English 293

Charles Baldwin, ENGL 293, Fall 2001, Special Topics

HONORS/ENGLISH 293A

MEMORY AS TECHNOLOGY/TECHNOLOGY AS MEMORY FROM PLATO TO *THE MATRIX*

TR 830-945, Armstrong 121

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> . . . a computer is nothing but a means for a memory to get from one state to another.
>
> - Joachim Weyl

There is nothing more immediate and natural than our memory, or so it seems. At the same time, there is little to say about memory. We speak of memories recalled and not memory itself, obliterating the process involved. Rather than repeat and confirm the self-evident nature of memory, this course argues that the naturalness and immediacy of our memory is in fact the outcome of applying complex techniques or "arts of memory." The aim of this course is to understand memory as technology and technology as memory, in order to grasp the historical production of individual memory and the cultural significance of archives and memorials. Every culture is framed by an art of memory as the media by which it invents itself. While all technologies involve processes of inscription, archivization, and representation, this class argues that these processes function as arts of memory. All cultural artifacts are memory technologies or mnemotechnics. The question is whether mnemotechnics preserve and enable memories, or - to the contrary - if they produce memories prosthetically. Is memory the essence of being human or a cultural artifact?

Drawing on a range of sources, we will examine the art of memory concealed in our concepts of writing, literature, visual imagery, film, and digital interfaces, as well as in theories of mind and learning. At stake are competing claims for the mnemotechnics of new media technologies, contrasting the possibility of a kind of super-human memory with struggles over the nature of historical memory under digital conditions. Finally, we will examine significant memorials as memory machines -e.g. the World Wide Web, the Holocaust Museum, the Mormon "mountain of names," Disneyworld, The Human Genome Project - to develop a model of cultural mnemotechnology as the medium for historical understanding.

▲ REQUIRED MATERIALS (AT WVU BOOKSTORE)

⊙ Jay David Bolter, *Writing Space*, 2nd Ed. (Lawrence Erlbaum)

⊙ Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge)

⊙ William Gibson, *Neuromancer* (Ace)

⊙ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, Trans. Walter Kaufmann (Vintage)

⊙ Frances Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Chicago)

⊙ All other materials either URLs, electronic reserve (ER), or films

GRADING

BENEDUM LECTURES	⊙ Attend three Benedum Lectures, dates to be announced (see attached)	10%
10 SHORT RESPONSES	⊙ Due Tuesday as noted	10%
	⊙ Prompts to be distributed	
	⊙ 250 words minimum	
ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION	⊙ Come to class prepared to discuss the texts	10%
	⊙ Unexcused absences negatively affect participation grade; more than four unexcused absences negatively affects overall grade	
	⊙ In and out of class group work	
PRESENTATIONS	⊙ Lead the class	20%
	⊙ Provide handout/PowerPoint	
PROPOSAL & BIBLIOGRAPHY PROJECT	⊙ Due 11/27 and 12/4	20%
	⊙ Informational, thesis-driven, web-based	30%
	⊙ 7 pages/1750 words minimum	

SOCIAL JUSTICE STATEMENT

West Virginia University is committed to social justice. I concur with that commitment and expect to maintain a positive learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. Our University does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color or national origin. Any suggestions as to how to further such a positive and open environment in this class will be appreciated and given serious consideration.

If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with the Office of Disability Services (293-6700).

DATE	TOPIC	READ/VIEW	WORK
8/21	INTRODUCTION	Galileo Web <http://es.rice.edu/ES/humsoc/Galileo/galileo_explore.html>, Memory Arena <http://www.uni-lueneburg.de/memory>, *Collective Memory Palace* <http://imda.umbc.edu/people/serena/>	
8/23	**UNIT 1** **MNEME/TECHNE**	Flusser, ÒElectronic MemoriesÓ (handout), Davis, ÒTechgnosisÓ <http://www.levity.com/figment/infoangels.html>	
8/28		Plato, *Phaedrus* <http://plato.evansville.edu/texts/jowett/phaedrus.htm>, Bolter, *Writing Space* (Chap. 6)	Response 1
8/30		St. Augustine, *Confessions*, Book X, esp. from Chap. VIII <http://www.ccel.org/a/augustine/confessions/confessions.html>	
9/4		Borges, ÒFunes the MemoriusÓ (ER), Van Tijen, ÒThe Arts of OneselfÓ <http://people.a2000.nl/ttijen/Index.html>	Response 2
9/6		Dick, ÒWe Can Remember it for You WholesaleÓ (ER), Gibson, ÒJohnny MnemonicÓ (ER), Bolter, *Writing Space* (Chap. 1)	
9/11	*DIGITAL ANAMNESIS*	*Blade Runner*, Bolter, *Writing Space* (Chaps. 2)	Response 3
9/13		*Blade Runner*	Presentation
9/18	**UNIT 2** **THE ARTS OF MEMORY**	Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Intro, Chaps. 1 & 2), Bolter, *Writing Space* (Chap 3)	Response 4
9/20		Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Chaps. 6 & 7)	Presentation
9/25		Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Chap. 9, 11), Bolter, *Writing Space* (Chap. 4)	Response 5

9/27		Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Chaps. 10 & 17)	Presentation
10/2		Bolter, *Writing Space* (Chaps. 5 & 7)	
10/3	Required Lecture: Either 1) Stuart Moulthrop, "ÔStory, Game, Theory: Positioning Cybertext," 6:00 p.m. Greenbrier Room, WVU Mountainlair or 2) Daniel Schachter, 8:00 pm, G24 Eisland Hall		
10/4		Bolter, *Writing Space* (Chap. 9), Beckett, *KrappÕs Last Tape* <http://www.msu.edu/user/sullivan/BeckettKrapp.html>	Presentation
10/9	*INTERFACE AS MEMORY*	Bolter, *Writing Space* (Chaps. 10), Bush, ÒAs We May ThinkÓ < http://www.isg.sfu.ca/~duchier/misc/vbush/> Ê	Response 6
10/11		Baldwin, ÒForgetting the FutureÓ (ER), Wooley, ÒInterfaceÓ (ER)	Presentation
10/16		Gibson, *Neuromancer*	Response 7
10/17	Required Lecture: James E. Young, 8:00 pm, G24 Eisland Hall		
10/18		Gibson, *Neuromancer*	Presentation
10/23		Wearable Computers <http://vismod.www.media.mit.edu/people/flavia/publications.html>, Memory Palace MOOs <http://vw.indiana.edu>, <http://www.mediamatic.nl/magazine/8_1/8_1Content.html >, Exploratorium, <http://www.exploratorium.edu/memory, <http://sunsite.queensu.ca/memorypalace>	Response 8
10/25	**UNIT 3** *CULTURAL MEMORY*	van Tijen, ÒDigital Ways of ForgettingÓ & ÒArs Oblivendi/The Art of ForgettingÓ <http://people.a2000.nl/ttijen/Index.html>	Presentation
10/30		Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*	Response 9
10/31	Required Lecture: Douwe Draaisma, 8:00 pm, G24 Eisland Hall		
11/1		Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*	Presentation
11/6		Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Intro, Chap 1)	Response 10
11/8		Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Chaps. 2 & 3)	Presentation

11/13	*MUSEUMS, LIBRARIES*	Liu, ÒNew God CityÓ (ER), Holocaust Museum <http://www.ushmm.org>, Bolter, *Writing Space* (Chap 6), Digital Library Initiative <http://www.dli2.nsf.gov/dlione>, Project Gutenberg <http://www.promo.net/pg>, Automatic Reference Librarian <http://www.cs.washington.edu/research/diglib>, Computer Vision Group <http://elib.cs.berkeley.edu/vision.html>, Digital Libraries for Children <http://www.cs.umd.edu/hcil/kiddiglib>, PERSIVAL <http://www.cs.columbia.edu/diglib/PERSIVAL>, Power Browser Project <http://www-diglib.stanford.edu/diglib/pub/RetrievingInformation.shtml>,	
11/15	*FILM AS MEMORY*	*La Jetee*	Presentation
11/20	**THANKSGIVING**		
11/22			
11/27		*Memento*	Project Proposal
11/29		*Memento*	
12/4		*The Matrix*	Annotated Bibliography
12/6	**LAST DAY**	*The Matrix*	
12/11	**FINAL PROJECT UPLOADED BY 600 PM**		