MALS
Fall 2014
COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

☐ MALS 127: Independent Study & ☐ MALS 137: Thesis Research, are offered every term. Enrollment is determined based upon completion of prerequisites, and committee approval. Please see student handbook or Departmental Administrator for further details.

MALS 191: Preserving the Past: Oral History in Theory and Practice
(Interdisciplinary OR Creative Writing)

Instructors: Myrna Katz Frommer & Harvey Frommer
Schedule: Thursdays, 6:00-9:00pm
Description:

“Preserving the Past” will explore the theoretical implications, practical applications, and literary dimensions of oral history. Through reading and discussion, students will be exposed to a variety of oral histories and evaluate the uses of individual and/or collective memory as a means of documenting, understanding, and appreciating the past. Oral history will be examined as a literary genre with consideration of how the oral historian becomes a creative writer whose work relies almost wholly on the voices of those interviewed. The special demands of oral biography will be considered as well.

Issues to be addressed include: the place of oral history -- by nature personal and subjective -- in the larger historical framework; the changes demanded by a shift in medium as the oral historian transfers taped commentary to print; the role of the oral historian/oral biographer as re-caster and re-arranger of memory; evolving recording technologies and the impact of the medium on the oral history’s “message” and “massage.”

Selected oral histories (that comprise the Required Reading segment of the course) will be contrasted with and compared to traditional historical accounts of similar events, as well as to one another as regards purpose, methodology, style, and literary effectiveness. Additionally students can consult historical works (see Recommended Reading for suggestions) for insights into the ways in which oral history has been included.) The roles and responsibilities of the practitioner as interviewer, archivist, historian, biographer, and artist will be examined and critiqued.

Each student will produce an oral history project with 6-12 voices on a cultural, institutional, local, familial, personal, or event-based topic. (Selected projects will be published in Volume XIII of the Oral History Reader.) Ongoing guidance will be given by the professors in one-on-one meetings as the student goes through the process of selecting a theme and individuals subjects to interview, preparing for and conducting interviews, transcribing and editing tapes, and fashioning from them the final work. Through discussing their projects in the Workshop component of the course, students will be given the opportunity to network and benefit from feedback.
Requirements

- Timely and thorough readings of assigned works to be reflected in informed participation in class discussions (books must be on hand for the sessions they are to be discussed).
- Participation in Collateral Readers’ Panel based on the in-depth reading/viewing of a portion of a traditional historical work/documentary that deals with one or more of the subjects treated in an assigned oral history.
- Submission of a satisfactory Oral History Project

Grades will be based on the quality of work in all of the above.

**Attendance at all class sessions is mandatory**

**Hours** -- Students must meet with either professor a minimum of five times during scheduled Friday hours for one-on-one consultations.

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**MALS 206: The Changing Craft and Culture of Journalism**  
(*Creative Writing OR Interdisciplinary*)

**Instructor:** Christopher Wren  
**Schedule:** Monday/Wednesday 4:00 to 6:00 pm  
**Description:**

The logic and fundamentals of news gathering as reinvented for the 21st century. What constitutes news today and why it matters. How to make the significant more interesting.

Distinguishing between journalism and the media. Issues and opportunities in the changing economics of journalism, the collapse of traditional print outlets and the demise of the twenty-four-hour news cycle

The conflation of reporting, analysis and opinion in the digital transformation of multi-platform news. The rise of social media like Facebook and YouTube as disseminators of breaking news and information. Wikileaks and other ethical dilemmas for journalists.

Students should expect to write weekly, experimenting with an expanding variety of media outlets, from legacy newspapers and magazines to digital websites and citizen blogs, and mining numbers, polls and statistics to extract the essentials worth covering.

Exploring the injunction of the veteran journalist Gay Talese that the best journalism should be as well-written and compelling as fiction, students will hone skills applicable to drama and arts criticism and narrative non-fiction and fiction. This writing course, taught by a former New York Times foreign correspondent, reporter, editor and author, will also track political, economic and conflict developments in real time via the Internet.

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MALS 277: Coloring Gender  
(*Cultural Studies*)

**Instructor:** Regine Rosenthal, MALS  
**Schedule:** Tuesdays, Thursdays, 10am-12pm  
**Description:** Taking its point of departure from the different waves of the women's movement, this course will explore multiple feminisms, contested binary notions of femininity and masculinity, and a wide range of gender issues. It will add “color” to gender by focusing on minority groups in the US, especially African American, Latina, and Native American women and their investment in feminism as well as the intersectionality of gender, race, ethnicity, class, and nation. Furthermore, the course will address, through feminist scholarship, women’s collaboration with racist and white supremacist discourse, both in the US and racist Nazi Germany. It will also examine a variety of trans/national contemporary debates within feminism, such as ecofeminism, postcolonialism, indigeneity, and religion (e.g. Islam).

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MALS 287: Religion and Politics in a Post-Secular World: Rethinking Secularization  
(*Globalization Studies*)

**Instructor:** Michael McGillen  
**Schedule:** Monday/ Wednesday 1:30 to 3:30pm  
**Description:** Narratives about the emergence of European modernity often link the rise of the modern nation state and the triumph of Enlightenment rationality with the decline of religion in a process of secularization. With an increasing separation of religion and politics, the story goes, religion is relegated to the private sphere while a civic politics occupies the public sphere. A globalized world characterized by networks of communication and cultural exchange might appear, then, as the epitome of a cosmopolitan capitalism and its secular ethos.

In the last two decades, however, this narrative of secularization has been called into question in the midst of a “return of religion” in a “post-secular society.” Scholarship on political theology, meanwhile, has shown how modern politics and its concept of sovereign power adopt and appropriate religious forms of thought in their secular institutions. Instead of secularization as the decline of religion, critics are rethinking secularization in terms of a hidden afterlife of religion in a secular modernity that is unable to cast aside its theological roots.

The course will examine how the return of religion and political theology are transforming politics in a globalized and post-national European modernity. In what ways might religion undergird the call for a “radical Enlightenment” that exceeds national boundaries? How might a post-secular society entertain a dialogue of religion
and the secular through mutual translation? How might religion provide a basis not only for the theory of sovereign power but for forms of resistance in which the public sphere is contested?

We will tackle these questions through readings of classical texts (Luther, Hobbes, Spinoza, Kant, Schmitt) alongside the work of twentieth-century and contemporary German, French, and Anglo-American critics (de Vries, Casanova, Hardt and Negri, Arendt, Lefort, Foucault, Said, Löwith, Blumenberg, Habermas, Taylor, Asad).

**Course Requirements:** Active participation in seminar discussions; one oral presentation; and a 15–20 page seminar paper.

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**MALS 288: Theorizing Memory**
* (Cultural Studies)*

**Instructor:** Tracy Rutler

**Schedule:** Tuesday/Thursday 2:00pm to 4:00pm

**Description:**

In *The Collective Memory*, Maurice Halbwachs writes, “Often we deem ourselves the originators of thoughts and ideas, feelings and passions, actually inspired by some group. Our agreement with those about us is so complete that we vibrate in unison, ignorant of the real sources of the vibrations.” However, other scholars such as Jacques Rancière, Nancy Armstrong, and Edward Said have uncovered moments in which the “collective” memory functions as a means of suppressing the voices of the under-represented. As scholars in an increasingly interdisciplinary environment, our work is necessarily shaped by those peers with whom we share our ideas, as well as by current trends in our respective fields. Within the growing field of memory studies, thinkers from such varied disciplines as anthropology, political science, history, literary studies, and psychology continue to analyze the uses and abuses of individual and collective memory formations. In this seminar we will study some of the founding texts of memory studies, alongside the most recent work being performed in this field, asking how our methods of investigation into memory may provide pathways to new, interdisciplinary projects.