Memory, Architecture and Design: Comparative Perspectives

Course Description:
This course compares the debates and contestations over architecture’s relationship to memory, trauma, nationalism, and memorialization that have taken place in Argentina, over the memory of its “dirty war” from 1976-1983, and in the United States over the last three decades. It situates this comparative perspective within the scholarship of architecture and design, memory studies, and visual culture.

Course Outline:
The realization of memory through architecture and design has been central to the politics of the memory of violence and trauma over the last few decades. Architects and designers have played a key role in creating spaces and memorial and museum designs as engagements with the memory of traumatic events, and their work is central to the contestations of space that form a key arena for memory debates. This course examines and compares the debates and contestations over architecture’s relationship to memory, trauma, nationalism, and memorialization that have taken place in Argentina, over the memory of its “dirty war” from 1976-1983, and in the United States since the construction of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in 1982 up through the memorialization of 9/11. It situates this comparative perspective within the scholarship of architecture and design, memory studies, and visual culture. Through explorations of how architecture and design have played a key role in shaping cultural memory in these two contexts, in particular in the design of museums, memorials, photographs, digital media, virtual mappings of memory, art engagements with memory, and memory’s commodification, we will investigate the intersections of memory and design in relation to contested spaces of memorialization.

The course will begin with 4 class sessions in New York, before departure to Buenos Aires for 2.5 weeks. The New York sessions will involve sessions on the key themes of the course and a site visit to the September 11 memorial museum under construction at Ground Zero in New York. We will then spend 2.5 weeks in Buenos Aires, meeting regularly at the NYU-Buenos Aires site and doing trips to relevant sites in the city, including the Memorial Parque, ESMA (a former military school and site of torture that is now being turned into a museum), the Plaza de Mayo, and Memoria Abierta, a nonprofit that has produced a Topografía de la Memoria through the work of designers and architects. We will arrange a day trip to Rosario, 180 miles away, where a Museum of
Memory will be dedicated in December 2010. Guest speakers in Buenos Aires will include architects and designers involved in memorial projects in the city.

Students will work on written and visual projects that will form the basis for a web cuaderno on Memory, Architecture, and Design: Buenos Aires and New York, for the Hemispheric Institute at NYU. The course will be conducted in English, with additional recommended readings in Spanish for bilingual speakers.

**Course Requirements:**
Students are required to attend all seminars, to undertake the reading assignments seriously, and to participate fully in seminar discussions. Readings will be prioritized each class.

Students will write one short paper on course themes in the first week, and then will produce a written and/or written and visual project that will form the basis for a web cuaderno on Architecture and Memory on the website of the Hemispheric Institute at NYU. Proposals will be reviewed in the second week of the course.

**Course Evaluation:**
Course grades will consider participation (20%) short paper (20%) and project (60%).

You are responsible for being an active participant in this class and engaged with the reading and course materials. All students are expected to bring questions to class for discussion.

You will be evaluated on (1) the level of your engagement with the class materials (as evidenced in your written work and class participation) (2) your capacity to explain your ideas and analysis in articulate and well-written forms (3) and your ability to creatively explore these theories and methodologies.

**Plagiarism and Academic Integrity:**
Please be sure that you have read and understand NYU’s Statement of Academic Integrity. If you have any questions concerning plagiarism in general, be certain that you ask them. Please note that plagiarism is grounds for automatic failure of this course. Please see NYU Steinhardt’s Statement of Academic Integrity for further information on this matter: http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.
Students With Disabilities
Any student attending NYU who needs an accommodation due to a chronic, psychological, visual, mobility and/or learning disability, or is Deaf or Hard of Hearing should register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212 998-4980, 240 Greene Street, http://www.nyu.edu/csd.

Course Objectives
By the end of the course, students will:
• Gain an understanding of the relationship of architecture to memorialization;
• Understand the interrelationship of visuality, spatial relations, and contestations of memory;
• Articulate memory debates of the United States and Argentina in relation to the politics of design;
• Be familiar with the primary theorists who have engaged with theories of memory and spatial relationships, trauma studies, and memorialization;
• Analyze the spatial experience of memorial and museum design;
• Engage in a comparative analysis of how memory has been codified and institutionalized in the United States and Argentina;
• Produce a project that engages in a visual fashion with architecture and memory.

Required Texts:
Elisabeth Jelin, *State Repression and the Limits of Memory* (Social Science Research Council, 20030
Marita Sturken, *Tourists of History: Memory, Kitsch, and Consumerism from Oklahoma City to Ground Zero* (Duke, 2007)
Diana Taylor, *Disappearing Acts: Spectacles of Gender and Nationalism in Argentina’s “Dirty War”* (Duke, 1997)
Marc Treib, ed., *Spatial Recall: Memory in Architecture and Landscape* (Routledge, 2009)

All other readings will be distributed as essays.
COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1— NEW YORK CITY

Class 1 (Monday June 6): Introduction: Architectures of Memory
Reading:
Marc Treib, *Spatial Recall* (Part I)

Class 2 (Tuesday June 7): Models for Memory
Reading:
Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, Introduction
Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories*, Introduction
Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History”
Bill Schwarz, “Memory, Temporality, Modernity”

Recommended:
Sigmund Freud, “Mourning and Melancholia”

Class 3 (Wednesday June 8): Architectures of Grief
Reading:
Marita Sturken, *Tourists of History* (Introduction, Chapters 4 and 5)
Terry Smith, *Architectures of Aftermath*, Introduction and Chapters 1, 4, 5

Recommended:
Philip Nobel, *Sixteen Acres* (selected chapters)

Class 4: (Thursday June 9) Field Trip to World Trade Center Museum, Ground Zero
Reading:
Terry Smith, *Architectures of Aftermath*, Chapters 6-7
James Young, “The Stages of Memory at Ground Zero: An Insiders Report”
Daniel Libeskind, *Breaking Ground* (excerpt)
Week 2—BUENOS AIRES

Class 1: (Monday June 13) Remembering Torture
Reading:
Jacobo Timmerman, *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number* (excerpt)
Marguerite Feitlowitz, *A Lexicon of Terror: Argentina and the Legacies of Torture*
Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain* (excerpt)
**Short Paper Due.**

Class 2: (Tuesday June 14) The City as Memory
Reading:
Andreas Huyssen, “The Voids of Berlin”
Christine Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory* (excerpt)
Marc Treib, *Spatial Recall* (select essays)

Class 3: (Wednesday June 15) Visit to Parque de la Memoria
Reading:
*Parque de la Memoria* (Essays in Parts I and II)
Andreas Huyssen, “Memory Sites in an Expanded Field”

Class 4: (Thursday June 16) Absence, Emptiness, The Disappeared
Reading:
Diana Taylor, *Disappearing Acts* (Chapters 1-6)
Elisabeth Jelin, *State Repression and the Limits of Memory* (selections)
**Project Proposal Due.**

Friday, June 17, Visit to ESMA

Week 3: BUENOS AIRES

Class 1: (Monday June 20) Performance, Protest, The Street
Reading:
Diana Taylor, “Acts of Transfer” and “You Are Here” from *The Archive and the Repertoire*
Diana Taylor, *Disappearing Acts* (Chapters 7-9)
Marianne Hirsch, “The Generation of Post-Memory”
Class 2: (Tuesday June 21) Aesthetics of Mourning
Reading:
Alfredo Jaar, "The Aesthetics of Witnessing"
Marita Sturken, “The Wall and the Screen Memory”
Andreas Huyssen, “Present Pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia”
Katherine Hite, “The Memory of Traumatic Events in Latin America”

Class 3: (Wednesday June 22) Counter-Monuments and Memory Museums
Reading:
Katherine Hite. *Politics and the Art of Commemoration* (excerpt)
Marita Sturken, *Tourists of History*, Chapters 2-3
James Young, “Memory, Countermemory and the End of the Monument”

Recommended:
Alois Riegl, “The Modern Cult of Monuments”

Class 4: (Thursday June 23) Mapping Memories
Visit to Memoria Abierta
Diana Taylor, “Trauma as Durational Performance”
Giuliana Bruno, *Public Intimacy* (excerpt)

Friday, June 24, Field Trip to Rosario, Museum of Memory

Week 4: BUENOS AIRES

Class 1: (Monday June 27) Dark Tourism and the Consumerism of Memory
Reading:
Brigitte Sion, “Dark Tourism as Memorialization in Post-Genocide Cambodia”
Laurie Beth Clark, “Trauma Tourism as a Politics of Hope”
Marita Sturken, *Tourists of History*, Chapter 1

Class 2: (Tuesday June 28)
Class Project Presentations
**Additional Readings in Spanish:**

Memorias de la Represion Series:

Ponciano del Pino and Elizabeth Jelin, eds., *Luchas Locales, Comunidades e Identidades*

Elizabeth Jelin and Victoria Langland, eds., *Monumentos, Memoriales y Marcas Territoriales*

Elizabeth Jelin and Federico Guillermo Lorenz, eds., *Educacion y Memoria. La Escuela Elabora et Pasado.*

Memorial Abierta, *Memorias en la Ciudad*

Victoria Dona, *Mi Nombre es Victoria*