This seminar attempts to understand how histories may contribute to ‘forgetting’, as well as recovering, the making, breaching, and enclosing of categories and boundaries in the last two centuries. It is motivated by ongoing mobilizations in many parts of the world around competing narratives and subjectivities of entitlement and loss. It is consequently about power and perspective, and alignments and realignments between power in its various forms and associated sensibilities of (dis-)possession. Towards this broad end, we will attempt to view trajectories of modern politics, memory, and historical scholarship in interactive frames, in particular the forming and deforming of empire, nation, and other possible political communities and containers over the last two centuries. Could the fraught, conflict-ridden, topsy-turvy politics of our time be a blowback against how solidarities and tensions along crisscrossing lines of race, religion, class, and gender were mobilized and manipulated by liberal-despotic European colonial, international, and ‘domestic’ political systems? Can historians engage and make a difference?

Evaluation

This is a revised version of the 2018-19 syllabus. It may be updated further before the start of the semester.

Evaluation comprises three main elements:

1. **Paper and presentation (50%)**: MA students write individual or joint papers (3000 words or 5000 words max). PhD students will write individual papers not exceeding 4000 words. More information in class, also see **Week 6** for walk-in hours to discuss your paper topics, etc.

   **Milestones and deadlines (all deadlines are midnight):**
   
   a. Paper topic and preliminary bibliography: 7 October
   b. 1000-word outline and bibliography: 1 November
   c. Complete first draft: Saturday preceding the presentation
   d. Papers will be presented and discussed 9 and 16 December. More details will follow.
   e. Completed final versions: 24 December

2. **Two reading responses (25%)**: maximum **750-words**, reviewing and reflecting on the class readings of the preceding weeks. **Deadlines (midnight)**: **11 November and 2 December**

3. **Class participation (25%)**: this will be based on two components: (a) participation in the two class discussions (**25 November and 2 December**)—themes to be decided in class, suggestions welcome), and (b) diligent attendance, reading, and classroom participation.
Schedule and Readings

Week 1, September 16
Inductions/no class

Week 2, 23 September
Introduction (led by Jiajia Liu)

Week 3, 30 September
Pasts and politics
Richard Evans, ‘Peterloo was the massacre that led to a new democratic era’, *Guardian*, 16 Aug. 2019

Week 4, 7 October
Monumentalizing memory
Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), chapter 1
Monumentalizing the Confederacy, Report of the Southern Poverty Law Center

Week 5, 14 October
*Guest seminar: Historical memory in contemporary India*
Professor Neeladri Bhattacharya, formerly Professor of History, Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi; Visiting Professor, Ashoka University, Delhi/NCR

Week 6, 21 October
Erasing Haiti
Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, chapter 3

Walk-in hours for paper consultation:
Professor Balachandran
• TBA
Jiajia Liu
• TBA

Week 7, 28 October
*Reading, paper research, and debate preparation week* (there will be no formal class meeting this week. The instructors will however be available for walk-in hours to discuss your paper proposals as per the schedule above.)

Week 8, 4 November
Slavery and freedom
Anderson, *White Rage*, chapter 1
‘*Black America made our founding ideals come true’, NYT, 14 Aug. 2019*
Week 9, 11 November
Liberal mythologies
Lowe, *Intimacies of Four Continents*, chapter 4

Week 10, 18 November
Empires
‘The Religion of Whiteness Becomes a Suicide Cult’, *NYT*, 30 Aug. 2018

Week 11, 25 November
Class discussion 1
Theme TBD

Week 12, 2 December
Class discussion 2
Theme TBD

Week 13, 9 December
Presentations

Week 14, 16 December
Presentations and wrap-up