

## **Memories Divided and Reconciled: Remembering World Wars I and II in France Today**

A Four-Week Summer Seminar for School Teachers

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### **Welcome**

We appreciate your interest in our NEH Summer Seminar for School Teachers, “Memories Divided and Reconciled: Remembering World Wars I and II in France Today. During a four week period, we will discuss the history, memory and legacies of the two wars in France in order to explore divergences in perspective and also convergences. We will visit monuments, museums, and cemeteries in Paris, the Somme, and Normandy, as well as read important novels and screen significant films related to our topic. Information on our site visits, as well as books and film, are provided below. **Please note: Books for the seminar should be purchased in advance. All books can easily be obtained at Amazon.com or Amazon.fr. Given the intense nature of the seminar, we advise you to read as much of these works in advance as possible.**

The first week of the seminar will take place in Paris, and the next three weeks will be in Caen, Normandy. Group transportation by chartered bus to and from Normandy has been arranged, as have living accommodations in both locations. Some meals have also been arranged. Details for lodging and food are provided below.

### **Seminar Schedule**

#### **WEEK I:**

Before undertaking our formal study of “Memories Divided and Reconciled,” we will all take a moment to get acquainted with each other during a brief reception on **Sunday evening, June 29**, at the *Centre International de Séjour de Paris—Maurice Ravel (CISP)*, our lodging in Paris (for more information, see **Housing** below). The reception will be followed by a group meal at the *CISP*’s cafeteria-style restaurant.

On **Monday morning, June 30**, we will use an interactive discussion to establish the general framework for the following four weeks of study. The Seminar Directors will emphasize the recently renewed attention to the interrelationship of World Wars I and II and the ongoing production of books and films on the subject which have inspired this year’s seminar. NEH Summer Scholars will articulate the particular perspectives, background, and experience which have motivated their application to the seminar. On Monday afternoon, Summer Scholars will be able to do errands, recover from jet lag, and to catch up on reading according to their own needs.

During the morning and afternoon sessions for Tuesday July 1, we will discuss Annette Becker & Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau’s *14 – 18 Understanding The Great War*, and the excerpts from Jay Winter’s *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*, and *Remembering War: The Great War Between Memory and*

*History in the Twentieth Century*. (We will send you photocopies of Winter's "Sites of Memory," "Homecomings: the Return of the Dead," and pages 1-51 of *Remembering War*. You should purchase your own copy of the Becker & Audouin-Rouzeau book.) This discussion will set the stage for our visits to key sites for the Battle of the Somme the next day. Becker & Audouin-Rouzeau insist on pondering the unprecedented violence of the Great War, and asking what made it possible. Winter points out that most of the major battles of the Great War took place on French soil. The memory of the Great War is thus literally inscribed into the French landscape, not only in the form of the innumerable military cemeteries large and small which dot the countryside in the Picardy and Champagne regions but also in the visible traces of the trenches and shell holes that scar the land and even in the on-going discovery of unexploded ordnance, including shells containing still lethal poison gas, buried in the ground that yet today necessitate the intervention of specialized bomb squads periodically called in to neutralize the dangers.

We will devote **Wednesday, July 2** to visiting the Museum of the Great War at Péronne, the Devonshire Cemetery at Mametz, the British Memorial at Thiepval, and the Newfoundland Memorial at Beaumont-Hamel. We will depart by chartered bus from the *CISP* at 8:30 in the morning and return to the *CISP* at around 10 p.m., so prepare for a long day. Appropriate stops for meals will be made along the way.

Designed in close consultation with the most eminent scholars of World War I, including Annette Becker, Stéphane Audouin-Rouzeau, and Jay Winter, *L'Historial de la Péronne / Museum of the Great War* is located at the site of the Battle of the Somme, within the walls of the chateau that once served as the German command post. The museum opened in 1992 and makes use of contemporary museography to provide an in-depth account of the Great War along with the events and mentalities that made it possible. We will thus get a close-up picture of the combatants of the Great War and of the equipment they used. We will also glimpse the culture, everyday life, and social history of the World War I era. The Péronne museum also offers battle narratives and harrowing descriptions of the horrors of trench warfare.

The Devonshire Cemetery at Mametz was named after the British regiment that defended the surrounding area in the valley of the Somme. It offers a striking example of one of the many small military cemeteries scattered across the countryside, here appearing in a distinctly British form, with discrete red brick walls and personalized messages on tombstones contributing to the appearance of an intimate space for the final resting place of the soldiers having fallen nearby.

We will find a striking contrast at the British Memorial at Thiepval, however, since the massive monument built there in honor of the war dead features a dramatic series of overlapping arches perched on a total of sixteen massive piers, and towering 150 feet over the surrounding memorial park. On its walls are inscribed the names of some 72,194 soldiers from the United Kingdom and South Africa who died in the Battle of the Somme but who were never found. Designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, the monument is modeled after the London cenotaph also designed by Lutyens. It is particularly interesting to us Americans that, as Winter points out, the inscription of names on stone would become a central feature of other important memorials such as the Vietnam Wall in Washington, D.C., and the Mémorial de la Shoah in Paris.

The Newfoundland Memorial at Beaumont-Hamel was opened in 1925 by British Field Marshal Douglas Haig, who had been commander in Chief of British forces in France during most of World War I. It commemorates the action of the 29<sup>th</sup> Division from Newfoundland, which was at the center of the July

1, 1916 offensive against the German lines. That day marked the most tragic single day for military forces in the history of the U.K., with some 60,000 casualties, including 20,000 dead. In addition to the three small military cemeteries and a museum that recounts the story of the Newfoundlanders, the site features stark reminders of the frightful conflict in the form of still existent trenches, barbed wire, shell holes, and forbidden areas containing unexploded ordnance.

On the morning of **Thursday, July 3**, we will use part 2 of Stéphane Audouin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker's *Understanding the Great War* to reflect on this intensive day of site and museum visits. We shall in particular seek to better understand how such tremendously costly (and for us today tragically futile) battles were undertaken and what subsequent repercussions they had on memory. On Thursday afternoon, we will change our focus to the Second World War, and proceed to visit two major World War II monuments in the heart of Paris, the *Mémorial de la Déportation* and the *Mémorial de la Shoah*. Located directly behind the Notre Dame cathedral on the Ile de la Cité, the *Mémorial de la Déportation* provides an example of the Gaullist desire to commemorate under the banner of the French Republic all those (forced laborers, members of the Résistance, and Jews) deported from France by the Nazis. The *Mémorial de la Shoah* just a few hundred yards away on the Right Bank, however, emphasizes the specificity of Jewish victims deported and murdered simply by virtue of their identity. We will look forward to meeting Claude Singer, a history professor at the Sorbonne and the Director of Pedagogy at the Mémorial who has written three important books (*Vichy, l'Université et les juifs. Les silences et la memoire*, 1992; *L'Université libérée. L'Université épurée*, 1997 and *Le Juif Süss et la propagande nazie. L'Histoire confisquée*, 2003) and with whom we will discuss the current state of Holocaust memory and the various programs undertaken by the *Mémorial de la Shoah* to foster knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust in France. That evening we will have a welcoming banquet at the *CISP*.

On **Friday morning July 4**, we will first go to view the discrete plaque marking the former site of the Vélodrome d'Hiver (rue Nelaton, adjacent to the Bir Hakeim metro station), the indoor sports stadium used to detain many of 13,000 Jews rounded up by the Paris police on July 16 and July 17, 1942 and handed over to the Germans. We then will proceed to the nearby *Place des Martyrs Juifs du Vel'd'Hiv* (Quai de Grenelle) to view the commemorative sculpture inaugurated by François Mitterrand in 1994: it was here that Jacques Chirac gave his speech in 1995, apologizing for French complicity in the massive roundup. We will next visit the *Historial Charles de Gaulle*, a state of the art facility inaugurated at the museum of *Les Invalides* in the winter of 2009 which tells the story of the life and political and military career of Charles de Gaulle, offering a dramatic overview of every phase of the war years and of the question of French resistance to the Germans from a distinctly Gaullist perspective on the period that is still strongly present in French cultural and political life.

On **Friday afternoon**, having examined a number of important aspects of Vichy and its memory, we will welcome Henry Rousso to the Seminar to discuss his landmark 1987 book *The Vichy Syndrome* in the perspective of the developments of the last three decades, including the crimes against humanities trials of French citizens Paul Touvier and Maurice Papon, the ever-increasing importance of the memory of colonialism and the Algerian war, and the dramatically different approaches to memory taken by Presidents François Mitterrand, Jacques Chirac, Nicolas Sarkozy, and now François Hollande. Rousso will assess what progress France has now achieved in confronting the painful legacy of the Dark Years and lead us to consider a series of questions that will remain pertinent throughout the seminar: has France now indeed achieved an overwhelming consensus on Vichy? Has competition among various memories

made it impossible to transmit the legacy of the war and the Holocaust to younger generations in France? How have the increasing European and international perspectives on the Second World War specifically impacted French memory of the Dark Years?

On **Saturday morning, July 5**, we will discuss the salient features of Gaullist memory as evident not only in the speech memorialized at the *Historial Charles de Gaulle* and by the *Mémorial de la Déportation*, but even more stridently by *Le Mémorial de la France Combattante*, one of the most uniformly revered sites of the Résistance. We will focus on the problematical aspects of Gaullist discourse and note how Pascal Convert's recent sculpture and documentary film *Mont Valérien, aux noms des fusillés* propose a more human, even anti-heroic approach which nevertheless aims to unite a community in memory by honoring the courage and sacrifice, but also the specific persons, of previously forgotten *résistants*.

That **Saturday afternoon**, we will then visit the *Mont Valérien*, a promontory overlooking Paris from the east where the Germans executed over 1,000 *résistants*, hostages, and Jewish detainees. And it is at this site that General de Gaulle had *Le Mémorial de la France Combattante* constructed. The site has been recently renovated and now includes a center for visitors and documentation as well as a museum devoted to the Resistance. The tension between the epic narrative told by the monument and the poignant personal tragedies of those shot by the Germans on the *Mont Valérien* will become palpable during the visit, which will thus prepare the group for further discussion of the evolution of the memory of the Dark Years.

On **Sunday, July 6**, we will take a well-deserved and much needed rest after a very intensive first week of visits and discussions, and will also have time to do laundry and prepare for our trip to Caen.

## **Week II:**

On **Monday, July 7**, we will take our chartered bus to Caen, Normandy, where the remaining three weeks of our Seminar will take place. We will leave Paris mid-morning and arrive in Caen early afternoon. Once there, we will take the remainder of the afternoon to settle into our apartments and shop for supplies and groceries at the supermarket nearby. On **Tuesday, July 8**, we will meet with the Historical Director of the *Mémorial*, where we will hold our daily meetings. The Director will orient us to the salient features of the museum. The museum has in fact been recently renamed, and is now called "*Le Mémorial: cité de l'histoire pour la paix*," since the museum's exhibits have been thoroughly updated in light of the most recent findings of historical research and in view of giving the museum a more European, even universal vocation. It is Europe's largest museum devoted to the history and memory of World War II, and committed in particular to engaging the youth from Europe and around the world in reflecting on pressing issues of war, peace, liberty, and human rights past and present. We will then have the opportunity to complete the circuit of World War II exhibits, which provide a coherent narrative of events as experienced in France.

On **Wednesday morning, July 9**, we will return to the memory of the Great War and discuss Jean Echenoz's novel *1914*. Published just recently in 2012, the work provides at once an historical and very contemporary representation of the beginning of World War I and its devastating impact on a group of friends from a small provincial village, their loved ones, and their progeny. Though in some ways a detached historical novel emotionally moving in its simplicity and objectivity, *1914* is nevertheless very

*contemporary* in its brutal evocation of the war and the full force of its destructiveness. We will discuss how *1914* indicates that the memory of World War I is now assuming France's novelistic center stage, along with that of World War II and the Holocaust. On Wednesday afternoon, we will see that the same holds true for French cinema, which has produced a good number of highly popular feature films on the Great War, including of course the one that we will screen, Bertrand Tavernier's *La Vie et rien d'autre / Life and Nothing But* (1989).

On **Thursday morning, July 10**, we will discuss the various elements of Tavernier's *Life and Nothing But* that make it emblematic of the perception of the war now prevalent in France and Europe. Set in 1920, the film interweaves the stories of a number of individuals and groups engaged in various quests to find, identify, mourn, and honor the hundreds of thousands of French soldiers still missing. Just as we see major and minor characters struggling to deal lingering uncertainty and grief over the fate and location of their loved ones, so Winter points out in *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning* that across the various national undertakings to memorialize the war dead, there are remarkable similarities among the various efforts to find meaning in the loss and some consolation for unprecedented bereavement. It was in France and Flanders (part of Belgium) that the problems of burying the war dead were most acute, because that is where the bloodiest battles had taken place. While revealing the strong parallels among their various ways of seeking to face bereavement and overcome the trauma, *Life and Nothing But* nevertheless exposes clear and stark divisions and inequalities separating groups of people according to social class, race, gender, religion, and politics.

**Thursday afternoon**, we will welcome historian and longtime friend of our NEH Summer Seminars in Normandy, Rémy Desquesnes, who has written numerous books on the Germans' Atlantic Wall defenses, the D-Day Landing, and the Battle of Normandy. Desquesnes participated in the original design of the Mémorial museum in Caen, and served as its Director of Pedagogy for more than ten years. He will provide the historical background for our two days of excursions to the D-Day Landing beaches, war cemeteries, fortifications, and battlegrounds connected with Operation Overlord and the Battle of Normandy.

On **Friday, July 11** and **Saturday, July 12**, Desquesnes will lead us on a two-day bus tour of the beaches, cemeteries, fortifications, and landing sites, and will provide detailed commentary at each stop. In addition to helping us take an in-depth look at La Pointe du Hoc, Omaha Beach, Utah Beach, and the American Cemetery at Colleville, Desquesnes will also lead us to place the D-Day Landing in the perspective of the overall Allied strategy as it evolved from the Operation Torch landing in North Africa on November 7, 1942 up until the surrender of Nazi Germany on May 8, 1945. He will also encourage us to contemplate the significance of sites largely overlooked by visitors, such as the somber German cemetery filled with the graves of teenage conscripts at La Cambe.

**Sunday, July 13** will be a day for rest and reading, as will Monday, July 14, which is a national holiday, meaning that our meeting rooms in the Memorial will be closed.

### **Week III:**

On **Tuesday morning, July 15**, we will lay the foundation for our discussion of three very important and very different cinematic representations of World War II, the Occupation, and the Holocaust in France: these are films whose production dates span four decades and whose widely varying

perspectives illustrate key aspects of the evolution of memory from the late 1960s up until the present day. First we will screen part 1, “The Collapse” of Marcel Ophüel’s landmark documentary *The Sorrow and the Pity*, which made a profound impact on French perception of the war and the Occupation, particularly since it highlighted many of the unsettling realities of the Dark Years that had been glossed over by the Gaullist resistance epic.

On **Wednesday morning, July 16**, we will discuss the film, its reception, and the features that made it so scandalous at the time, including the rapid collapse of France’s defenses under the German onslaught of May and June 1940, French complacency and anti-Semitism, the notion of a fascist “idealism” as articulated by Christian de la Mazière (a French aristocrat who enlisted in the Waffen SS to fight with Hitler’s forces on the Russian front), and Ophüel’s deliberate neglect of de Gaulle and the Free French, coupled with the director’s heavy emphasis on the importance of the mainland Resistance groups having originally formed outside of de Gaulle’s organization. We will also discuss historiographical developments which have challenged Ophüel’s presentation of occupied France and which have recently been articulated by noted historian Pierre Laborie in his 2011 book *Le Chagrin and le venin*.

That **Wednesday afternoon**, we will screen Rachid Bouchareb’s *Indigènes / Days of Glory*, which caused a sensation when it first came out in 2006. Though criticized for certain licenses taken with historical fact, Bouchareb’s highly-praised film proposes a promising model for the resolution of problems posed by the traumatic memory of immigrants and their descendants. The film not only made the selection at Cannes in May 2006 but also garnered the personal attention of President Jacques Chirac, who was so impressed by his own viewing of the work in early September that he announced his decision to raise the pensions granted to soldiers from the former colonies to the same level as those received by French citizens. Judging from the film’s reception and the testimony offered by the director and his actors, what may be needed to compose a national memory shared by all of France’s citizens is precisely more attention to the painful but forgotten or overlooked episodes of its past such as that featured in *Days of Glory*.

After discussing Bouchareb’s *Days of Glory* **Thursday morning, July 17**, we shall devote that **Thursday afternoon** to a screening and discussion of Roselyne Bosch’s *La Rafle* [“The Police Round-Up”] which garnered intense media coverage and public interest when it was first screened on March 10, 2010. Bosch’s film sought to provide a detailed cinematic representation of one of the most horrific examples of the brutal round-ups, detentions, and deportations which repeatedly targeted Jews throughout the summer of 1942. On the one hand, *La Rafle* enjoyed great success with the general public, who tended to strongly identify with its most endearing figures, the two children who survived and those who helped them escape. On the other hand, however, noted historian Annette Wieviorka joins a number of critics in deploring the tendency to transform the story into a melodrama providing cinemagoers with an uplifting aesthetic experience. Our discussion will seek to determine the most appropriate assessment of the film and to discern what its production and success say about the current state of Holocaust memory in present-day France.

On **Friday, July 18**, will discuss Irène Némirovsky’s highly acclaimed and somewhat controversial novel, *Suite française*. We will assess the widely varying critical assessments of the book and seek to clarify the nature and scope of Némirovsky’s contribution to the history and memory of the Vichy years. In the morning we will discuss the first part, *Tempête en juin*. We shall discuss why

contemporary readers have been so taken by her depictions of the chaotic exodus, and how Némirovsky has drawn new attention to an often neglected event, the civilian exodus that claimed 100,000 lives in May-June 1940. In the afternoon we will discuss the second part of *Suite française, Dolce*. We will first compare Némirovsky's text with Vercors's *Le Silence de la mer*: in both, one finds a detailed portrait of a highly educated German officer who also happens to be a musician professing love for France and things French. We shall also study the correlation between social status and political affinities as depicted by Némirovsky and seek to determine why *Suite française* has struck such a vibrant chord with present-day readers and what it contributes to our overall perception of the Dark Years in France.

The weekend of Week III will be devoted to work on individual projects. The Directors will be available for individual consultations.

#### **Week IV:**

On **Monday Morning July 21**, we will discuss the final text of the seminar, Laurent Binet's recent 2010 novel, *HHhH*, today. A national and international bestseller as well as a global critical success, *HHhH* deals with the assassination of "Hitler's Hangman," the SS chief Reinhard Heydrich, by Czech and Slovak partisans in Spring 1942. At once a history of Heydrich's crimes and of the courage of the Czech and Slovak partisans who assassinated him, the novel also reflects on how this past can and *should* affect those living in the present, and what the ethical and moral responsibilities of the novelist are in writing about recent history. We will discuss to what degree this singular aspect of the novel is emblematic of historical memory specific to present-day France. Monday afternoon will be set aside for participants to put the final touches on their individual projects.

**Tuesday, July 22** and the morning of **Wednesday July 23** will be devoted to the presentation of the NEH Summer Scholars' individual projects. Each presentation should last 15 minutes, and participants will be asked to provide a written outline of the presentation to each member of the group. Wednesday afternoon the participants will have free time to prepare for final departure from Caen the next morning. They will be expected to clean their studios thoroughly in order to receive their full security deposits back before leaving.

On **Thursday July 24**, the group will have a brief "wrap-up" meeting before leaving by Paris in our chartered bus at 10 am. We will be arriving in Paris between 2 and three pm, and the bus will let us off at the Luxemburg Gardens. There we will say farewell. **Please note: NEH Summer Scholars are responsible for their own lodging and transportation arrangements in Paris, as the Seminar will be officially concluded.**

**HOUSING:** In **Paris** the NEH Summer Scholars will be housed at the *Centre International de Séjour de Paris-Maurice Ravel* (<http://www.cisp.fr>), a dormitory residence run by the city of Paris and located near the *Parc de Vincennes*. Meetings of the seminar and departures for field trips and the transfer to Caen will also be located at the *CISP*. NEH Summer Scholars will reside in single rooms; there are some double occupancy rooms available on a first come, first serve basis. Each room is equipped with a small, private bathroom and television. There is a WiFi connection in the spacious lobby where beverages and snacks are available. There is also an inexpensive cafeteria open for breakfast, lunch and dinner (Please see **Stipends** below for information on meals provided in Paris). Surrounding neighborhoods offer shops, cafes, a laundromat, a post office and other amenities. Within a few minutes' walk is Metro station

Porte de Vincennes (Line 1) . Within ten minutes are Metro stations Bel Air (Line 6) and Porte Dorée (Line 8, Tramway Line 3).

Once in **Caen**, the NEH Summer Scholars will be housed at the Sphinx- Residence Tempologis, in comfortable, fully equipped studio apartments (<http://www.sphinx-immobilier.fr/tempologis.html>) (with dishes, towels, sheets and blankets, dishes etc.) NEH Summer Scholars will pay for all their own meals while in Caen. Each room has television and internet access, but no phone. There is a laundry room in the building. These apartments are located about 400 yards from the *Memorial*, where all the Seminar meetings will take place. Downtown Caen is about a 30 minute walk (1.8 miles) from *Tempologis*. There are also busses that run into town approximately every twenty minutes during the day, and less frequently at night. There are two shopping centers, a post office, a café and a park with botanical gardens within ten minutes' walk from the residence.

**Please Note:** Neither the *CISP* in Paris nor *Tempologis* is air-conditioned.

**Stipend:** The Seminar Stipend for four-week Seminar is \$3300. This is taxable and intended to **help** cover project expenses (air fare to and from Paris, books, and lodging and meals in Paris and Normandy.) The cost of the bus round-trip from Paris to Normandy is covered by the Seminar. The list of books to be purchased is provided below. **Please note: the cost of individual NEH Summer Scholar's lodging in Paris and in Normandy, as well as some meals, will be deducted from the Scholars' stipends in advance, as these payments will be due before our arrival. The remainder of the stipend will be sent to the Summer Scholars before their departure to help defray costs of airline tickets, etc. In Paris two meals a day (breakfast plus lunch or dinner) will be deducted. No meals in Normandy will be deducted.**

#### **Seminar Readings:**

You should plan on ordering the following books in advance. Jean Echenoz's *1914* is only available in French. It can be ordered on Amazon.fr.

Annette Becker and Stéphane Audouin-Rouzeau. *14-18: Understanding the Great War*.

Laurent Binet. *HHhH*.

Jean Echenoz. *1914*.

Irène Némirovsky. *Suite Française*.

Henry Rousso. *The Vichy Syndrome*.