Department of Sociology
University of Toronto

SOC350H1F New Topics in Sociology:
Sociology of Collective Memory
Summer 2025

Class Time and Location	Mondays and Wednesdays, 10:10 AM - 1:00 PM, Online
Instructor	Harmata Aboubakar
Office Hours	Mondays 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM via Zoom
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Teaching Assistants	Emily Hammond | e.hammond@utoronto.ca Jennifer Peruniak | jennifer.peruniak@utoronto.ca

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Course Description

How do societies remember their pasts? What gets preserved, what gets forgotten, and why does it matter? In this course, we'll explore collective (or *shared*) memory -- how violent and/or turbulent events such as wars, social movements, and genocides are remembered, reinterpreted, or erased - and uncover how these histories continue to shape the world we live in today. We critically examine commemorative practices, including public rituals, monuments, museums, and media representations, to understand their role in constructing and perpetuating collective memories. A key focus is understanding how memories are shaped by social structures, cultural practices, and power. We also explore historical erasure (silence, forgetting, denial, etc.) around violent and troubled pasts; why and how does this phenomenon occur and how do certain groups resist against such erasure? Through global case studies, videos, podcasts, art, guest lectures, and more, this course tackles the challenges of representing contested histories and reflects on the important themes of (re)conciliation, justice, and healing.

Prerequisites:
Completion of SOC201H1, SOC202H1, SOC204H1 and 1.0 credit from SOC251H1, SOC252H1, SOC254H1. Students without this requirement will be removed from the course without notice.

Learning Outcomes

1. Analyze how societies remember, interpret, and process turbulent historical events.
2. Critically engage with and apply theoretical frameworks to global case studies, exploring the challenges of representing contested memories.
3. Reflect on and evaluate marginalized stories, perspectives, and events in Canada and around the world, fostering an appreciation for diverse histories and voices.
4. Engage creatively with memorialization efforts by critically analyzing their approaches, evaluating their strengths and limitations, and proposing innovative ways to address historical erasure.
5. Develop the skills to engage thoughtfully and respectfully with diverse perspectives
6. Navigate uncomfortable conversations and apply these abilities to foster constructive and intellectual dialogue beyond the classroom.

Evaluation Components

Type	Description	Due Date	Weight
Class Participation	Attendance and Participation	*On-going*	10%
Assignment	Critical Reading Reflection	2025-05-19	20%
Assignment	Creative Assignment	2025-05-26	20%
Assignment	Research Proposal	2025-06-02	10%
Assignment	Final Research Paper	2025-06-16	40%

Grading

Attendance and Participation – 10%
To make sure students keep up with the course materials and reflect on the topics, attendance and participation will be measured through the answering of a short, low-stake, pass/fail question given in class to those in attendance. These marks will begin on *Class 3*, across 10 classes (1% per class).

Critical Reading Reflection – 20%
For this assignment, students will choose two readings (from classes 2-4, inclusively) and will write a reflection, summarizing the main arguments, comparing and contrasting the readings, and providing a critical analysis of the authors' arguments. More detailed instructions will be uploaded to the Quercus course page and discussed in class.

Creative Assignment – 20%
Students will choose a historical event. They will think of and describe an alternative way to commemorate (or memorialize) this event, such as through a statue, museum exhibit, storybook, film, etc. First, students need to discuss one way in which the event is currently commemorated, and its limitations. Then, they will describe their own commemoration idea, explain why they chose this format, and critically analyze its benefits and limitations, referencing course material. Finally, they will design a creative visual element to depict their idea (e.g., a sketch of a statue, cover page of a storybook, parade poster, etc.). Detailed instructions will be uploaded to Quercus and discussed in class.

Research Proposal – 10%
This assignment will help students prepare for the final research paper. In this proposal, students will identify a historical event and outline their planned research paper. They must formulate a guiding question (or use one provided), choose a theoretical approach from the sociology of memory, and list key concepts from the course that they will apply. They will also describe the type of data materials they plan to engage with and submit a preliminary bibliography with scholarly sources. Detailed instructions will be uploaded to Quercus and discussed in class.

Final Research Paper – 40%
In this research paper, students will analyze how a specific historical event is remembered, forgotten, or contested - and reflect on the social and political stakes of that memory. They must apply course theories and concepts (e.g., silencing, reconciliation, apology, prosthetic memory, post-memory, etc.) to interpret real-world memory practices and/or events. Students can analyze existing materials or conduct a small-scale original research component involving the collecting of their own data. The analysis must be supported by at least 6 scholarly sources, including 3 from the course, and follow ASA formatting. More detailed instructions will be uploaded to Quercus and discussed in class, prior to the last two weeks of class.

Class Format

Lectures will be delivered online. Although the primary format of the class will be lecture based, I encourage students to ask questions and provide comments in a respectful and courteous manner that is consistent with classroom etiquette policies described in this document.

Lecture content will include information that is not covered in the readings, and readings will cover material that is not always covered in lectures. Students are expected to read the required material in advance of the lecture. The course syllabus and other relevant information will be posted on Quercus. Please view the site and syllabus regularly.

Course Readings

All course readings are electronically accessible. Readings for each week can be found on Quercus, on the dedicated "Module" page for each class. Every attempt will be made to follow this list, but it is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

Missed Academic Obligations

Missed deadlines and tests: Students who miss a paper deadline or a test will receive a mark of zero for that paper or test unless the reason is a circumstance beyond their control. **Within three days** of missing a paper deadline or test, students must send the instructor a request for consideration. Students must document their request with **one of the following:**

- Absence declaration via ACORN (**can only be used once during the semester**)
- U of T Verification of Illness or Injury Form
- College Registrar's letter (e.g., in case of personal/family crisis or emergency)
- Letter of Academic Accommodation from Accessibility Services

Students who miss the test or are late in submitting an assignment for other reasons, such as family or other personal reasons, should request their College Registrar to email the instructor.

Late Assignments

- In order not to be considered late, assignments must be submitted by the due date listed on the syllabus. ***You are expected to keep a back-up copy of your assignment in case it is lost.***
- Late assignments for reasons that are within your control will be penalized 5% marks per day. The penalty will run until the day it is submitted to the instructor via Quercus
- The penalty period includes weekends and holidays.
- Assignments that are more than seven (7) days late will not be accepted, and will receive a mark of zero (0).
- Because the Attendance/Participation grade is low stakes and awarded based on class attendance, late submissions will not be accepted.

Re-marking Pieces of Term Work

A student who believes that their written term work has a substantive error in grading may ask their assigned Teaching Assistant (TA) to re-evaluate it. There are two TAs for this course - each student will be assigned to a TA based on their last name. Students may also see who evaluated their work on Quercus, under the feedback comment they receive. Students have up to two weeks from the date of return of an item of term work to inquire about the mark and file an appeal. Requests for re-marking should include an explanation written by the student detailing why they believe the work was incorrectly/unfairly assessed, referring only to their work, assignment/test guidelines, rubrics, etc., as needed. Decisions will be provided to students in a timely fashion.

Electronic Communication and Electronic Learning Technology

Email communication is rapid, convenient, and efficient - and you are encouraged to use it to enhance your learning and experience in the course. With that said, it is essential that you follow a few rules.

- Assignments must be submitted to the instructor via Quercus.
- Assignments will not be accepted via email. See above for how to submit them.
- All course communication should be conducted through Quercus or your U of T email account. All emails must include the course code (SOC350) in the subject line.
- All emails should be signed with the student's full name and student number, and address the course instructor or TA appropriately.
- Emails from students will generally be answered within 2 working days of receipt.
- Treat emails as you would any other professional communication. Proofread, use appropriate language, be respectful.
- Emails that ask questions that are answered in the course syllabus or website (e.g., "how much is assignment X worth?") may not receive a response.

Classroom Etiquette

- Students are expected to arrive at class on time. If there is a scheduling conflict that will require you to be routinely late, please contact the instructor.
- Copying and posting lecture material to the internet is strictly forbidden. Posting the lecture or course slide materials to any internet site is prohibited.
- Videotaping and recording lectures are strictly forbidden without written permission.

In this course, we will discuss contested, and often difficult topics. Open and honest intellectual conversations are essential to our learning process, and diverse perspectives are both welcome and encouraged. However, it is crucial that all contributions are expressed respectfully and intellectually.

- **Respect Others:** Disagreement is a natural part of academic discussion, but it must always remain respectful and focused on ideas, not individuals.
- **Engage Thoughtfully:** When expressing your views, aim to articulate them clearly and thoughtfully, grounding your arguments in logic, evidence, and the course material. Avoid inflammatory language or dismissive remarks.
- **Listen Actively:** Make space for others to speak and genuinely consider their perspectives, even if they differ from your own. Active listening creates a productive dialogue and helps us learn from one another.

This classroom is a space where it is safe to feel uncomfortable, and to provide different perspectives and belief, but it is not a space for harm. Our shared goal is to engage in meaningful and constructive discussions that deepen our understanding of the topics and prepare us to navigate these (difficult and uncomfortable) conversations outside the classroom.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from the University of Toronto is a strong signal of each student's individual academic achievement. As a result, U of T treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously.

The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters outlines behaviors that constitute academic dishonesty and the process for addressing academic offences.

Copying, plagiarizing, falsifying medical certificates, or other forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Any student caught engaging in such activities will be referred to the Dean's office for adjudication and punishment. Any student abetting or otherwise assisting in such misconduct will also be subject to academic penalties.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from your instructor or from other institutional resources. By enrolling in this course, you agree to abide by the university's rules regarding academic conduct, as outlined in the Calendar. You are expected to be familiar with the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters and Code of Student Conduct.

The Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

In this course, all assignments must reflect your independent and original analysis, critical thinking, and engagement with course material. Students are not permitted to use artificial intelligence (AI) tools - including generative AI (e.g., ChatGPT) - for completing assignments in any capacity. This includes but is not limited to submitting AI-generated content as your own work, paraphrasing or modifying AI-generated content, using AI to misrepresent your skills, knowledge, or understanding of course content.

Use of AI tools in these ways constitutes academic dishonesty. Any violation of this policy will result in a grade of zero on the assignment and may result in further disciplinary action. You are expected to produce your own work and properly cite all sources used.

Student Services, Accessibility, and Resources

The university offers a variety of **student support services and resources**, which can be found at http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/as.This includes support for your academics, health, and wellness, and other student services.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic
May 5th 2025	**Class 1 – Course Overview and Theoretical Foundations** **Reading and Podcast:** 1. Wertsch, James V., and Henry L. Roediger. 2008. "Collective Memory: Conceptual Foundations and Theoretical Approaches." *Memory* 16(3): 318–26. 2. Why do we care about statues? 2020. *The Inquiry*, BBC World Service Podcast.
May 7th 2025	**Class 2 – Media, Monuments, and Memorials** **Readings:** 1. Jackson, Sarah J. 2021. "Making #BlackLivesMatter in the Shadow of Selma: Collective Memory and Racial Justice Activism in U.S. News." *Communication, Culture & Critique,* 14(3):385-404. 2. Sodaro, Amy. 2022. "Race, Memory and Implication in Tulsa's Greenwood Rising." *Memory Studies* 15(6):1378-1392. ***Recommended Reading:*** 3. Wagner-Pacifici, Robin and Barry Schwartz. 1991. "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial: Commemorating a Difficult Past." *American Journal of Sociology* 97(2): 376-420.
May 12th 2025	**Class 3 – Conflict, Cultural Trauma, and the Nation** **Readings:** 1. Baser, Bahar, and Mari Toivanen. 2023. "Inherited Traumas in Diaspora: Postmemory, Past-Presencing and Mobilisation of Second-Generation Kurds in Europe." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 47(2):297–320. 2. Saito, Hiro. 2006. "Reiterated Commemoration: Hiroshima as National Trauma." *Sociological Theory,* 24(4):353-376. ***Recommended Readings:*** 3. Philips, Miray. 2023. "'We Love Martyrdom, but We Also Love Life': Coptic Cultural Trauma between Martyrdom and Rights." *American Journal of Cultural Sociology* 11(2):220-47. 4. Renan, E. 2011 [1990]. "What is a Nation?" Pp. 80-83 in *The Collective Memory Reader,* edited by J. K. Olick, V. Vinitzky-Seroussi, and D. Levy. NY: Oxford University Press.

May 14th 2025	**Class 4 – Forgetting, Denial, and Historical Erasure** **Readings:** **1.** Rivera, Lauren A. 2008. "Managing 'Spoiled' National Identity: War, Tourism, and Memory in Croatia." *American Sociological Review* 73(4):613-634. **2.** Webster, Scott. 2023. "Revisiting Memoricide: The Everyday Killing of Memory." *Memory Studies*. ***Recommended Reading:*** **3.** Zubrzycki, Geneviève, and Anna Woźny. 2020. "The Comparative Politics of Collective Memory." *Annual review of sociology* 46(1): 175-194.
May 19th 2025	**No Class Today – Victoria Day** ➔ ***Reading Reflection (20%) due on Quercus, by 11:59pm EST.***
May 21st 2025	**Class 5 – Commemoration and Rituals** **Readings:** **1.** Armstrong, Elizabeth A., and Suzanna M. Crage. 2006. "Movements and Memory: The Making of the Stonewall Myth." *American Sociological Review* 71(5):724-751. **2.** Saito, Hiro. 2010. "From Collective Memory to Commemoration." Pp.629-638 in *Handbook of Cultural Sociology*, edited by J. R. Hall, L. Grindstaff, and M.-C. Lo. London: Routledge ***Recommended Reading:*** **3.** Schwartz, Barry, and Howard Schuman. 2005. "History, Commemoration, and Belief: Abraham Lincoln in American Memory, 1945-2001." *American Sociological Review* 70(2):183-203.
May 26th 2025	**Class 6 – (Re)Conciliation, Apologies, and Transitional Justice** ➔ ***Creative Assignment (20%) due, on Quercus, by 11:59 pm EST.*** **Readings:** **1.** MacDonald, David B. 2019. "Chapter 9: Conciliation and Moves to Responsibility." Pp. 182-200 in *The Sleeping Giant Awakens: Genocide, Indian Residential Schools, and the Challenge of Conciliation*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. **2.** Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. 2000. "Abortive Rituals: Historical Apologies in the Global Era." *Interventions* 2(2):171-186.

May 28th 2025	**Class 7 – Recognition and Memory Politics in Canada** **Readings:** **1.** Coulthard, Glen Sean. 2014. *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. **2.** Marois, Sophie. 2025. "Remember, reclaim, heal": Commemorating anti-Muslim violence in Canada. *American Journal of Cultural Sociology.* ***Recommended Readings:*** **3.** Guiping, Qu. 2024. "Memory, Identity and Cross-Cultural Communication: The Evolution of the Image of Chinese Railway Workers in Canada and the Reconstruction of Multiculturalism." *Social Sciences in China* 45(3):161-80. **4.** Thobani, Sunera. 2007. "Multiculturalism and the Liberalizing Nation," Pp. 143-175 in *Exalted Subjects: Studies in the Making of Race and Nation in Canada*.
June 2nd 2025	**Class 8 – Memory in Film, Music, Art, Comics and Photography** ➔ ***Research Paper Proposal (10%) due on Quercus, by 11:59 pm EST.*** **Readings:** **1.** Hariman, Robert, and John L. Lucaites. 2003. "Public Identity and Collective Memory in U.S. Iconic Photography: The Image of 'Accidental Napalm'." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 20(1):35-66. **2.** Norridge, Zoe. 2019. "'Papaoutai'? Family Memory, Parental Loss and Rwandan Artists Today." *Memory Studies* 14(2):159-179. ***Recommended Readings:*** **3.** Hitchcott, Nicki. 2020. "Seeing the Genocide against the Tutsi through Someone Else's Eyes: Prosthetic Memory and Hotel Rwanda". *Memory Studies* 14(5):935-48. **4.** Plantinga, Carl. 2021. "Collective Memory and the Rhetorical Power of the Historical Fiction Film." *Global Storytelling: Journal of Digital and Moving Images*.
June 4th 2025	**Class 9 – The Uncanny, Dreams, Hauntology, Conspiracies, and Death** **Readings:** **1.** George, Kelly. 2019. "The Shame of Pennsylvania: Public Memory, Local News, and Institutionalization's Contested Past." *Pennsylvania Communication Annual.* **2.** Jones, Steve, and Joli Jensen. 2005. *Afterlife as Afterimage: Understanding Posthumous Fame*. New York: Peter Lang. [*Chap8: Collectively Remembering Tupac*] ***Recommended Readings:*** **3.** van Prooijen, Jan-Willem, and Karen M. Douglas. 2017. "Conspiracy Theories as Part of History: The Role of Societal Crisis Situations." *Memory Studies* 10(3).

June 9th 2025	**Class 10 – Temporality, Resistance, and Methodological Considerations** **Readings:** **1.** Harris, Fredrick. 2006. "It Takes a Tragedy to Arouse Them: Collective Memory and Collective Action during the Civil Rights Movement." *Social Movement Studies* 5(1):19-43 **2.** Yazdiha, Hajar. 2022. "On the Misuse of Legacy: The Struggle for the People's King." Online article. ***Recommended Readings:*** **3.** Kattago, Siobhan. 2024. "Time." in *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Memory Studies*, edited by L. M. Bietti and M. Pogacar. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
June 11th 2025	**Class 11 – Transnational and Comparative Perspectives** **Readings:** **1.** Klymenko, Lina, and Marco Siddi. 2020. "Exploring the Link between Historical Memory and Foreign Policy: An Introduction." *International Politics* 57(6):945-53. **2.** Saito, Hiro. 2020. "Unpacking Cosmopolitan Memory." Pp. 221-32 in *Cosmopolitanism in Hard Times,* edited by V. Cicchelli and S. Mesure. Leiden: Brill.
June 16th 2025	**Class 12 – Review Session and Final Paper Discussion** ➔ ***Final Paper (40%) due on Quercus, by 11:59 pm EST.***

Every attempt will be made to follow this schedule, but it is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.