MAPPING MEMORY: HISTORY, TEXTS AND CULTURES

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MEMORY STUDIES
(22 & 23 February, 2024)

DEPARTMENTS OF ENGLISH AND HISTORY
LORETO COLLEGE, KOLKATA

CONCEPT NOTE:

Memory studies is a multidisciplinary field which combines intellectual strands from literature, history, philosophy, psychology and sociology, among others. Henri Bergson's *Matter and Memory* (1896), Paul Ricœur's *Memory, History and Forgetting* (2004), French historian Pierre Nora's *Realms of Memory* (1996) and Jacques Le Goff's *History and Memory* (1992) have inspired much research in the area of memory studies. Memory can be both an individual phenomenon as well as societal and collective. Forms of remembering operate as individual and collective representations of the past and they constitute a range of cultural resources for personal, social and historical identities, privileging particular readings of the past and subordinating others. Collective memory can serve as a therapeutic practice for a community and its members, as it comprises an active constructive process during which the members of a community participate in interpreting and processing shared past experiences (particularly traumas) into eventual memory representations, often in such forms as narratives, dramatizations, art, and ritual. Literature thus forms an important medium of cultural memory. The mass media plays a key role in the constitution of memory – and the politics of remembering is intrinsically connected to power. The act of remembering, whether involving individual, socio-historical or cultural representations of the past, is a process which involves selections, absences and multiple, potentially conflicting accounts. Memories are part of a larger process of dynamic cultural negotiation involving history and literature, which defines memories as narratives, and as fluid and mediated cultural and personal traces of the past. In the modern world, then, memory is an important means of establishing authority or destabilising grand narratives of history and power, of evoking nostalgia and helping to forge personal and national identity.

The conference will seek to address issues such as the following:

How do we represent the past to ourselves and to others? Which of our many pasts do we represent, and when, where, and why do we change those representations? How do those representations shape our actions, identities, and understandings? How do individual-level processes interact with collective ones, and vice versa? What does it mean to think about "memory" in these broad ways?

In what ways are we ethically and politically obligated to remember, and what are the consequences of forgetting or failing to meet, these obligations?

Keynote Speakers:

Prof. Stef Craps (University of Ghent, Belgium)
Dr. Abhishek Parui (IIT Madras)

Special Plenary Sessions:

Dr. Itay Lotem (University of Westminster, London)
Ms. Roberta Bacic (Founder of *Conflict Textiles*, Northern Ireland)

We invite paper submissions of 15-20 minutes duration from scholars whose work addresses topics including, but not limited to the following fields:

- Memory and oral history
- Contested histories and memory
- Memory, memorials, the visual arts, archives, installations
- Landscape and memory
- Memory and trauma (slavery, Partition, World Wars, Holocaust, Irish conflict, genocide, apartheid, 9/11, pandemic etc)
- Literature and nostalgia
- Memory and the diaspora
- Memory and the Media
- Collective Memory
- Cultural Memory

To submit a proposal, **please send abstracts to conferencememorystudies@gmail.com by OCTOBER 16, 2023, 5 p.m.**

Please include the following in one PDF:

• Paper title
• Paper abstract (250-word maximum)
• CV with your full name, institutional affiliation (if applicable), title, and email address

Paper presenters will be informed by 31 October, 2023

Conference Convenor: Sukanya Dasgupta
Co-Convenor: Suparna Ghosh
Head of the Organizing Committee: Srijita Chakravarty

Following the conference, a selection of papers will be chosen by the organizers for inclusion in a proposed edited volume.