Course Description: The legacies of genocide, slavery, and state terrorism produce “traumatic histories,” that is, collective memories of extreme violence that refuse to recede into the past as ordinary events do. Traumatic experiences seem to interrupt the flow of narrative time and even history itself. By what means do writers of memoir and testimony nevertheless narrate their traumatic stories? What literary strategies are employed by fiction writers and playwrights who attempt to represent violent histories? What stylistic features mark the cinema and poetry of disaster? To find provisional answers to these and other questions, we will begin our course by studying theories proposed by Freud and more recent thinkers that try to account for the effects of trauma on history, memory and language. Then we will discuss films and literary texts, in various genres and from around the world, that, despite the inherent difficulties involved in representing trauma, find innovative ways to remember and confront specific histories of violence. In addition, we will read exemplary critical essays to deepen our understanding of the primary texts under study but also to provide us with models for our own critical essays, for which we will learn current techniques for carrying out scholarly research in the humanities.

Required Texts (9)
Jean Améry, *At the Mind’s Limits* (9780253211736) Indiana UP, 2009
Cathy Caruth, ed., *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (0801850096) Johns Hopkins UP, 1995
Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (1400033411) Vintage, 2004

Course Requirements

Class preparation and participation (15% of the course grade): It is essential that you read all assigned texts carefully before we meet, and that you are prepared to discuss them in class.

Three papers (15%, 25%, and 35% of the course grade): Preliminary information is below; more details will be provided later.
--Paper 1 (due Sept. 21): a 3-page discussion trauma theory.
--Paper 2 (due Nov. 2): a 5-page discussion in which trauma theory is applied to a text or film on our syllabus.
--Final Project, i.e., Paper 3 (due Dec. 14): a 10-page research paper in which trauma theory is applied to a text or film NOT on our syllabus.

Oral presentation (10% of the course grade): a 20-minute talk about your final project (paper 3).
Aug. 24, Course Introduction

Aug. 31, Theorizing Trauma (I)
Bella Brodzki, “Teaching Trauma and Transmission”
Cathy Caruth, “Preface,” (vii-ix); “Trauma and Experience: Introduction,” (3-12) in Caruth, ed., Trauma
Bessel A. van der Kolk and Onno van der Hart: “The Intrusive Past: The Flexibility of Memory and the Engraving of Trauma” (158-182) in Caruth, ed., Trauma
Sigmund Freud, Beyond the Pleasure Principle (Chapters 1-4; especially 2 and 3)

Further reading: Ruth Leys, Trauma: A Genealogy, especially Chapter 8, 266-297

Sept. 7, Theorizing Trauma (II)
Saul Friedlander, “Trauma and Transference”
Dori Laub, “Truth and Testimony: The Process and the Struggle” (61-75) in Caruth, ed., Trauma
NOTE: texts indicated with * should be located in full text databases and printed by class members.

Further reading: Geoffrey Hartman, “Holocaust Testimony, Art, and Trauma”

Sept. 14, Testimony and Trauma (I): The Holocaust
Charlotte Delbo, Auschwitz and After (a trilogy). “Introduction,” by L. Langer (xi-xviii); None of Us Will Return (1-114); and Useless Knowledge (115-231); Optional: The Measure of Our Days (233-354)
Michael Rothberg, Traumatic Realism, Chapter 4 (141-177) especially pages 141-162

Further reading: Lawrence Langer, Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory

Sept. 21, Testimony and Trauma (II): The Holocaust
DUE: Paper 1, a discussion of trauma theory
Jean Améry, “Torture” (21-40); “Resentments” (62-81); and “Afterword” by Sydney Rosenfeld (104-111) in At the Mind’s Limit
Primo Levi, The Reawakening (excerpts: the first and last chapters)
Jonathan Druker, “Trauma and Latency in The Reawakening”

Sept. 28, Trauma Fiction (I): The Holocaust
Cynthia Ozick, The Shawl
Dori Laub, “Bearing Witness, or the Vicissitudes of Listening”

Oct. 5, Cinematic Representations of Trauma (I): A Community in Mourning
The Sweet Hereafter directed by Atom Egoyan
Laura Brown, “Not Outside the Range: One Feminist Perspective on Psychic Trauma,” (100-112) in Caruth, ed., Trauma
Kai Erickson, “Notes on Trauma and Community,” (183-199) in Caruth, ed., Trauma
Oct. 12, Trauma Fiction (II): The Legacy of Slavery
Toni Morrison, *Beloved*
*Dean Franco, “What We Talk about When We Talk about *Beloved*,” *Modern Fiction Studies*, Volume 52.2 (Summer 2006): 415-439

Oct. 19, Staging Trauma: Authoritarian Violence in Chile
Ariel Dorfman, *Death and the Maiden*

Oct. 26, Trauma Fiction (III): 9/11
Jonathan Safran Foer, *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*

Nov. 2, Cinematic Representations of Trauma (II): Legacies of WW II
DUE: Paper 2, in which trauma theory is applied to a text or film on our syllabus
*Hiroshima mon amour* directed by Alain Resnais and written by Marguerite Duras
*Cathy Caruth, Unclaimed Experience*, chapter 2 (25-56)
Further reading: Cathy Caruth, “An Interview with Robert Jay Lifton” (128-147) in Caruth, ed., *Trauma*

Nov. 9, Secondary Trauma and Graphic Art: The Holocaust
Art Spiegelman, *Maus I and II*

Nov. 16, Metaphorical Trauma
A selection of poems will be distributed by the instructor.
Shoshana Felman, “Education and Crisis,” (13-60; especially 26-44) in Caruth, ed., *Trauma*
Kevin Newmark, “Traumatic Poetry,” (236-255) in Caruth, ed., *Trauma*

Thanksgiving Break

Nov. 30, Student Presentations (I)
Talk for 20 minutes about your final project (Paper 3) and respond to feedback and questions from classmates and the instructor for 10-15 minutes.

Dec. 7, Student Presentations (II)
Talk for 20 minutes about your final project (Paper 3) and respond to feedback and questions from classmates and the instructor for 10-15 minutes.

Dec. 14
DUE: Paper 3, in which trauma theory is applied to a text or film NOT on our syllabus.