

The Specter of Genocide

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Course Description:

Genocide scholars often refer to the 20th century as “the century of genocide.” It is estimated that more than 150 million people were murdered by governments in the 20th century, 20-40 million of them in events that meet the legal definition of genocide in international law. In this course, we explore what a classic collection of essays called “the specter of genocide.” We begin by discussing the history of the term, its ambiguities, its legal definition and the controversies surrounding it. We then turn to discuss several case studies that will help us explore some key themes in Genocide Studies: Rwanda, the Armenian genocide, the extermination of the Roma and Sinti by the Nazis, the Cambodian "auto-genocide," East Timor, and the current war in Yemen.

Course Requirements:

Full attendance.

Weekly reading assignments: Students are required to read the assigned items for every week, to watch the assigned documentaries/films and to send one or two paragraphs summarizing the main arguments of the text or the most important/interesting aspects of the documentary to my email before class.

Response papers: Students are required to submit two response papers, each 2-3 pages. Each paper should address one of the main themes discussed in class (perpetrators’ motivations; the politics of genocide; genocidal sexual assaults;

relations between genocide and war, etc.), by analyzing the arguments of two sources from the syllabus and reflect on their broader relevance to genocide studies. The response papers should be submitted via Moodle and a copy should be sent my email.

The final grade is determined by attendance, participation in class that reflects engagement with the reading materials (30%), and the response papers (70%).

Final paper: Students may submit a final paper: a short, referat paper or a seminar paper. Short papers are to be submitted by the end of February 2021. Seminar papers are to be submitted by the end of June 2021. The part of the paper in the final grade will be 70%, participation 15% and response papers (15%).

Reading List:

1. Introduction: What is Genocide?

"Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide," *The United Nations Human Rights Website*:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CrimeOfGenocide.aspx>

2. Raphael Lemkin and the Invention of Genocide

Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupies Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1973), ix-xv; 79-95.

Documentary: Watchers of the Sky

Additional reading:

Scott Strauss, "Contested Meanings and Conflicting Imperatives: A Conceptual Analysis of Genocide," *Journal of Genocide Research* 3(3) (2001): 349-375.

A. D. Moses, "Conceptual Blockades and Definitional Dilemmas in the 'Racial Century': Genocides of Indigenous Peoples and the Holocaust," *Patterns of Prejudice* 36(4) (2002): 7-36.

William A. Shabbas, *Genocide in International Law: The Crime of Crimes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2000), 1-13; 71-81.

3. Genocide in Rwanda (1): Historical Background

Alison Des Forges, '*Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda*' (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999), 1-30; 31-64.

Documentary: Ghosts of Rwanda.

Additional reading:

Rene Lemarchand, "Ethnicity as Myth," *The Dynamics of Violence in Central Africa* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 49-68.

4. Genocide in Rwanda (2): Ordinary Killers?

Scott Straus, *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power, and War in Rwanda* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press 2006), 122-152.

Lee Ann Fujii, "The Power of Local Ties: Popular Participation in the Rwandan Genocide," *Security Studies*, 17:3 (2008): 568-597.

Documentary: Hotel Rwanda

Additional reading:

Omar S. McDoom, "Who Killed in Rwanda's Genocide? Micro-Space, Social Influence and Individual Participation in Intergroup Violence," *Journal of Peace Research* 50(4) (2013): 453-467.

Omar McDoom, "Rwanda's Ordinary Killers: Interpreting Popular Participation in the Rwandan Genocide," *Crisis States Research Center*

<http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/28153/1/wp77.pdf>

5. Genocide in Rwanda (3): Peace and reconciliation?

Susan Thomson, "Whispering Truth to Power: The Everyday Resistance of Rwandan Peasants to Post-Genocide Reconciliation," *African Affairs* 110 (440) (2011): 439-456.

Helen Epstein, "A Deathly Hush," *The New York Review of Books*, June 28, 2018
<https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2018/06/28/rwanda-deathly-hush/>

Documentary: Crisis in The Congo

6. The Armenian Genocide (1)

Ronald G. Suny, "Explaining Genocide: The Fate of the Armenians in the Late Ottoman Empire," in *Removing Peoples: Forced Removal in the Modern World*, ed. Richard Bessel and Claudia B. Haake (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

Documentary: Scream Bloody Murder

7. The Armenian Genocide (2)

Richard G. Hovannisian, "The Armenian Genocide: Wartime Radicalization or Premeditated Continuum?" in *The Armenian Genocide: Cultural and Ethical Legacies*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2007), 3-15.

Additional reading:

Donald Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide: Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Destruction of the Ottoman Armenians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 69-96.

Taner Akcam, *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2007), 118-148.

Richard G. Hovannisian, "Denial of the Armenian Genocide in Comparison with Holocaust Denial," in *Remembrance and Denial: The Case of the Armenian*

Genocide, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1999), 201-231.

7. The Extermination of the Roma and Sinti (Gypsies) (1)

Michael Zimmerman, "The National Socialist 'Solution of the Gypsy Question,'" in *National Socialist Extermination Policies: Contemporary German Perspectives and Controversies*, ed. Ulrich Herbert (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2004).

Additional reading:

Gilad Margalit, "The Uniqueness of the Nazi Persecution of the Gypsy," *Romani Studies* 10 (2) (2000): 185–210.

Michael Zimmerman, "Intent, Failure of Plans, and Escalation: Nazi Persecution of the Gypsies in Germany and Austria, 1933-1942," *The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Symposium* 2002: 9-21.

8. The Extermination of the Roma and Sinti (2)

Martin Holler, "Like Jews? The Nazi Persecution and Extermination of Soviet Roma Under the German Military Administration: A New Interpretation, Based on Soviet Sources," *Dapim: Studies on the Holocaust*, 24:1 (2010): 137-176.

Additional reading:

Michael Zimmerman, "The Wehrmacht and the National Socialist Persecution of the Gypsies," *Romani Studies* 5, 11 (2) (2001): 111-135

Ian Hancock, "Responses to the Porrajmos: The Romani Holocaust," in Alan S. Rosenbaum (ed.), *Is the Holocaust Unique? Perspectives on Comparative Genocide* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1996).

9. Auto-genocide in Cambodia?

Alex L. Hinton, *Why did they Kill? Cambodia in the Shadow of Genocide* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2005), 126-169.

Documentary: [Cambodia Year Zero](#)

Additional reading:

Ben Kiernan, "The Cambodian Genocide – 1975-1979," in *Century of Genocide: Critical Essays and Eyewitness Accounts*, eds. Samuel Totten, William S. Parsons and Israel W. Charny (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 339-359.

Ben Kiernan, "The Inclusion of the Khmer Rouge in the Cambodian Peace Process: Causes and Consequences," in *Genocide and Democracy in Cambodia: The Khmer Rouge, the United Nations and the International Community*, ed. Ben Kiernan (New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1993).

Simon Springer, "Culture of Violence or Violent Orientalism? Neoliberalisation and Imagining the 'Savage Other' in Post-Transitional Cambodia," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, New Series, 34(3) (2009): 305-319.

James A. Tyner, "Memory and the Everyday Landscape of Violence in Post-Genocide Cambodia," *Social and Cultural Geography* 13(8): 853-871.

10. East Timor: A Forgotten Genocide

John G. Taylor, "'Encirclement and Annihilation': The Indonesian Occupation of East Timor," in *The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective*, eds. Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

Geoffrey Robinson, *'If You Leave Us Here, We Will Die': How Genocide was Stopped in East Timor* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2010), 40-65.

Brad Simpson, "Solidarity in an Age of Globalization: The Transnational Movement for East Timor and U.S. Foreign Policy," *Peace and Change* 29(3&4) (2004): 453-482.

Documentaries: [The Act of Killing](#)

11. Yemen: How One Genocidal War Became Forgotten

Jeffrey S. Bachman, "A 'synchronised attack' on life: the Saudi-led coalition's 'hidden and holistic' genocide in Yemen and the shared responsibility of the US and UK," *Third World Quarterly* (2019)

12. New Directions in Genocide Research

Alex L. Hinton, "Critical Genocide Studies," *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 7(1) (2012).

Additional reading:

Benjamin A. Valentino, *Final Solutions: Mass Killing and Genocide in the 20th Century* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University, 2004), 1-29.

Adam Jones, "Genocide and Structural Violence: Charting the Terrain," in *New Directions in Genocide Research*, ed. Adam Jones (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 132-148.