

HST 203: History of the United States Sp14 (Escobar Meta 41237 41238)

Home ► My courses ► Spring 2014 ► HST 203 Sp14 (Escobar Meta 41237 41238) ► May 12 - May 18 ►

Forum 3 ► Historical Amnesia

Search forums

Forum 3

Display replies in nested form Move this discussion to ...

< Previous (Demonizing the Enemy)

(Demonizing the Enemy) Next >



Historical Amnesia

by Joe Escobar - Saturday, May 10, 2014, 11:02 AM

This forum thread is for Historical Amnesia discussion.

After studying the required materials, address the questions in your posts.

To make your POSTS, click the reply link in this, MY post.

To reply to another student's post, be sure to click the reply link within in THEIR post.

IMPORTANT - SUBJECT LINES

BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post. Do NOT simply leave it RE: Historical Amnesia

Sum of ratings: -

Edit | Delete | Reply



sweeping it under the rug

by Britney Painter - Sunday, May 11, 2014, 12:46 PM

I almost would find it insulting not to know all the horrific events that my country had to go through to be the way they are now. I hate that we just skim over topics and only know the good parts of the events. I feel that with every good thing, something bad has to happen, nothing comes easily and we have to work for it. So why not learn about how we worked and maybe did do a couple of things we're not proud of these days, but it got us here and got us trying to make changes. My gravest concerns regarding this "history amnesia" is that people will start to think they are better than others, or they don't have to work as hard, because they think their country didn't do anything wrong but every other country is the enemy. I almost see it as a parent telling their child while they're young, that homeless people are bad, and that they do bad things like steal or do drugs. Ten years later, they find out that their parent got a DUI when they were fresh out of college, but decided not to say anything because if they sweep it under the rug, they can pretend it never happened.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: sweeping it under the rug



by Kenneth Green - Tuesday, May 13, 2014, 10:46 PM

There is not much to add to your post, except since you made it so down to earth, why can entire nation's "sweep it under the rug" but kids in your generation can't even post a "whacky" photo on Facebook and not confront the consequences? A DUI would show up on your public record, well now days, forever? Employers can deny jobs because kids can't whitewash personal history in 2014. Only entire Nations (or as you imply, Parents) can do it. (Parents can't do it anymore.)

But regarding the article, PRI did a report a few weeks ago stating that an entire generation of young people in China have no idea Tiananmen Square ever happened. Iconic "Tank Man" photo? They've never seen it.

Tank Man, should have lived in America and posted it on Facebook.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Mistakes Happen (or did they?)



by Kenneth Green - Monday, May 12, 2014, 5:52 PM

The greatest concerns regarding "historical amnesia" have to do with history repeating. Of course, we've learned in this class that history does not repeat. As humans, only the actions we take while we are alive create the consequences that those who come after us will refer to as "History." Yet the attempts to whitewash disparaging actions of our forefathers come with the risk of not learning the lessons of those mistakes. So perhaps, history does not repeat, only the mistakes.

This is an American History course, and it is telling that not since the series "Roots," has the issue of slavery reached greater cinematic appeal with movies like, 12 Years A Slave, Lincoln, and (my personal fav) Django Unchained. "Roots," was a literary best-seller in the 20th century, and the ABC Network mini-series based upon the book broke all television ratings records for the time-period. (1970's) Yet, it takes 10 years after the turn of the second millennium for Hollywood to touch the subject of American slavery? If that's not historical amnesia by someone, I don't understand the term. Ignoring history in my view, is amnesia.

Only if textbooks (or Historians such as Fumiko Niki from the article) are allowed to advance the truth of history from testimony of primary sources or photos, can a discussion begin about "why did this happen?" Then the mistakes of history become less repeatable. And it's true, also according to this article, Tiananmen Square never happened. The current Chinese Government wants to practice historic amnesia in order to promote nationalism just as much as anyone. The two events do not weigh as much on a scale, but any form of amnesia always leaves the victims asking more questions than the carefully white-washed

version provides answers.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Selective Memory Learns Nothing

by Robert Johnson - Tuesday, May 13, 2014, 12:16 AM

False information about anything can obviously cause people to make the wrong choices. And when it comes to false information in a country's history book, I think it may double the damage in terms of peoples lives being negatively effected.

In this case, Japanese Students learning from a textbook that changes the historical facts, to me is not very smart, especially if the country wants to learn from its mistakes and grow past them. Maybe they just really don't care, and just as soon forget about their war crimes in China (selective memory) and who know's maybe they will do it again, massacre people in the future as a result. This Is just one of the grave concerns I can see about Historical Amnesia.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Learning from Mistakes

by Jesse Flannery - Wednesday, May 14, 2014, 10:56 PM

I had actually never heard of the "Rape of Nanking" before this video. I was very surprised that any country would try to hide its past anymore. Japan's government looks ignorant trying to deny, or hide historical facts. There is no erasing of the past. I agree with the people in China that found it insulting. It's almost a slap in the face pretending a tragedy of that magnitude never happened. With the ability to store massive amount of information these days the story of Nanking will keep coming back to haunt them. I think learning about these things are important to show as an example for future generations. While showing our deepest sorrow and condolences for mistakes of the past. We can help to show future generations how ridiculous, and unnecessary atrocities like this are. How do we learn? A lot of the time from mistakes. Erase those mistakes and your bound to repeat them.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



"When legend becomes fact, print the legend"

by Laura Newman - Friday, May 16, 2014, 3:07 PM

Prior to this forum, I was speaking with a friend of mine, Penny, who is originally from Australia and has traveled extensively around the world. We began talking about her time teaching English in Japan and she had informed me that schools do not teach about Japan's role in WWII. Shocked, I had asked her why? She went on to explain, culturally, how the Japanese try to maintain excessively the idea of innocence and purity among their people. They feel as if they teach these things, the population will grow tainted and be

ashamed of themselves.

Upon further research, Japan in a cultural anthropology is regarded as a “shame culture”. This is a cultural technique used to maintain order in society by shaming an individual or group from straying away from the social norm or because of bad actions. The consequence would be an overall rejection from society and honor in oneself, family, and ancestry is a large fixation in Japan’s way of life.

Knowing this information, it gives some perspective on why the government would want to keep the “Rape of Nanking” and other horrific events of their history under wraps. This is in no way a justification, rather a different perspective on looking at it from our Americanized eyes.

Denying or not teaching important facts in history isn’t just a Japanese idea. We all thought for the first 10 or so years of our lives that Thanksgiving was a day founded on Pilgrims making friends with the Native Americans and feasting with our new BFFs. Being the educated individuals that we are, we’ve discovered that this is the farthest thing from the truth.

Enforce ignorance or the censoring of a nation’s history is a terrible thing to inflict onto a people. It leads to a lack of empathy, or understanding of other cultures. It is insulting to the other nation’s it affects, perhaps the same reason that most natives don’t trust the white man. If the history isn’t taught to the white man, then he will have no idea why a sect of people has so much animosity toward him.

Really the holiday of Thanksgiving was Lincoln’s idea to make it a federally observed holiday in order to bring families together, in the midst of the Civil War, for a day of peace and thankfulness in 1863.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thanksgiving>

We get very comfortable taking our history at face value and embracing pop culture versions of past event as truths. In an HBO special I watched a while ago, comedian Robert Wuhl called “Assume the Position 101”, which sheds light on our history of misinformation and is equally as funny. I attached the link below.



Sum of ratings:3 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Not just amnesia in Japan....

by Joseph Foley - Saturday, May 17, 2014, 11:42 AM

Laura,

Great post and I agree. It has been interesting to see how our own history has been suppressed and altered, especially in public schools. As we have talked about demonizing our enemies, it made me think about how little I heard of the American propaganda machine while learning about WWI and WWII in school. I'm 31, so my public schooling spanned through the 80's and 90's. I learned falsities about the pilgrims, our founding fathers, the civil war, the emancipation proclamation, reconstruction, immigration (Chinese Exclusion Act), propaganda, and the list goes on. It wasn't that I was not offered information (although social sciences are thinning in public schools currently), I was only offered certain information.

As Kenneth and Laura mention, there seems to be a long delay when it comes to the correct information reaching the American masses. I would agree that the situation in China/Japan is much more extreme, with entire generations not being aware of basic history. Tragic situations like what happened in Nanking (several interesting American documentaries covering Nanking) should never be forgotten. I did not learn about Nanking in public school, but later independent research, and American cinema. Obviously the filter for information can be much stronger in other regimes. It reminds me of the movement attempting to discredit the Holocaust.

I have found quite a few articles touching on America's lack of history knowledge. In an article from NBC, Christien Amario touches on recent (2011) national testing, she says, "Just 13 percent of high school seniors who took the 2010 National Assessment of Educational

Progress — called the Nation's Report Card — showed solid academic performance in American history. The two other grade levels tested didn't perform much better, which just 22 percent of fourth-grade students and 18 percent of eighth-graders scoring proficient or better (found @http://www.nbcnews.com/id/43397386/ns/us_news-life/t/report-students-dont-know-much-about-us-history/#.U3eokBbnmX0). Obviously our reasons for why history is disappearing in our country can be debated, but it is certainly resulting in historical amnesia. Our citizens our losing touch with basic historical facts.

One result of a lack of factual knowledge, is our current political climate. People pull their talking points from media outlets like Fox, or MSNBC, and don't fact check. I hear endless arguments, with both sides using false data. Historical knowledge becomes virtually non-existent, and speculation and emotion takes over the debate. Historical amnesia has always existed, and it is not unique to only particular civilizations.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



So History Doesn't Repeat Itself

by Robert Johnson - Saturday, May 17, 2014, 5:24 PM

The question of whether or not history repeats itself has come up in class.

Our instructor's view on this question, in which I greatly value, has been firm. But the topic of historical amnesia has me thinking about it.

One way people learn is through trial and error. It should be safe to say that, through out history people have experienced what works, and what doesn't, in relation to the desired outcome, or undesired consequences. This knowledge then being passed forward, in the case of history to future generations. Looking back on history, these generations can then use it as a guide,

But in this world, whether about war or human rights, there have been lines drawn and sides, where the desired outcome for one, can and does, lead to suffering for generations to come on the other.

On the one hand, I can see how looking back on history, can lead to helping, or preventing the re-occurrence of events, for example. On the other hand, I struggle to see how historical amnesia could never result in history not repeating itself.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Letting history go, and moving forward

by Robert Johnson - Saturday, May 17, 2014, 6:03 PM

Although I tend to consider forgetting events in history, are like sweeping them under the

rug, so to speak, I wonder if any good at all could possibly result.

Could it be possible in some cases, that when, and long as history is recorded and taught, entirely and accurately, that it may continue to cause problems or setback's, or support the same barrier's of those born generation's later?

In just this one perspective, It almost seems that historical amnesia, could be a form of just letting it go for some people.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Letting history go, and moving forward



by Dakarai Hightower - Saturday, May 17, 2014, 9:56 PM

Personally, I wouldn't say it is people trying to let it go. The times when ive seen historical amnesia, its generally been to cover something up like the Chinese taking the Tiananmen square incident off of google, and putting up nice pictures of what the square looks like today.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Chinas spotty past



by Dakarai Hightower - Saturday, May 17, 2014, 9:43 PM

The gravest concern regarding historical amnesia, is that people in later generations will be ignorant to historical truths that happened in my generation or generations before mine. Unlike a video I saw last term where it showed the perspective of what something from another country and they believed their side was correct. Historical Amnesia, is a lot more unacceptable, because you are hiding historical truths from society and attempting to claim that those events never happened. Recently in class, Joe showed the president from Iran who says the holocaust didn't happen just to spite the jews. Or like china, and how they actually went to the lengths of removing all photos from the Chinese google of the tiananamen square incident.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Forgive, but never forget



by Derek Landon - Saturday, May 17, 2014, 10:53 PM

Trying to forget about something wrong that a nation has done before is a big mistake. Time and time again we have seen nations try and (what Britney said) sweep their mistakes under the rug, but by doing that, they will never fully understand why that happened and how to make sure that it will never happen again. The Nanjing massacre is a particular incident that most of Japan still denies ever happened to this day and because of that, I think Japan could do this mistake again and many worse. Even in life we are told to learn from our mistakes so that we do not keep making them. We will never know what is right from wrong without these lessons learned throughout history.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



forget me not

by Edwin Westlund - Saturday, May 17, 2014, 11:26 PM

I agree one hundred percent with the idea that experience is the best teacher. You learn from the past. All events, good and bad, have a lesson to teach. It must be difficult for a country to grow and progress as fast as they could if the people are being lied to and having their government make it seem like the don't ever make mistakes. I can respect making a mistake, admitting it, and changing according to what you've learned. I cannot respect making a mistake and acting like it never happened and leaving the opportunity to make the same mistake all over again. That is a dishonest way to do things and its crazy to think that this is acceptable any place in the world. The sad part is that it happens everywhere. Nobody wants to admit all of the terrible things that they have done but telling and teaching about those things can exchange important lessons.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Painful, but necessary

by Daniel Hovet - Saturday, May 17, 2014, 11:58 PM

The saying "those who forget history are doomed to repeat it" was described in something I read a long time ago as actually being an optimistic saying, as it implies change can occur. Some argue that human nature never changes, regardless of the warnings or laws put in place. I don not entirely agree with that. I feel that to avoid terrible things like the atrocities of the past, the first thing needed to do so is to remember what happened. Striking the Rape of Nanking from history textbooks is the very sort of behavior that encourages forgetting the important lessons of the past. Yes, it may be easier on one's mind to forget such things, but to remember them is unquestionably necessary.

Sum of ratings: -

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)

[< Previous \(Demonizing the Enemy\)](#)

[\(Demonizing the Enemy\) Next >](#)

You are logged in as Joe Escobar (Logout)

 [Moodle Docs for this page](#)

