack thereof? How one can productively compare imperial and universalist notions of history as progress with ideas about historical and cultural uniqueness and exceptionalism, including nationalism, as well as with conceptualizations of history as justice, as trauma, and as objects of consumption. What are practices of production, exchange and consumption of historical narratives in education, tourism and politics?

3. Identity. This term has become one of the key categories in historical and social analysis. One of the goals of the course is to ask what identity is, and what approaches to identity are useful for understanding historical memory.

The course’ point of departure is Romantic and post-Romantic discourses on communities, uniqueness and exceptionality, including the myths of origin and discourse of cultural exclusivity, narratives of national history and pantheons of national heroes. It then moves on to empire and postcoloniality, (post)socialism and (neo)liberalism as equally
distinct forms of historical memory organization, with their own repertoires of referential imagery and understandings of boundaries. It explores the issues of memory of war, including civil war and ethnic conflict. Archive, film, body and material objects, including buildings, are approached as culturally-specific memory devices and contested sites for historical memory. Genres of historical narratives, including historiography, ethnology and anthropology, and museum are discussed.

**Learning Objectives** of this course is to give students experience in hands-on exploration of practices of historical memory and identity formation.

**Learning Outcomes** of this course are abilities to conceptually and critically unpack the notions of different forms of historical memory, and discuss how they constitute, and are constituted by, different kinds of identity. These outcomes include the list of competences detailed below

Upon completion of the course students will be examined in:

- knowledge of key approaches to memory, practices of commemoration, and narratives of history;
- ability to draw distinctions between different modalities of historical memory, including the state, local, personal, regional, ethnic and national narratives, forms of their contestation in the processes of narrative production and circulation;
- understanding how situated are different agents of social and cultural memory;
- comprehension of approaches to identity, in particular, its primordial, instrumental and constructivist understandings;
- proficiency in debating these issues with sufficient empirical grounding in work on specific regional and historical contexts.

**List of competences.** As a result of completing the course, students will develop the following competences:

**Systemic competences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code (RUS)</th>
<th>Code (ENG)</th>
<th>Competence description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CK-2</td>
<td>SC-2</td>
<td>Способен формулировать научные концепции, создавать модели, вырабатывать и апробировать новые методы и инструменты профессиональной деятельности</td>
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<td>Ability to generate research concepts and theoretical models, to test new methods and tools for professional research activities</td>
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СК-6 SC-6 Способен анализировать, верифицировать, оценивать полноту информации в ходе профессиональной деятельности, при необходимости восполнять и синтезировать недостающую информацию
The ability to analyze, verify and assess the sufficiency of available information in the course professional research activity and, if necessary, generate and synthesize information that is lacking for analysis.

СК-8 SC-8 Способен вести профессиональную, в том числе научно-исследовательскую деятельность в международной среде
Ability to carry out research and other professional activities in international environment

Professional competencies

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<tr>
<th>Code (RUS)</th>
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<td>ПК-1 PC-1</td>
<td>вести исследовательскую деятельность, с применением современных методов и методик исследования, используя знания в области гуманитарных и социальных наук и смежных областей научного знания</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ability to carry out research practices drawing on up-to-date research methodologies and knowledge in humanities, social sciences and other relevant areas of scholarship</td>
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<td>ПК-2 PC-2</td>
<td>осуществлять междисциплинарное взаимодействие и сотрудничество с представителями смежных областей знания в ходе решения научно-исследовательских и прикладных задач</td>
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<td>Ability to engage in interdisciplinary interaction and collaboration with scholars in relevant research areas in order to adequately address fundamental and applied research problems</td>
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Master’s program “Applied and Interdisciplinary History «Usable Past»”

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<th>Code (RUS)</th>
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<td>ПК-7</td>
<td>PC-7</td>
<td>Ability to formulate relevant and promising research questions, study of which may enrich history, and to adequately address and resolve prospective fundamental and applied research issues</td>
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<td>ПК-10</td>
<td>PC-10</td>
<td>Ability to carry out academically-sound expert analysis that would be based on retrospective information about various practices of the state, municipal and civic institutions, media and cultural organizations, including communication and information technologies search and process methods</td>
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Personal and social competencies

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<td>ПК-23</td>
<td>PC-23</td>
<td>Ability to make conscious choices in strategies of interpersonal interactions</td>
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<td>ПК-24</td>
<td>PC-24</td>
<td>Ability to solve problems in worldview, social and personal areas</td>
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Methods of Instruction
The course consists of both lectures and seminars. Seminars will focus on marked* key readings for each of the themes (see curriculum below).

Grading System:
- seminar participation (15%)
- class assignments (35%)
- take home final essay exam (50%)
- late assignments will be marked down by 10% of the mark per day
- if you plagiarize, you fail.

Guidelines for Knowledge Assessment

Course Plan

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>№</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Total Hours</th>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Sacrifice and ritual memory</td>
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Curriculum (by theme)

1. Memory and collective representations
   Klein, Norman The History of Forgetting: Los Angeles and the Erasure of Memory. Verso 1997

2. Blog, diary, autobiography

3. The invention of tradition


4. Purity and exile


5. Heritage as property


6. Sacrifice and ritual memory


7. Body and the gender of memory


8. Discourses of the Vanishing

Rouch, Jean 1955: Les Maitres Fous (The Mad Masters) [film]

9. Affect, memory, identity


10. Necropolitics


11. Consumption


**Course Reading List**

**Required Readings:**


Optional Readings:


Klein, Norman The History of Forgetting: Los Angeles and the Erasure of Memory. Verso 1997


Rouch, Jean 1955: Les Maîtres Fous (The Mad Masters) [film]


