

HIST 641/601
History and Nostalgia
Wednesday, 3 pm-5:50 pm

Professor: Stacy E. Holden
Student Hours: by appointment
Office: UNIV 127

The purpose of this class is to consider how people exhibit—emotionally and narratively—understandings about the past. What is nostalgia, and how is it expressed? What use does it have as a category of analysis? How can we use this concept to understand historical processes?

Our class readings consist of works by historians, literary scholars and anthropologists. We will grapple with myriad approaches to and definitions of nostalgia to cultivate our own research.

We will have four guests over the course of the semester, three of whom (Ahad-Legary, Gross and Yavuz) will zoom in to discuss their works, while Purdue University's Dr. Dan Kelly will stop by our class to discuss the very idea of feelings from the perspective of a philosopher in the field of cognitive science.

Required Texts

David Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country-Revisited*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2015).

Thomas Dodman, *What Nostalgia Was: War, Empire, and the Time of a Deadly Emotion* (Chicago Studies in Practices of Meaning, 2018).

France M. Clarke, *War Stories: Suffering and Sacrifice in the Civil War North* (The University of Chicago Press, 2011).

Badia Ahad-Legary, *Afro-Nostalgia: Feeling Good in Contemporary Black Culture* (University of Illinois Press, 2021).

Rachel B. Gross, *Beyond the Synagogue: Jewish Nostalgia as Religious Practice* (NYU Press, 2021).

Peter Mitchell, *Imperial Nostalgia: How the British Conquered Themselves* (Manchester University Press, 2020).

Patricia M.E. Lorcin, *Historicizing Colonial Nostalgia: European Women's Narrative of Algeria and Kenya, 1900-Present* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2012).

Edith Wharton, *In Morocco* (1920, reprint; Stanford Travel Classic-John Beaufoy Publishing, 2016). [also available online, since it is in the public domain]

M. Hakan Yavuz, *Nostalgia for the Empire: The Politics of Neo-Ottomanism* (Oxford University Press, 2020).

Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (Basic Books, 2002).

Grade Breakdown:

participation, 30%

3 book reviews, 15% each

6-p. conference paper, 25%

I expect students to be prepared to discuss the assigned book during our class time.

Everyone must review 3 books this semester. Your review is due to me by noon Wednesday. The review is to be between 500-750 words, and I will provide guidelines to assist you in writing it.

When reviewing a book, I expect you to help to moderate the discussion. Towards this end, you must email me at least 2 questions by noon Wednesday. If you are not writing a review, we can and should still discuss any issues that you consider important. Is there something that needs clarification? Do you want to brainstorm about how the ideas may pertain to your research).

***Twice during the semester, we will discuss a single book during 2 classes. If you want to review either book, you must review the entirety of the book. It is due on the day of 2nd discussion.

Our class meetings will be based on the discussions of the book, such as:

1. What argument did the author present to their readers?
2. How did the author organize their research?
3. What sources and methodologies did the author use in their writing the book?
4. How does the author define nostalgia, and how do they give life to such an elusive concept?

At the end of the semester, we will hold a conference, and each student will present a 6- page paper using nostalgia as a prisme for their own research interests. You must hand in a 250-word proposal by 2 March, and it should provide your specific area of research, a question(s) worth asking, and the evidence you will study. This paper can be speculative, but ground your findings in the historical record (primary sources, which can be from any period of time, and widely constructed so that we can include just about anything). What will you examine? Why is it important? How might “nostalgia” provide a useful prism for viewing this topic? Your final paper will allow you to present a 15-min. presentation), addressing the theme of nostalgia in a place and time of your choosing.

Week 1 (1/12) introductions

Week 2 (1/19) the past in the present, part 1

David Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country-Revisited*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2015), 1-288 (Part I and Part II).

Lawrence Raab, “[Writing in the New Year; the Invention of Nostalgia](#),” *The New York Times* (31 December 2003), p. A19.

Week 3 (1/26) the past in the present, part 2

David Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country-Revisited*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2015), 289-610 (Part III and Part IV).

Week 4 (2/2) a disorder of the imagination

**visit by Dr. Dan Kelly to discuss feelings as a philosophical and physiological issue*

Thomas Dodman, *What Nostalgia Was: War, Empire, and the Time of a Deadly Emotion* (Chicago Studies in Practices of Meaning, 2018).

Week 5 (2/9) invisible wires of sympathy

France M. Clarke, *War Stories: Suffering and Sacrifice in the Civil War North* (The University of Chicago Press, 2011).

Week 6 (2/16) more than slavery and oppression

**zoom discussion with Professor Badia Ahad-Legardy*

Badia Ahad-Legardy, *Afro-Nostalgia: Feeling Good in Contemporary Black Culture* (University of Illinois Press, 2021).

Week 7 (2/23) blind spots of collective memory

**zoom discussion with Professor Rachel B. Gross*

Rachel B. Gross, *Beyond the Synagogue: Jewish Nostalgia as Religious Practice* (NYU Press, 2021).

“In the Haunted Present” and “Everyone’s (Second) Favorite Dead Jew” in Dara Horn, *People Love Dead Jews: Reports from a Haunted Present* (W.W. Norton & Co., 2021), xi-xxi and 1-14.

Week 8 (3/2) gender, race and colonial anxieties

Patricia M.E. Lorcin, *Historicizing Colonial Nostalgia: European Women’s Narrative of Algeria and Kenya, 1900-Present* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2012).

250 word abstract due on brightspace

Week 9 (3/9) mourning what one has destroyed

Renato Roslodo, “Imperialist Nostalgia,” in *Culture & Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis* (Beacon Press, 1989), 68-87.

Edith Wharton, *In Morocco* (1920, reprint; Stanford Travel Classic-John Beaufoy Publishing, 2016).

Week 10 (3/16) spring break

Week 11 (3/23) return to an imaginary imperial past

**zoom discussion with Professor Hakan Yavuz*

M. Hakan Yavuz, *Nostalgia for the Empire: The Politics of Neo-Ottomanism* (Oxford University Press, 2020).

Orhan Pamuk, "[The Pamuk Apartments](#)," *The New Yorker* (27 March 2005).

Week 12 (3/30) a necessarily difficult reckoning with real history

Peter Mitchell, *Imperial Nostalgia: How the British Conquered Themselves* (Manchester University Press, 2020).

Yohann Koshy, "[The Last Humanist: How Paul Gilroy Became the Most Vital Guide to Our Age of Crisis](#)," *The Guardian* (5 August 2021).

Week 13 (4/6) globalization and nostalgia, part 1

Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (Basic Books, 2002), 1-257.

Week 14 (4/13) globalization and nostalgia, part 2

Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (Basic Books, 2002), 258-355

Week 15 (4/20) paper presentations

Week 16 (4/27) paper presentations