Syllabus

WITNESSING MEMORY AND MEDIA - 50967

Last update 13-02-2014

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 2nd degree (Master)

Responsible Department: Communication and Journalism

Academic year: 1

Semester: 2nd Semester

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Amit Pinchevski

Coordinator Email: amitpi@mscc.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: Mon 16-17

Teaching Staff:
Dr. Amit Pinchevski
Course/Module description:
What does it mean to be a witness? What are the ethical stakes in witnessing? Do media turn us into witnesses, and if so what might this mean? What are the social, political and cultural consequences of witnessing in our time? These are some of the questions to be taken up in this seminar. Witnessing is a term laden with historical legacies in religion, law and science—but also with recent relevance in philosophy, history and literature. The last century has seen the rise of the witness in the wake of unprecedented devastation, particularly that of the Holocaust, but also the development of technological media that redefine the scope and pertinence of what it means to be a witness. The seminar will locate the contemporary significance of witnessing between these two poles, bringing it to bear on key questions in communication and media studies.

Course/Module aims:
The first part of the seminar will be devoted to foundational texts, followed by a series of cases and issues at the conjunction of media and witnessing. Among them: Levinas’s ethics as horizon of witnessing; testimony and the failure of language; the trauma testimony discourse; media and trauma: the case of the Eichmann trial; testimony and new archival formations; technologies of memory; witnessing through the media: the media witnessing discourse; distant suffering and moral action. Readings will include texts in communication and media studies, philosophy, literary critique, sociology, psychoanalysis, and history.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:
Discuss issues of witnessing (including in juxtaposition to issues of media and/or memory) according to contemporary theories.

Attendance requirements(%):
80%

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: class discussions

Course/Module Content:
Introduction

Witnessing after Auschwitz
Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History (New York: Routledge, 1992), Ch. 2, 3.


Cathy Caruth, Unclaimed Experiences (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press), Introduction, Ch. 3.

Sigmund Freud, Beyond the Pleasure Principle

Primo Levi, Is this a Man?

Between testimony and evidence

(1999, Morris Errol) Death . Mr.

Jean-Francios Lyotard, The Differend


Giorgio Agamben, Remnants of Auschwitz

Primo Levi, The Drowned and the Saved

Eichmann in Jerusalem

Hanna Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem ch. 1


העשרה
Hannah Jablonka, The State of Israel vs. Adolf Eichmann


Eichmann in Jerusalem 2
Omer Bartov, Mirrors of Destruction


Idith Zeral, "From the People's Hall to the Wailing Wall," Representations


Eichmann in Jerusalem 3


Saul Friedlander, Kitsch and Death

Jeffrey Alexander, Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity (Berkeley: California UP, 2004), pp. 1-30.

Archive and memory

Jacques Derrida, Archive Fever
Wolfgang Ernst, The Archive as Metaphor, Open no.7: 46-53.


Pierre Nora, Lieux De Memoire


Also available as "Anamnesis and Hypomnnesia" from http://www.arsindustrialis.org/anamnesis-and-hypomnesis
Archive and Memory 2


9. Media Witnessing I


John Ellis, “Mundane Witness,” in Media Witnessing, pp. 73-88.

10. Media Witnessing II (2.6)


Regarding the Pain of Others

Judith Butler, Precarious Lives


Susan Sontag, Regarding the Pain of Others (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003), Ch. 5-8.

Luc Boltanski, Distant Suffering: Morality, Media and Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999), pp. 114-130; 149-152.


**Required Reading:**
above in Course Content

**Additional Reading Material:**
above in Course Content

**Course/Module evaluation:**
End of year written/oral examination 0 %
Presentation 0 %
Participation in Tutorials 10 %
Project work 70 %
Assignments 0 %
Reports 20 %
Research project 0 %
Quizzes 0 %
Other 0 %
Additional information: none