

Memory and Identity: From the Exodus and Black Literature to the Digital Age.

The Zelikovitz Centre presents this year's faculty colloquium as a platform for a scholarly exploration of memory and identity with a particular focus on Jewish history. Our panelists address the complex dynamics of this correlation from four different perspectives: from the antiquity to the new media age.



Sarah Phillips Casteel – “Black Holocaust Fiction: Esi Edugyan’s Half-Blood Blues”

This paper identifies a subgenre of Holocaust fiction that portrays the experiences of Black victims of the Nazis. Works of Black Holocaust fiction contribute to recent efforts to expand our understanding of the Holocaust by documenting the experiences of Afro-Germans, Africans, Afro-Caribbeans and African Americans under the Nazis. Imaginatively recovering the lost stories of these Black victims, Black Holocaust fiction such as Esi Edugyan’s Half-Blood Blues harnesses the strategies of postslavery writing, hybridizing Holocaust and postslavery narrative and exposing the areas of overlap between these literary genres.



Ira Wagman – “Thinking about Digital Memory with Hannah Arendt”

The Internet seems to remember everything about us, and the increased memory capacities of so many of our personal devices has converted many of us into amateur archivists, responsible for retaining fragments of the personal and often banal memories of people in our social circles. How are people going to live together when we know so much about each other? This talk points to the overwhelming emphasis in public discourse to make the Internet “forget” our past as one of the possible solutions to this issue. I consider this approach but wonder whether Hannah Arendt’s conception of forgiveness, articulated in The Human Condition, offers any insights for addressing this important ethical issue.



Kimberly Stratton – “Reading Exodus against Rome: history, memory, and identity in the face of occupation”

The exodus story was re-purposed in the centuries following the disastrous Jewish revolts against Rome (70 and 135 CE) and offered opportunity for literary responses to that violent episode and the ensuing exile. This appropriation of a traditional story about ancient hostilities fostered collective unity and solidarity. In particular, early rabbinic midrashim (expansions and interpretations) of Exodus operate as resistance literature; they undermine the authority and hegemony of Rome through a hidden discourse of its demise.



Jeniffer Evans – “Holocaust Memory in the Digital Mediascape”?

How has social media molded and shaped how people think, represent, and remember the Holocaust? With examples from popular digital platforms in use today, this talk asks how social technology affects the way history is made and circulated online. Social media has become a place where memories of the Holocaust take shape through user-driven content shared in elaborately interconnected communication networks. Alongside curated exhibits, documentaries, and scholarly research, smartphone photos, short videos, and online texts act as windows into popular consciousness. It helps everyday people make sense of the crime of genocide, presenting unique challenges to historians.

Wednesday, March 2nd, 2016
11 AM to 2 PM
Robertson Hall 608

For more information please visit us at carleton.ca/jewishstudies/
RSVP at jewish.studies@carleton.ca or 613-520-2600 x. 1320
A kosher lunch will be provided for those who RSVP.



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