

**GWS-500 / GWS-400 (HON)**  
**CRITICAL TRAUMA STUDIES**

**Professor Monica J. Casper**

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Spring 2013

Monday 12:30 – 3 PM, Harvill 103

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Office hours: T 10-11 AM or by appointment

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*“The twentieth century may well be remembered as a century of historical trauma.*

*As citizens facing the third millennium, we daily confront the unthinkable...Global disasters challenge our sensibilities with occasions for communal mourning too numerous to chronicle. How have we survived, both individually and collectively, in the face of unimaginable trauma?”*

—*Suzette A. Henke, 2000*

*“If every age has its symptoms, ours appears to be the age of trauma. Naming a wide spectrum of responses to psychic and physical events often with little in common beyond the label, trauma has become a portmanteau that covers a multitude of disparate injuries.”*

—*Nancy K. Miller and Jason Tougan, 2002*

*“A traumatic event is simply an event that has the capacity to induce trauma. My claim is that most such happenings that force people to adapt to an unfolding change are better described by a notion of systemic crisis of ‘crisis ordinariness’ and followed out with an eye to seeing how the affective impact takes form, becomes mediated.”*

—*Lauren Berlant, 2011*

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Studies of trauma have been loosely institutionalized into a somewhat amorphous field of scholars, perspectives, journals, conferences, curricula, and publications. Although contention surrounds the boundaries, scope, and content of "trauma studies," there is general consensus that this fertile intellectual space been shaped by and encompasses twentieth-century catastrophes including war, genocide, and forced migration alongside everyday experiences of violence, loss, and injury. Historically, clinical and psychological perspectives dominated trauma studies, for example in understandings of PTSD. However, fresh perspectives in sociology, comparative studies, cultural studies, literary studies, gender and race studies, history, performance studies, and other fields have broadened the scope of trauma studies to encompass a more critical understanding. At the conceptual heart of *critical* trauma studies is a set of tensions between the everyday and the extreme, between individual identity and collective experience, between history and the present, between experience and representation, between facts and memory, and between the "clinical" and the "cultural." The category of trauma is not taken for granted but rather is unraveled and interrogated to assess the political and cultural work that trauma/“trauma” does. We critically consider the various social and material practices that cohere around contemporary notions of trauma and its kin, asking such questions as: what counts as trauma, for whom, under what circumstances, and with what symbolic and material consequences? This course offers an intensive examination of critical

trauma theory, trauma cultures and representations, trauma interventions, and empirical studies of trauma, with particular attention to issues of gender, race, sexuality, citizenship status, and geography. The course is ideal for social scientists and humanists, as well as professional students in social work, religion, ethics, counseling, human rights, law, and health care.

### **COURSE GOALS AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Because Critical Trauma Studies is an emergent and somewhat contentious area of investigation and scholarship, this course is designed to provide you with the conceptual tools and theoretical background to contribute to its formation and practice. Upon completion of the course, you should:

- Understand and be able to narrate the emergence of Critical Trauma Studies as an interdisciplinary field, including core concepts and debates;
- Comprehend and compare theories of/about trauma and how various (inter)disciplines relate to Critical Trauma Studies;
- Know key definitions, categories, critiques, and controversies that comprise research and scholarship in Critical Trauma Studies;
- Compare the possibilities and limits of “trauma” as a conceptual framework vis-à-vis concepts of suffering, vulnerability, structural violence, marginality, inequality, injustice, and catastrophe;
- Situate “overwhelming” experience(s) in social, historical, temporal, economic, and cultural contexts globally, nationally, and locally;
- Articulate theoretical and political possibilities and limitations as produced in and through the field of Critical Trauma Studies;
- Explore new frontiers for your own engagement with “trauma” and/in related fields of knowledge and practice.



### **REQUIRED COURSE READINGS**

All articles and materials not in the required texts will be posted on D2L. You will be reading the following required books, all of which have been ordered from the UA Bookstores:

Berns, Nancy. 2011. *Closure: The Rush to End Grief and What it Costs Us*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Bradshaw, G.A. 2009. *Elephants on the Edge: What Animals Teach Us About Humanity*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

- Cho, Grace M. 2008. *Haunting the Korean Diaspora: Shame, Secrecy, and the Forgotten War*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Cvetkovich, Ann. 2003. *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Fassin, Didier and Richard Rechtman. 2009. *The Empire of Trauma: An Inquiry into the Condition of Victimhood*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Greenberg, Judith, ed. 2003. *Trauma at Home: After 9/11*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska.
- James, Erica Caple. 2010. *Democratic Insecurities: Violence, Trauma, and Intervention in Haiti*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Sontag, Susan. 2003. *Regarding the Pain of Others*. New York: Picador.



## COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

*Note: One point = one percent*

1. **Class participation.** As you might expect, the fact that we meet only once per week makes it imperative that you attend all class meetings. We will be covering a great deal of intellectually (and emotionally) demanding material and attempting to engage it as fully as possible; therefore your committed participation is crucial. Active participation—that is, not just showing up, but being prepared to discuss the readings and ideas and actually discussing them—will be worth 10% of your final grade.

10 points	Perfect attendance; high-quality contribution every class meeting
9 points	Enthusiastic, well-prepared participation at least 14 times
8 points	Thoughtful and reasonably prepared at least 12 times
7 points	Adequate verbal/written engagement at least 10 times
6 points	Semi-attentive, minimally participatory at least 8 times
5 points	Disinterested, uncommunicative presence at least 6 times
4 points	Distinterested, uncommunicative presence at least 4 times
3 points	Distinterested, uncommunicative presence at least 3 times
2 points	Distinterested, uncommunicative presence at least 2 times
1 point	Distinterested, uncommunicative presence at least 1 time
0 points	Never showed up

2. **Discussion Board.** Throughout the first half of the semester, there will be 5 discussion board forums on D2L, focused on topics related to the readings. You are required to post to

each of these forums, dialoguing with your colleagues and me about the material. Each discussion is worth 6% of your grade (30% total). A grading rubric for discussion posts is available on D2L. To receive full credit for each post, you must respond to the original question, as well as any follow-up questions posed by your classmates, in sufficient depth to indicate that you've read and are engaging with the material. When responding to posts, use people's names so that we know what issues/concerns you're following up on. Responses will be due within 48 hours after I post each question; after 48 hours, the forum will close and no new posts will be accepted, although the forum will still be visible.

3. **Discussion Questions/Facilitation.** In order to help facilitate in-class discussion of the materials, you will produce two sets of discussion questions to share with the class during the semester and also engage in discussion leadership. On the first day of class, you will receive your list of assignments for the semester and these will also be posted on D2L. You will be responsible for introducing the topic and helping to lead the discussions. You can prepare a PowerPoint or other visual aid, bring handouts, use show and tell, or apply any other pedagogical strategy when it is your turn to discuss. Each set of questions and discussion facilitation is worth 10% of your final grade, for a total of 20%.
4. **Final Project:** Each student will be required to submit a final project in this course, chosen from among the following three options:

A. **TRAUMA JOURNAL.** Option 1 is to create a "critical trauma journal," selecting a specific trauma to focus on throughout the semester. The idea here is that you will choose something that might be considered "traumatic" to reflect upon. This does not necessarily have to be a trauma you have experienced (and indeed you are encouraged, though not required, to look beyond your own lives for exemplary "objects of analysis"). The journal should take account of your chosen site (this could be a singular event, something that's ongoing, some kind of individual experience, a collective experience, something happening to humans, non-humans, or the environment) through the various theoretical lenses and perspectives we'll engage in class. The journal can take any form you choose (including digital), but it should offer critical reflection alongside creativity. You may integrate narrative, images, essays, journal entries, creative writing, poetry, news coverage, media, objects, and/or other materials into your journal. You will give a short oral presentation about your journal during our final class session. Journal topics will be due by January 28. The trauma journal is worth 40% of your grade and will be due on or before April 29. No late assignments will be accepted.

- OR -

B. **ANALYTICAL PAPER.** Option 2 is to write a 15-page analytical paper on any topic related to the course. The paper could do any of the following: analyze a specific "trauma," disaster, or catastrophe using literature from the course; analyze a topic related to your thesis or applied research, but using material/ideas from the course; offer a synthetic, critical review of several readings from class; innovate theory in the field of Critical Trauma Studies; or anything else you choose and I approve. You will give a short oral presentation about your paper in our final class session. Topics will be due by February 11. The analytical paper is worth 40% of your grade and will be due on or before April 29. Papers should be typed,

double-spaced, and formatted consistently throughout (in CMS, APA, or MLA style). No late assignments will be accepted.

- OR -

**C. CRITICAL BOOK REVIEW.** Option 3 is to write a 15-page critical book review that incorporates ideas and material from the class. Your review should offer an intellectual, theoretical engagement with the book you've chosen, first providing a summary and then analyzing the book through a "critical trauma theory" lens. I would expect that the review would demonstrate a firm grasp of the book's content, while also illustrating your knowledge of ideas, theories, and theorists of trauma studies. You may select for review one of the five books listed below. Your topic/book will be due by February 11. The book review is worth 40% of your grade and will be due on or before April 29. Reviews should be typed, double-spaced, and formatted consistently throughout (in CMS, APA, or MLA style). No late assignments will be accepted.

**Books eligible for review:**

Bartók, Mira. *The Memory Palace: A Memoir*. New York: Free Press, 2011.  
Grealy, Lucy. *Autobiography of a Face*. New York: HarperPerennial, 1994.  
Jentz, Terri. *Strange Piece of Paradise*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006. (See also <http://www.strangepieceofparadise.com/>)  
Urrea, Luis Alberto. *The Devil's Highway: A True Story*. New York: Back Bay Books, 2004.  
Williams, Terry Tempest. *Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place*. New York: Vintage Books, 1991.

**GRADING AND ASSIGNMENT STANDARDS**

Class Participation	10%
Discussion Board Posts (5 x 6%)	30%
Discussion Questions/Facilitation (2 x 10%)	20%
<u>Final Project</u>	<u>40%</u>
Total	100%

*Grading scale:*

- A = 90% and higher
- B = 80-89.9%
- C = 70-79.9%
- D = 60-69.9%
- E = less than 60%

Also see: <http://catalog.arizona.edu/policies/984/grade.htm>



## WHY TRAUMA STUDIES? WHY NOW?

January 14

Administrative Business • Course Overview • Questions

### Read:

- Cohen, Patricia. 1999. "The Study of Trauma Graduates at Last." *New York Times*, May 8.
- Killen, Andreas. 2000. "Pundits of Pain." *Salon.com*, February 11.
- Siebert, Charles. 2006. "An Elephant Crackup?" *New York Times Magazine*, October 8.
- Herman, Judith. 1997. "Introduction" and "Afterword." From *Trauma and Recovery*. New York: Basic Books.
- Seltzer, Mark. 1997. "Wound Culture: Trauma in the Pathological Public Sphere." *October* 80: 24.
- Ball, Karyn. 2000. "Introduction: Trauma and Its Institutional Destinies." *Cultural Critique* 46: 1-44.

## (RE)THEORIZING TRAUMA

January 28

### Read:

- Ahmed, Sara and Jackie Stacey. 2001. "Testimonial Cultures: An Introduction." *Cultural Values* 5(1): 1-6.
- Taylor, Diana. 2003. "Who, What, When, Why" and "Acts of Transfer." From *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Gómez-Barris, Macarena and Herman Gray. 2010. "Toward a Sociology of the Trace." From *Toward a Sociology of the Trace*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Stevens, Maurice. 2011. "Trauma's Essential Bodies." In Monica J. Casper and Paisley Currah (eds.), *Corpus: An Interdisciplinary Reader on Bodies and Knowledge*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Berlant, Lauren. 2011. "Introduction: Affect in the Present." From *Cruel Optimism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Roth, Michael S. 2012. "Trauma: A Dystopia of the Spirit." From *Memory, Trauma, and History: Essays on Living with the Past*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Stein, Howard F. 2012. "A Mosaic of Transmissions After Trauma." In M. Gerard Fromm (ed.), *Lost in Transmission: Studies of Trauma Across Generations*. London: Karnac.

Due:

Journal Topics



## SUBJECT TO TRAUMA

February 4

Read:

Fassin, Didier and Richard Rechtman. 2009. *The Empire of Trauma: An Inquiry into the Condition of Victimhood*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

## EVIDENCE AND EMPATHY

February 11

Read:

Sontag, Susan. 2003. *Regarding the Pain of Others*. New York: Picador.

Fassin, Didier and Estelle d'Halluin. 2007. "Critical Evidence: The Politics of Trauma in French Asylum Policies." *Ethos* 5(3): 300-329.

Taylor, Diana. 2003. "False Identifications: Minority Populations Mourn Diana." From *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press).

Casper, Monica J., Darnell Moore, Heather Laine Talley, Tamura Lomax, and David Leonard. 2012. "Talking About Grief and Violence." *The Feminist Wire*, December 21. To access, visit: <http://thefeministwire.com/2012/12/talking-about-grief-and-violence/>.

Due:

Analytical Paper and Book Review Topics

## WAR STORIES

February 18

Read:

- Greenberg, Judith, ed. 2003. *Trauma at Home: After 9/11*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska.
- Radstone, Susannah. 2002. "The War of the Fathers: Trauma, Fantasy, and September 11." *Signs* 28(1): 457-459.
- Gómez-Barris, Macarena. 2010. "Reinscribing Memory through the Other 9/11." From *Toward a Sociology of the Trace*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Rana, Junaid. 2011. "The Language of Terror: Panic, Peril, Racism." From *State of White Supremacy: Racism, Governance, and the United States*, ed. Eduardo Bonilla-Silva et al. Stanford: Stanford University Press.



February 25

Read:

- Haaken, Janice. 2002. "Cultural Amnesia: Memory, Trauma, and War." *Signs* 28(1): 455-457.
- Henry, Doug. 2006. "Violence and the Body: Somatic Expressions of Trauma and Vulnerability During War." *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 20(3): 379-398.
- Leonard, David. 2012. "The Invisible War: A Film on Rape, Women, and Combat [A Review]." *The Feminist Wire*, June 23. To access, visit: <http://thefeministwire.com/2012/06/the-invisible-war-a-review/>.
- Philipose, Liz. 2007. "The Politics of Pain and the End of Empire." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 9(1): 60-81.
- Kienzler, Hanna. 2008. "Debating War-Trauma and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in an Interdisciplinary Arena." *Social Science and Medicine* 67: 218-227.
- Morrison, Dan and Monica J. Casper. 2012. "Intersections of Disability Studies and Critical Trauma Studies: A Provocation." *Disability Studies Quarterly* 32(2), <http://dsq->

[sds.org/article/view/3189/3073](http://sds.org/article/view/3189/3073).

March 4

Read:

Cho, Grace M. 2008. *Haunting the Korean Diaspora: Shame, Secrecy, and the Forgotten War*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

**PACHYDERM PERIL**

March 18

Read:

Bradshaw, G.A. 2009. *Elephants on the Edge: What Animals Teach Us About Humanity*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Christy, Bryan. 2012. "Ivory Worship." *National Geographic*, October.

Visit Carol Buckley's site: <http://www.elephantaidinternational.org/>

The Elephant Sanctuary, "Flora," <http://www.elephants.com/flora/floraBio.php>

Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson, 2011, "Elephants, Trauma and the Ego,"

<http://jeffreymasson.wordpress.com/2011/11/14/elephants-trauma-and-the-ego/>

Joan Vannorsdall Schroeder. 1993. "The Day They Hanged an Elephant in East Tennessee." *Blue Ridge Country*, May 1<sup>st</sup>. See <http://blueridgecountry.com/archive/mary-the-elephant.html>

Film:

*One Lucky Elephant* (<http://www.oneluckyelephant.com/>)



## “BLOOD AT THE ROOT”

March 25

### Read:

Wood, Amy Louise. 2005. “Lynching Photography and the Visual Reproduction of White Supremacy.” *American Nineteenth Century History* 6(3): 373-399. (BB)

Waligora-Davis, Nicole A. 2007. “Dunbar and the Science of Lynching.” *African American Review* 41(2): 303-311.

Carbonell, Bettina M. 2008. “The Afterlife of Lynching: Exhibitions and the Re-composition of Human Suffering.” *Mississippi Quarterly* 62(1/2): 197-215. (BB)

Raiford, Leigh. 2009. “Photography and the Practices of Critical Black Memory.” *History and Theory* 48:112-129.

NPR. 2012. “The Strange Story of the Man Behind ‘Strange Fruit.’”

<http://www.npr.org/2012/09/05/158933012/the-strange-story-of-the-man-behind-strange-fruit>

Casper, Monica J. 2012. “On Race, Trauma, and ‘Strange Fruit.’” *The Feminist Wire*, April 7. To access, visit: <http://thefeministwire.com/2012/04/on-race-trauma-and-strange-fruit/>.

## MUNDANE TRAUMA

April 1

### Read:

Cvetkovich, Ann. 2003. *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.



## INTERVENTIONS

April 8

Read:

James, Erica Caple. 2010. *Democratic Insecurities: Violence, Trauma, and Intervention in Haiti*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Guest:

Erin Durban-Albrecht

### “CLOSURE”

April 15

Read:

Berns, Nancy. 2011. *Closure: The Rush to End Grief and What it Costs Us*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

### “TRANSFORMATION”

April 22

Read:

Anzaldúa, Gloria E. 2002. “Now Let Us Shift...The Path of Conocimiento...Inner Work, Public Acts.” In Anzaldúa and Keating (eds.), *This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation*. Routledge.

Fregoso, Rosa-Linda. 2012. “For the Women of Ciudad Juárez.” *The Feminist Wire*, December 3. To access, visit: <http://thefeministwire.com/2012/12/for-the-women-of-ciudad-juarez/>.

April 29

In-Class Presentations

Wrap-Up

Due:

Trauma Journals

Analytical Papers

Book Reviews



### **CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR**

You are bound to observe the UA Student Code of Conduct. You are also bound by university policy regarding disruptive behavior in an instructional setting, and policy that prohibits threats of physical harm to any member of the university community, including oneself. These codes and policies may be read here:

<http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/policiesandcodes/studentcodeofconduct>  
<http://policy.web.arizona.edu/disruptive-behavior-instructional>  
<http://policy.web.arizona.edu/threatening-behavior-students>

### **USE OF PERSONAL ELECTRONICS**

You may not text, chat, make phone calls, play games, or surf the web during lecture or discussion section because these activities distract the instructor and disrupt the learning experience of your classmates. The same goes for disruptive conversations with people sitting around you, and for other distracting activities such as snoring, loud inappropriate remarks, taking up more than your fair share of space, giggling, whispering, or passing notes. If you are observed engaging in this activity, you will be asked, first, to cease this behavior; should you persist in it, you will be asked to leave lecture or discussion.

That said, some learning styles are best served by using personal electronics with keyboards or recorders. If you plan to record any part of the seminar, you must obtain permission from all participants.

### **GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR COURSE PARTICIPATION**

You are expected to “show up”—physically, emotionally, and intellectually—and to be prepared to participate in the seminar. You should attend class regularly, do the assigned reading when it is assigned, turn your written work in on time, and actively join in discussions.

For some students, participating verbally in semi-public discussions with your peers and instructors may feel difficult. Nevertheless, you are expected to conscientiously engage with assigned course materials, to express your positions and reactions to the best of your ability, to be respectful of others who might differ with you, and to trust that you are entitled to the same respect from others. Use the space of the university classroom to think freely and deeply, and to practice your skills for

addressing the substantive issues involved in things you learn about and perhaps feel passionately about.



### **NOTIFICATION OF OBJECTIONABLE MATERIALS**

This course contains material that some students may find objectionable. Although such students are not excused from interacting with such materials, they are certainly encouraged to express well-formed opinions that express those objections and their reasons for them.

### **SPECIAL NEEDS AND ACCOMMODATION**

Students who need special accommodation or services should contact the Disability Resources Center, 1224 East Lowell Street, Tucson, AZ 85721, (520) 621-3268, FAX (520) 621-9423, email: [uadrc@email.arizona.edu](mailto:uadrc@email.arizona.edu), <http://drc.arizona.edu/>. You must register and request that the Center or DRC send me official notification of your accommodations needs as soon as possible. Please plan to meet with me by appointment or during office hours to discuss accommodations and how my course requirements and activities may impact your ability to fully participate. The need for accommodations must be documented by the appropriate office.

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS**

Students are encouraged to share intellectual views and freely discuss the principles and applications of course materials. However, graded work/exercises must be the product of independent effort unless otherwise instructed. Students are expected to adhere to the UA Code of Academic Integrity as described in the UA General Catalog. This code may be accessed here:

<http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/codeofacademicintegrity/>

### **CONFIDENTIALITY OF STUDENT RECORDS**

As required by law under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), student records are confidential. This law and its applicability to your educational records may be accessed here: <http://www.registrar.arizona.edu/ferpa/default.htm>

### **SUBJECT TO CHANGE STATEMENT**

Information contained in the course syllabus, other than the grade and absence policy, may be subject to change with advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.