The Rupture of Silence: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa
AAS 124B
Spring 2000
Fridays: 9am – 12pm
Room: Rabb, Du Bois Lounge

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REQUIREMENTS:

♦ Critical reading of the theoretical text.
♦ Participation in class and critical discussion and questioning that engages with the readings.
♦ A mid-term paper of 6-10 pages based on the examination of public testimony as a medium through which traumatic memory is addressed. Will provide 40% of the grade. Due March 10, by 12.30pm.
♦ A final paper (12-15 pages) on a topic to be chosen by students. Consultations with students (individually or in small groups) concerning topics will be scheduled during April. The final paper will provide 60% of the grade.

SYLLABUS

1. 21 January – Introduction to the course: Political Negotiations and how the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established.
♦ Alex Boraine: The Healing of a Nation? Introduction
♦ Michelle Parlevliet: “Background to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission”

2. 28 January – Transition to democracy: The TRC debate in South Africa.
♦ Antjie Krog: “The TRC and National Unity”
♦ See also: Appendix 1: “The political calendar during the era of destabilisation.”

3. 4 February* – Amnesty: The dilemma between justice and reconciliation.
Guest: Beth Lyons

♦ Martha Minow: “Trials” and “Truth Commissions.” In Between vengeance and forgiveness.

4. 11 February – Political memory and the politics of memory
   Screening of video footage from TRC hearings

♦ Martin Meredith: “In the fullness of time.” In Coming to terms, Martin Meredith. New York: Public Affairs.
♦ Judith Herman: “Terror.” In, Trauma and recovery: The aftermath of violence. Basic Books.

5. 18 February – “Framing the witness:” Public hearings and reporting on TRC testimonies.


6. 25 February – Trauma and memory

♦ Dori Laub & Nanette Auerhahn: “Knowing and not knowing massive psychic trauma: Forms of traumatic memory.”
♦ James Young: “Video & Cinemagraphic Testimony.” In, Changing the shape of memory, The American Jewish Committee, 1993

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7. 10 March – The language of trauma: Narrative and art


This lecture will be followed on Saturday 11 March by a class trip to the Pucker Gallery in Boston, where Bernie Pucker will give a lecture on and illustration of Samuel Bak’s work. Transport from Brandeis will be arranged. Time TBA.

8. **17 March** – The language of trauma: Re-enactment of traumatic memory
   Screening of video footage from TRC public hearings and excerpts from “Death & the Maiden”

   ♦ Judith Herman: “Remembrance and mourning.” In, Trauma and recovery: The aftermath of violence. New York: Basic Books.

9. **24 March** – The gendered nature of trauma
   **Guests**: Victoria Sanford, Peace Fellow at the Bunting Institute; Sindiwe Magona, writer and author of *Mother to Mother*, Beacon Press, 1999.
   Screening of segments from “Long Night’s Damage,” TRC documentary by Iris Films


10. **31 March** – Perpetrators’ narrative and the appropriation of the language of victims.
Primo Levi: “The memory of offense.”
Judith Herman: “Captivity” and “The dialectic of trauma continues.” In, Trauma and recovery: The aftermath of violence.

11. 7 April – The act of apology: Forgiveness and healing traumatic wounds

Martha Minow: “Vengeance and forgiveness.” In, Between vengeance and forgiveness.
Mary Baures: Letting go of bitterness and hate. Journal of Humanistic Psychology.
Robert Bies & Thomas Tripp: “Getting even and the need for revenge”

Schedule discussion of topics for term papers

12. 14 April – Individual memory, collective memory, national healing and the challenge of reconciliation
Students expected to watch outside of the class period Bill Moyers’ documentary “Facing Truth,” for class discussion

Presentation by students


13. 19 April, WEDNESDAY – Working with trauma: Reflections
Guest: Victoria Sanford

Screening of footage from TRC public hearing

Dori Laub: “Bearing witness or the vicissitudes of listening.”

* All these classes will be open to the University Community.