The Invention of History
(SCAN10010)

Tuesdays, 16.10 – 18.00, 11.01 David Hume Tower

Dr Joost Fontein & Dr John Harries
Email: J.Fontein@ed.ac.uk & j.harries@ed.ac.uk

Short description
The past is ‘everywhere a battlefield of rival attachments’ – an arena fraught with contestation and dispute. Picking up this cue this course examines the politics of history, memory, and the past. It begins by examining time, and the way in which notions of time and history have been central both to the development of social anthropology as a discipline and to wider, racialised discourses about others in colonial contexts. Engaging with a growing body of anthropological work, and research done in related disciplines, which has emphasised the collective nature of memory, and the social construction of the past, it looks at how the past is understood, experienced, remembered and represented in different ethnographic contexts in the present. Memory, history, and ‘oral traditions' will be examined as different but related means of understanding, representing and politicising the past, alongside other, less discursive means of relating to the past, such as through performance, rituals, objects, bodies and landscape. Engaging with more recent arguments that have emphasised the limits to the ‘invention’ of history, the course will consider how the study of ‘the past' inevitably involves not only notions of time and temporality, but also of landscape, space and place, and artefacts, bodies, practice, things and materiality. The politics of the past is in no way limited to how we understand or represent it; it is also finely related to questions of what to do with its materiality – in the form of archaeological remains, ruins and heritage sites, objects and artefacts, bodies and bones, monuments and memorials. With reference to a variety of empirical examples and broader theoretical trends, lectures will explore the politics of the past through the following topics: Time and denial of co-evalness; nationalism and identity; memory and forgetting; commemoration and memorials; heritage and museums; landscape and place; ruins, ruination and affect; artefacts and bones; and kinship, performance and ritual.
Aims
To foster a critical appreciation of the politics of history, memory & the past, and its inebriation in the politics of ritual, performance, place & space, landscape, objects, bodies, artefacts and things.

Learning outcomes
Knowledge and understanding of how the past is imagined, constructed and contested through the processes of history, memory and commemoration. Recognition of the role that ideas and knowledge of the past play in the complex politics of identity and state-making, in colonial, postcolonial and nationalist contexts. An understanding of how place & space, landscape, objects, bodies and things (in discursive and material ways), can enable and limit the imagination of the past; and of the ways in which notions of the past inform, enable, and limit the means through which landscape, objects and heritage are understood, engaged with, and managed; and the way in which struggles over place and the past are both inscribed in and produce or constitute space/place, landscape, ritual and artefacts.

Teaching
Classes take place Tuesdays, 16.10- 18.00, 11.01, David Hume Tower
This course consists of whole class lectures, general discussions and small group work in which students MUST participate. During the second part of each lecture, the class will break into groups to discuss particular readings and exercises assigned for that lecture.

Assessment
For honours students the course will be assessment with a final essay, or “summative assessment” and a shorter essay, or “formative assessment”

Formative Assessment
The mid-semester assessment takes the form of a short essay of 1000, worth 20% of the final mark of the course as whole. It is to be submitted online via ELMA by 12 noon on Tuesday 11 February 2014.

Short essay topics:
With reference to a place in Edinburgh write 1000 words on one of the following:
- The Presence of the Past in The Present.
- Collective Memory and Lieux-de Mémoire.
- Ruination and the Affective Presence of the Past.
- Ghosts and the Return of the Repressed.

Summative Assessment
The main assessment is based on one essay of 3000 words, worth 80% of the final mark for the course as a whole. It is to be submitted online via ELMA by 12 noon on Tuesday 22 April 2014.
Sample Essay questions:

- Can heritage ever be authentic?
- Memory is as much about forgetting as it is about remembering. Discuss using detailed ethnographic examples.
- “… the mind reconstructs its memories under the pressure of society” (Halbwachs). Discuss the relationship between individual and collective memory with reference to appropriate examples.
- The politics of the past is not only about the representation of the past, but also about the management of its material forms and remains. Discuss with reference to at least two examples.
- Why does the substance of bones matter?
- Using ethnographic examples, discuss EITHER how rituals ‘can make history’ (Kelly & Kaplan) OR how ‘spirit possession can be understood as a form of history’ (Lambek).
- Ghosts are about the returned of a repressed past. Discuss
- Any other title agreed, in advance, with the course organiser.

Submitting your coursework
Course work will be submitted online using our submission system – ELMA. You will not be required to submit a paper copy.

Marked course work, grades and feedback will be returned online – you will not receive a paper of your marked course work or feedback.

For information, help and advice on submitting coursework and accessing feedback, please see the ELMA wiki at [http://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/SPSITWiki/ELMA](http://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/SPSITWiki/ELMA)

When you submit your work electronically, you will be asked to tick a box confirming that your work complies with the School’s Declaration of Own Work statement. This confirms that the work you have submitted is your own (for a copy of the statement, and for information on plagiarism and how to avoid it, please refer to the information available at: [https://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/undergrad/on_course_students/on_being_a_student/what_is_plagiarism](https://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/undergrad/on_course_students/on_being_a_student/what_is_plagiarism)

Remember that your name should not appear anywhere on your coursework or cover sheet.

Length Penalties
Essays over the word limit will lose 10% of their marks. (This applies as much to essays of 5 words over as to essays of 500 words over). This word limit includes footnotes and appendices but not the bibliography.

Any apparently deliberate misrepresentation of the word count or failure to declare a word count will lead to a deduction of 20 marks. N.B. This can affect your final result.
The following are some of the criteria through which the essays will be marked. However, it is important to note that the overall mark is a result of a holistic assessment of the assignment as a whole.

A. Does the essay address the question with sufficient focus?
B. Does the essay show a grasp of the relevant concepts and knowledge?
C. Does the essay demonstrate a logical and effective pattern of argument?
D. Does the essay support an argument with relevant examples?
E. Does the essay demonstrate reflexivity and critical thinking in relation to arguments and evidence?
F. Is the essay written clearly and convincingly?
G. Is the essay adequately presented in terms of: correct referencing and quoting; spelling, grammar and style; layout and visual presentation?

Late submission of assessed items
Unlike coursework in Years 1 and 2, for all Social Anthropology Honours assessment, NO EXTENSIONS ARE GRANTED WITH RESPECT TO THE SUBMISSION DEADLINES FOR ANY ASSESSED WORK.

Please refer to the Honours handbook for additional information regarding late submission of coursework and essays and instructions on how to submit a Lateness Penalty Waiver.

Special Circumstances:
If you find yourself struggling due to illness, an accident or bereavement, you can ask your Personal Tutor and Student Support Officer for advice on applying for Special Circumstances. You should also read the Special Circumstances section of the Honours Handbook.

External Examiner
The External Examiner for the Social Anthropology Honours programme is:

Dr Matei Candea
Lecturer, Division of Social Anthropology
Department of Archaeology & Anthropology
University of Cambridge
Free School Lane
CAMBRIDGE CB2 3RF
THE LECTURE OUTLINE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>14 January</td>
<td>History, anthropology and the politics of the past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>21 January</td>
<td>Time and the past in the present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>28 January</td>
<td>Memory, collective and otherwise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4 February</td>
<td>Landscape: ruins, affect and the materiality of nostalgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>11 February</td>
<td>Trauma, ghosts and the return of the repressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>25 February</td>
<td>The invention of tradition &amp; the limits there of.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>4 March</td>
<td>The Past in the service of Colonialism &amp; Nationalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>11 March</td>
<td>Heritage &amp; Museums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>18 March</td>
<td>Commemoration, bones and the politics of the dead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>25 March</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WEEK 1: History, anthropology and the politics of the past (JF)

The first lecture, as an introduction to the course, will begin by considering the place of history in anthropology, before turning to Fabian’s important argument about the way anthropology has used time to construct its ‘other’, as a way of introducing ‘the politics of the past’ which will a recurrent theme throughout the course.

Read

- Cohn B. 1980 “History & anthropology: the state of play” in Comparative Studies in Society & History
- Fabian 1983 Time & the Other New York: Colombia University Press

WEEK 2: Time and the past in the present (JH)

In this lecture we will consider the anthropology of time and the problem of the relationship between the past and the present. Focussing on key debate within Anthropology (1996), we will explore the seeming contradiction that the past is theoretically constituted as being at once determining yet determined (and yet again, in act of ontological gerrymandering* perhaps typical of social-constructivist approach, these various determinations of the past are often explained with reference to “historical” conditions of possibility that are somehow more “real” than the pasts that people create for themselves).
Read


Reading for Class Discussion


Also for class (homework exercise): please bring a thing that is, like the crumbs of tea-soaked cake described by Prout’s narrator, evokes the “past” for you. It can be a photograph, a memento, or even just some old piece of something that somehow feels to be connected to the past.

Additional Readings

WEEK 3: Memory, collective and otherwise (JH)
Following on from the previous lecture, we will discuss the problem of the presence of the past with particular reference to “memory” and especially collective, or social, memory. We will find a pathway through the vast literature on collective memory, which shares an emphasis on the ways that our memories of past events are socially constituted in the present (and so may, in fact, be no more than the practice of their social constitution). We will also be exploring some of the critiques of collective memories studies and, in so doing, suggest the possibility of an anthropology of memory which goes beyond presentism to acknowledge the “imminanet past” (Birth 2006).

Read

Reading for Class Discussion

Also for class (homework exercise): consider how the two world wars are remembered in Scottish society? Please provide some “material” relating to the ways in which we or they (the Scottish) go about remembering the wars. You can chose to look at the school cirriculum, Youtube videos, find memorial or commemorative sites in Edinburgh, or local museum displays and so on. If possible make this material avialable – by posting the weblink, uploading a photograph etc. – on the “REMEBERING” discussion board for this class that is available on LEARN

Additional Readings
WEEK 4: Landscape: ruins, affect and the materiality of nostalgia (JH)
This lecture focuses on the temporality of landscape and the ways in which the past inhabits, or is said to inhabit, the material fabric of the world around us. We will particularly focus on ruins. Ruination, decay and the material traces of the “non-absent” past, have long been the stuff of poetic evocations of the melancholy feeling of pastness. Recently, however, there has been a growing scholarship concerning ruination, rot and dereliction, particular in the context of a hypermodern age in which the traces of past lives are either erased or, as Tim Edensor argues, domesticated as museum exhibits or heritage sites where any ambiguity, excess, or insufficiency has been eliminated to constitute what Pierre Nora has called Lieux de Mémoire. As will be discussed in the lecture, this literature is interesting for three reasons: 1) it foregrounds the materiality of the past; 2) it suggests this materiality may exceed and perhaps preceed the social determination of the past; and 3) allows us to reformulate the work of the social (or political) determination of the past as a material process, which by virtue of its very materiality is always open even as it aspires to closure.

Read

Reading for Class Discussion

Also for class (homework exercise): during the week before the class please find a “ruin” in Edinburgh. This should NOT be an official “sign-posted” ruin, but a neglected space or place in which you can encounter the enigmatic traces of past lives and times gone by. Please, if you can, take a photograph of this “ruin” and write no more than 100 words describing what you saw, felt and thought in encountering this ruin. Post the photograph and your notes on the “RUINS” discussion board for this class that is available on LEARN.
Additional Readings


WEEK 5: Trauma, ghosts and the return of the repressed (JH)

A with ruins, ghosts and “the spectral” are enjoying something of theoretical vogue. This lecture will discuss some of the reasons for this popular and academic interest in ghosts. Building on the previous lectures, and anticipating a more explicit discussion of the politics of history, memory and heritage to follow, we will consider the proposition that ghosts are an affective experience of the unbidden return of a past, often, traumatic and violent, that has been repressed, or “forgotten”, within normative narrations of a shared history. Ghosts, it will be argued, trouble not only these narrations but the very idea of collective memory, for they suggest an past which, although forgotten, may nonetheless make its presence felt.

Read

Reading for Class Discussion


Also for class (homework exercise): please either collect a local ghosts story from a friend, or acquaintance. Alternatively, taking inspiration from Armstrong and Bell, visit a place in the city and attempt to conduct a “spectral ethnography”. What do you think these stories and experiences are about? Post your stories/ethnographic accounts on the “GHOSTS” discussion board for this class that is available on LEARN.

Further Reading

WEEK 7: The invention of tradition & the limits there of. (JF)
In this lecture we will look at the impact of Hobsbawm and Ranger’s (1983) well known edited collection, “The Invention of Tradition” from which the course gets its name, and examine some of the critiques that have emerged, as historians and anthropologists have increasingly recognised the ‘limits of invention’.

Read:

Reading for class discussion:

WEEK 8: The Past in the service of Colonialism & Nationalism (JF)
Following on from the previous lecture, in this lecture we will discuss how ‘re-invented’ and ‘re-imagined’ pasts, particularly as provided by archaeology, have been used to both provided legitimacy for colonialism, and for anti-colonial nationalist movements.

Read:
Read - continued


Reading for class discussion

- Paine R. 1994 “Masada: A History of a Memory” in History and Anthropology Vol. 6, No. 4 pp 371-409

Further reading

- Chatterjee, P. 1986 Nationalist thought & the colonial world: a derivative discourse? Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press
- Abu El-Haj N. “Translating Truths: Nationalism, the practise of archaeology, and the remaking of past and present in contemporary Jerusalem” in American Ethnologist 25(2): 166-188

WEEK 9: Heritage & Museums (JF)

This week we consider how not only the representation of the past, but the management of its material remains as ‘Heritage’ is often subject to intense political contestation and dispute.

Read


Reading for class discussion:

Further reading

- Herzfeld M. 1991 “Histories in their places” in Herzfeld M. *A Place in History: Social and monumental time in a Cretian Town* Princtown University Press
- Also reprinted in Low S.M. & Lawrence-Zuniga D. 2003 *The Anthropology of Space and Place* Oxford: Blackwell Publishing

WEEK 10: Commemoration, bones and the politics of the dead (JF)

In this final lecture, we will consider how just as there is a politics of the past that plays itself out as ‘heritage’, (which we explored last week) so too is there a politics of ‘commemoration’, which is sometimes unique from, yet often entangled with it. Focusing on the ‘politics of the dead’ in Zimbabwe, in the second half of the lecture we will explore how heritage and commemorative processes have come together in Zimbabwe through the materialities of human remains.

Read

- Forty A. 1999 Introduction in *the Art of forgetting*, Oxford : Berg
- Kuchler s. 1999 “The Place of Memory” in Forty & Kuchler (eds) *The art of forgetting* Oxford: berg
- Rowlands M. 1999 “Remembering to forget: Sublimation as Sacrifice in War Memorials” in *the Art of forgetting*, Oxford : Berg
Read continued

Reading for Class discussion

Further reading

WEEK 11: Conclusion:
In this final class we will review the course and course material and consider the question of the future of the study of the invention of history and collective memory in the context of globalisation and cosmopolitanism. We will consider the question of whether, as the work of memory becomes undifferentiated from the technologies of rememberance, whether memories are now wholly deterritorised and so longer can be considered either an individual capacity, or the property of given collective or culture, but belong to us all.

Read