Description of the Dana Forum
(Adapted from information at http://www.muhlenberg.edu/main/academics/dana-scholars/)
The Dana Forum is a senior year experience designed to provide an opportunity for Dana scholars to engage in shared interdisciplinary dialogue, enriching both your own education and the intellectual climate on campus. My expectation is that this capstone experience should reflect the College’s Mission Statement that speaks to your development as scholars, leaders, and citizens: “Muhlenberg College aims to develop independent critical thinkers who are…committed to life-long learning, equipped with ethical and civic values, and prepared for lives of leadership and service.”

Each year the Forum helps Dana seniors develop and execute collaborative research projects centered on issues of public concern and interest that are tied to the Center for Ethics annual theme. This Fall’s Center for Ethics program is entitled Memory and Forgetting (more information can be found below and at http://www.muhlenberg.edu/main/aboutus/cfe/current_programs/index.html). The events through the Center for Ethics, and the conversations in the Dana Forum, will center around the following questions:

What are the ethics and politics of memory construction? What is the morality of memory? Are we obligated to remember people and events from the past? Are there some things we are obligated to forget? Do we have a responsibility, through memory and remembrance, to repair past mistakes? Should we ever attempt to erase memories? What is collective memory and what is its relationship to personal memory? What is the relationship between memory, myth, and truth? In what ways is memory construction a cause and effect of access to power? How is memory used in shaping the public and granting access to communities? Are there more or less ethical ways to access and attempt to shape memory? Is there such a thing as false memories, recovered memories, and if so, what are the implications for the ethics and morality of memory?

Goals for the Dana Forum

During the first semester, our weekly meetings are designed to facilitate the construction of an intellectual community in which we generate a shared discourse around the Center for Ethics theme. Unlike a regular course or seminar, the Forum is not designed to teach you information on which you will be tested, or help you master a particular, predetermined body of knowledge. Rather, our goal is to work together to explore this very rich and complex theme, and consider how the full range of disciplinary perspectives in the sciences, social sciences and humanities,
each bring something important to the conversation. The initial sessions of the semester will be based on a variety of readings that I will provide to get us started. Again, the goal for this part of the Forum is not that you learn specific details about particular histories, authors or fields. Rather, the idea is that we should find interesting materials - it almost doesn’t matter what they are - and use them as a springboard for developing a nuanced appreciation of the ways that the theme of “Memory and Forgetting” can be deployed as a useful analytical model. We will then have a series of six guest lectures from faculty members across the college in a wide range of fields. This will give us a chance to see how a multi-disciplinary engagement with the theme enlivens the conversation and helps us to broaden our understanding of the topic when we place different academic disciplines in conversation with one another.

As the fall semester progresses, you will form groups of four or three to develop projects - which will be written during the spring semester - that consider some aspect of the issue of memory and forgetting. By the end of the semester, each group will have developed a project proposal with a preliminary bibliography, which will be presented to the rest of the Forum students during one of the last three sessions of the semester. Each group will also need to select a faculty mentor to help guide the project during the spring semester. At the end of the semester, each group will be asked to formally defend the project proposal before a faculty panel consisting of myself, Dr. Hashim, and your faculty mentor, during a pre-arranged time that will take place outside of the normal Dana Forum sessions.

There are no rules with regard to what your topics should be, how you should approach your projects, or what research methodologies you should employ. If our work together is successful, our shared conversation over the course of the fall semester will serve as inspiration for research ideas that none of us can predict. The Dana Forum has the potential to be an exciting intellectual adventure for all of us.

**Fall 2011 coursework**

As part of the course, you are required to attend a minimum of four Center for Ethics events and reflect on those experiences in our class. For each event that you attend you should submit a written reflections within a week of the event. These should be 2-3 pages typed double-spaced and should be submitted as a hard copy to me at my office or in class. Please note that submission of a reflection indicates that you attended the entire event, including any question & answer session. For some of our fall sessions, I will encourage us to direct our conversation over dinner at the beginning of class to the recent event, so that those who attended can share thoughts with others in the group.

**Requirements and evaluation**

Grades for the Forum will be determined on the basis of the components described below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and participation (Fall course)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Written reflections on Center for Ethics events (Fall)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group-lead discussion (Fall course)</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group research proposals (Fall)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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Group proposal presentation (Fall course) 5%
Final Project and Presentation (Spring) 40%
Peer Evaluations (Fall and Spring) 10%

The grading scale for the determination of final letter grades is as follows: A, 90% and above; B, 80-89%; C, 70-79%; and D/F, below 70%. In addition, pluses (+) and minuses (-) may be used to denote the higher and lower end of each range. Students will receive a final grade upon completion of the research project and presentation at the end of the Spring 2012 semester.

All Forum requirements are to be performed under the bounds of the Academic Behavior Code. Please familiarize yourself with this document and understand that a student who violates the Code may receive a failing grade for the course.

Any student with documented disabilities or special needs who requires accommodations in this work should let me know as soon as possible. Students with disabilities requesting classroom or course accommodations must complete a multi-faceted application process through the Office of Disability Services prior to the development and implementation of an Accommodation Plan. Each Accommodation Plan is individually and collaboratively developed with the directors or staff of the following departments, as appropriate: Academic Resource Center, Office of Counseling Services, Student Health Services, and the Office of Disability Services. If you have not already done so, please contact the appropriate department to have a dialogue regarding your academic needs and the recommended accommodations, auxiliary aides, and services.

Schedule of Fall Sessions

9/1 – Class introduction; General Exploration of Theme and consideration of “Big Ideas”

9/8 – Discussion of The Future of Nostalgia
   Introduction, chapters 3-6

   Readings to be posted on Blackboard

Discussion of lecture by Stephanie Coontz, (9/14, Miller Forum, 7pm)

9/22 – Guest Speaker, Marcia Morgan, Philosophy.
   “St. Augustine and the Battle between Memory and Time"
   Readings to be posted on Blackboard

9/29 (reschedule) – Guest Speaker, Dr. Jeremy Teissere
10/6 Discussion of Jonah Lehrer talk (10/4, Miller Forum, 7pm)
   Readings to be posted on Blackboard

10/13 (reschedule, 12?) – Guest, Dr. Gretchen Gotthard

10/20 (Reschedule) – Discussion of Olick/Gourevitch talk (10/19, Miller Forum, 7pm)

10/27 – Guest Speaker – Dr. Jefferson Pooley

11/3 – Guest Speaker – Dr. Thomas Cragin

11/10 – Guest Speaker – Dr. James Peck

11/17 – Group Presentations

12/1 – Group Presentations

12/8 – Group Presentations