Course description

In this course we will examine one of the most destructive, evil and perplexing phenomena haunting society: genocide - i.e., the on a large scale organized exclusion and killing of populations defined by race, ethnicity, nationality political affiliation or religion. In the first section of this course students will be introduced to ideational, rational and psychological explanations of genocide. Causes of genocide can be found at different levels of analysis. We will focus on theories at three different levels. First, we will look at how national and international processes such as modernization and political leadership cause genocide (macro level). Second, we will look at why individuals, both victims and non-victims, accept or even participate mass killings (micro level). Third, we will look at what role subnational groups such as religious congregations, organizations, local communities and militias play in linking micro and macro forces (meso level). In the second part of this course, we will assess the validity of different explanations through the comparative study of four particular cases: the Holocaust, the Armenian Genocide, Bosnia and Rwanda. Students will explore and present a fifth case on their own. We will end the course with a discussion on resistance and foreign intervention.
Students will improve their analytical skills by drawing connections between social science theory, historical monographs, journalistic accounts and policy documents. Upon completing the course, students will not only be acquainted with the main types of explanations offered for genocide, but they will also be able to evaluate the evidence supporting the various explanations. In turn, this should help students to develop and evaluate proposals to end and prevent mass killing and recognize opportunities for resistance against mass-killing.

**Required Texts**

The following books are available for purchase at the Norris bookstore:


Other texts are available on CANVAS, ONLINE or via the library website as EBOOKS or EJOURNALS.

**Requirements**

The formal requirements and grade calculation are as follows:

- An in-class midterm examination: 25% of grade.
- Together with a partner you will give presentation: 30% of grade.
- A final examination: 40% grade.
- Attendance: 5% grade.

**Midterm and Exam**

Both midterm and exam will be composed of short identification and longer essay questions. The midterm will be held in class (University Hall 101) on **Wednesday 10/19**. The final will be held in the week of **12/5**, location TBA.

**Presentation**

This will be a group project (expect to work in teams of two), and your group is expected to conduct original research for it!!!! Together with a partner you will give a 15 minute presentation about **ONE** episode of mass killing. In your presentation you will:

1. Give a general overview of how the violence unfolded.
2. Explain why you think this episode can be conceptualized as Genocide.

3. Deploy three of the seven perspectives introduced in this class to explain why and how this episode of mass killing took place OR explain why none of the perspectives are useful. In case of the former explain why you choose these perspectives and not others. Also explain which perspective works best.

Use slides, maps and pictures to illustrate your work. Also provide your audience with all relevant citations. You can choose the episode yourself but the Ottoman destruction of other Christian minorities, Kosovo and other victims of the Nazi’s are not on the table as they are too closely related to the cases discussed in class. Examples of cases you could choose are:

- Political purges in Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge.
- Stalin’s Genocides against national minorities.
- Mao’s Cultural revolution.
- Killing of Herero’s in Namibia.
- Many others.

For your presentation you will have to collect and read additional literature on your own. Each team has to read at least a 5 academic sources. Your TA and Professor can be consulted for help. As a first step you might want to look at what the following reference works, which have been put on course reserve in the main library or placed in front of room 103, 1808 Chicago Avenue, have to say about your case:

To guarantee sufficient variation in case selection, we will circulate a case selection sheet on **Wednesday 10/5** and reserve the right to assign you, in consultation, a different case. On **day 10/10** you will have a one-on-one meeting with your professor (1808 Chicago Avenue, room 103). During that meeting you have to bring at least two sources you could potentially use for your presentation. A sign up sheet for the meetings will be made available on **Wednesday 9/28**. Presentations take place the last week of class. We will randomly assign time slots.

**9/21: Introduction**
- Syllabus Soc 376/Poli SCI 390. CANVAS.
- University of Denver John Evans Study Report, pp. iii-V and 88-90. [AVAILABLE ONLINE HERE](#).

**9/26: Definitions**

**9/28: Macro: Structural, Ideational, Rational**
- Sign up for one-on-one meeting in class during class.

**10/3: Macro Psychological, Micro Psycological, Micro Rational**
- [TED-talk Zimbardo on the psychology of evil.](#) AVAILABLE ONLINE.
• Five experiments that prove humanity is doomed. AVAILABLE ONLINE.


**10/5: Micro Ideational and Meso**


• Alex Alvarez. *Genocidal crimes*. Routledge, 2009, Chapter 4. CANVAS.

• Case selection due in class.

**10/10: Holocaust Macro**


**10/12: Holocaust Micro and Meso**


**10/17: One-on-one meetings**

• Bring case and reference(s) and come to 1808 Chicago Avenue, room 103 at allocated time.

**10/19: Mid-term**

• Prepare for id and essay questions.
10/26: Armenia Macro and Comparisons


10/31: Rwanda Macro


11/2: Rwanda Micro and Meso


11/7: Bosnia Micro


11/9: Resisting Genocide

- Listen to two testimonies available at [this USHMM link](https://www.ushmm.org). CANVAS.


11/14: Prevention


• Benjamin A Valentino. True costs of humanitarian intervention. the hard truth about a noble notion. *Foreign Affairs*, 90:60–69, 2011. LIBRARY EJOURNAL.

11/16: Student presentations

• Schedule TBA

11/21: Student presentations

• Schedule TBA

Final exam

• Time and Location TBA