Call For Papers: Memory as a Future Practice
Digital Symposium|29 May 2026

While memory is inherently bound to the past, it is through acts of remembering that individuals, communities, and institutions imagine and shape possible futures (Huyssen 2003; Erll & Hirst 2026). Remembering structures expectations, frames political and ethical debates, and influences how societies respond to present challenges (Szpunar & Szpunar 2016). Therefore, this symposium invites postgraduate researchers to explore memory as a future-oriented practice and to reflect on how memory studies can contribute productively to contemporary debates and future-making processes.

Recent scholarship has increasingly questioned linear models of memory that separate past, present, and future (Conway et al. 2016). Instead, memory is approached as a dynamic practice that connects temporalities and opens spaces for reflection and action (Erll & Rigney 2009). At the same time, changing media environments and new technological forms are transforming how memory is produced, mediated, and addressed to future audiences.

This postgraduate symposium, jointly organized by the Institute for Cultural Identity and Memory Studies at the University of St Andrews and the Frankfurt Memory Studies Platform at Goethe University Frankfurt, aims to provide a forum for interdisciplinary discussion on memory as a dynamic and future-oriented field. We welcome contributions from postgraduate researchers across disciplines, including but not limited to cultural studies, literary studies, history, media studies, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, digital humanities, and museum studies.

Possible topics for discussion include, but are not limited to, the following thematic areas:

Art, Literature, Film, Media, and Other Representations

Literary and media texts shape cultural memory and influence how futures are imagined (Erll 2022). This section invites contributions on narrative form, medial practices, and aesthetic strategies that engage memory as a temporal practice. Papers may examine how texts address future audiences or challenge established memory narratives.

Digitalization and Digitization

Digital technologies affect how memory is stored and circulated (Mandolessi 2024). This section welcomes papers on digital archives, online memory practices, and immersive media. Contributions may address questions of durability, access, or ethical responsibility in digital memory cultures.

Migration and (Post)colonial Contexts

Memory practices are shaped by migration and colonial histories (Adebayo 2023). This section focuses on remembrance in indigenous, diasporic and postcolonial contexts. Contributions may examine how memory is negotiated in relation to belonging, displacement or historical responsibility.

Environment and Ecological Memory

Environmental debates have renewed attention to memory as a way of thinking about responsibility toward future generations (Gülüm et al. 2024). This section invites papers on environmental memory, ecological narratives, climate change fiction, and cultural responses to environmental change. Contributions may address how memory informs ideas of sustainability.

Archives, Heritage Institutions, and Museums

Archives and museums are key sites of memory production and preservation (Stoler 2002). This section invites contributions that examine how institutional memory practices are oriented toward future users and future forms of knowledge. Contributions may examine curatorial strategies, archival power, restitution debates or institutional change.

Practical information

The symposium will take place online on Friday, 29 May 2026. Presentations will be 15-20 minutes in length, followed by discussion.

Please submit an abstract (max. 250 words), along with a short biographical note (max. 50 words), by 28 February 2026, 23:59pm (GMT+0) via [this form](). For questions, please write an email to: cims@st-andrews.ac.uk.

We particularly encourage submissions from postgraduate researchers and early-career scholars. The symposium aims to provide a supportive space for interdisciplinary exchange.

References

Adebayo, Sakiru. 2023. *Continuous Pasts. Frictions of Memory in Postcolonial Africa*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Conway, Martin A., Catherine Loveday, and Scott N. Cole. 2016. "The Remembering-Imagining System." *Memory Studies* 9 (3): 256–265. doi:10.1177/1750698016645231

Erll, Astrid and William Hirst, eds. 2026. *Cognition, Culture, and Political Momentum. Breaking down the Silos in Collective Memory Research*. New York: Oxford UP 2026.

Erll, Astrid. (2022). "The hidden power of implicit collective memory." *Memory, Mind & Media*, 1(e14). doi:https://doi.org/10.1017/mem.2022.7.

Erll, Astrid and Rigney, Ann. "Introduction: Cultural Memory and its Dynamics". *Mediation, Remediation, and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory*, edited by Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney, Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, 2009, pp. 1-14. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110217384.0.1

Gülüm, Erol, Paul Leworthy, Justyna Tabaszewska & Hanna Teichler, eds. 2024. *Memory and Environment*. Special issue of the *Memory Studies Review* 1 (1). https://doi.org/10.1163/29498902-20240007

Huyssen, Andreas. *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003.

Mandolessi, Silvana. 2024. "Memory in the digital age." *Open research Europe* 3 (123).

Stoler, Ann. 2002. "Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance." *Archival Science*, 2(1): 87–109.

Szpunar, Piotr M. and Karl K. Szpunar. 2016. "Collective Future Thought: Concept, Function, and Implications for Collective Memory Studies." *Memory Studies* 9 (4): 376–389.