

Studying Memory: Methodologies and Tools for Research



BERLIN PROGRAM ALUMNI ROUNDTABLE
AT THE 37TH ANNUAL GSA CONFERENCE

October 5th, 2013 in Denver, Colorado

4:15 pm–6:00 pm, Evergreen E

BERLIN PROGRAM
for Advanced German & European Studies



Memory Studies as a field has grown continuously over the past years and it is one that – much like the GSA – brings together a diverse set of academic disciplines. This diversity means the field is not only rich in the types of questions that are asked but also in the research techniques that are employed to answer them. Memory Studies encompasses everything from cognitive research, “large-n” surveys, narrative analyses, oral history interviews, ethnographies, to literary and film studies, and more. This Roundtable will bring together alumni of the Berlin Program for Advanced German & European Studies with other memory scholars to discuss key issues in Memory Studies methodology. At the outset of the Roundtable, each panelist will briefly explain what they regard as the methodological state of the art in the field, drawing on their own experience. Furthermore, each participant will be asked to identify areas for improvement, development, or cross-disciplinary sharing. We will also seek to discuss key issues, such as: Does the great variation in approaches indicate a lack of focus in the field? How can knowledge accumulate and lead to “scientific progress” under such conditions? Are our epistemological beliefs compatible or are the different strands of memory research destined to develop in parallel but never intersecting paths? Can Memory Studies learn from the experience of other interdisciplinary fields?

Roundtable organized by Jenny Wüstenberg

CHAIR: Belinda Davis (Berlin Program Fellow 1989–1990)
Department of History, Rutgers University


PARTICIPANTS:
Jeremy Brooke Straughn (Berlin Program 1998–1999)
Transnational Studies, Westminster College

Alexander Mirescu (Berlin Program 2007–2008)
Department of Political Science, Saint Peter’s University

Jenny Wüstenberg (Berlin Program 2012–2013)
Postdoctoral Fellow, Berlin Program, Freie Universität Berlin


Eric Langenbacher
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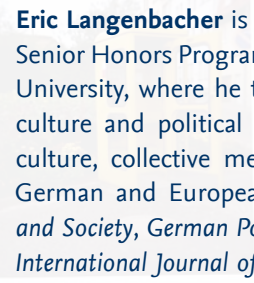
Belinda Davis is Professor and Chair of the Graduate Program in History at Rutgers University, New Brunswick. She is author or co-editor of *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin* (2000); *Alltag—Erfahrung—Eigensinn. Historisch-anthropologische Erkundungen* (2008); *Changing the World, Changing Oneself: Political Protest and Transnational Identities in 1960s/70s, West Germany and the U.S.* (2010); and *The Internal Life of Politics: “Extraparliamentary” Opposition in West Germany, 1962–1983* (forthcoming).

Jeremy Brooke Straughn teaches Transnational Studies at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri, where he also directs the Office of Study Abroad and Off-Campus Programs. His peer-reviewed articles on contention, social memory, and national identity have appeared in journals such as *Theory & Society*, *Sociological Forum*, and the *American Journal of Sociology*. He is currently writing a book based on a longitudinal ethnography of social memory in the former East Germany. Straughn earned his bachelor's in German language and literature at Brown University and took a master's of theological studies at Harvard Divinity School before receiving his master's and doctorate in sociology at the University of Chicago.



Alexander Mirescu received his PhD in Political Science from the New School for Social Research in May 2011. During this time, he worked as a consultant at the United Nations Development Program from 2009 to 2010. Since 2010, he has been assistant professor of Political Science at Saint Peter's University in Jersey City, New Jersey. Mirescu's research in comparative politics focuses on democratization and civil society, religion and politics and development issues. His dissertation was a comparative study on religious policy and the emergence of civil society-based “free spaces” in Poland, Yugoslavia and East Germany from 1945 to 1990. In 2013, Mirescu has conducted field research on pre- and post-Arab Spring oppositional groups in Tunisia.

Jenny Wüstenberg is a political scientist currently living and working in Berlin, Germany. After receiving her Ph.D. in Government & Politics from the University of Maryland, College Park in 2010, she taught at American University in Washington D.C. In October 2012, she became a postdoctoral fellow at the Berlin Program of Advanced German & European Studies at the Freie Universität Berlin. Her current postdoctoral research project examines actors and networks in processes of memory construction in the European Union. In addition, she is completing a book on civil society activism in German memory politics since 1945.



Eric Langenbacher is a Visiting Assistant Professor and Director of the Senior Honors Program in the Department of Government, Georgetown University, where he teaches courses on comparative politics, political culture and political films. His research interests center on political culture, collective memory, political institutions, public opinion and German and European politics. He has published in *German Politics and Society*, *German Politics*, *The Canadian Journal of Political Science*, *The International Journal of Politics and Ethics* and in several edited volumes. Recent edited publications include *Launching the Grand Coalition: The 2005 Bundestag Election and the Future of German Politics* (Berghahn Books, 2006), *Power and the Past: Collective Memory and International Relations*, with Yossi Shain (Georgetown University Press, 2010) and *Dynamics of Memory and Identity in Contemporary Europe* with Bill Niven and Ruth Wittlinger (Berghahn Books, 2013).

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Our cooperation with the German Studies Association (GSA) offers Berlin Program Fellows and Alumni a chance to present their work at the annual GSA Conference to an expert audience. Each year, one or more Berlin Program Panels and Roundtables at the GSA serve as a site for critical engagement.

Panels and roundtables in recent years have been:
A New Era of German Bevölkerungspolitik? (2012)
Architectures of Berlin (2011)
The Visual Arts in Cold War Germany and Beyond (2010)
Being and Becoming a Minority in Germany (2009)

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