SOC 101: The Roots of Genocide

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RING DOOR BELL!!
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Elder Hall 032
TTH 3:30-4:50PM

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 in 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, Cambodia 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 genocide.
Required Texts

The following book is available for purchase at the Norris bookstore (and most other vendors):


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

Requirements and Grades

The formal requirements and grade calculation are as follows:

- 6 short assignments: pass or fail.
- An in-class presentation: 35% of grade.
- A final paper: 60% of grade.
- In-class participation: 5% of grade

The 6 assignments act as building blocks which will help your write your final paper/presentation.

Case Selection

For 4 of the 6 assignments as well as for the presentation and paper you need to work on a particular episode of mass killing not discussed in class. You can choose the episode yourself but the Ottoman destruction of other Christian minorities and other victims of the Nazi’s cannot be studied as they are too closely related to the cases discussed in class. Examples of cases you could choose are:

- Genocide in the Balkans.
- Stalin’s genocides against national minorities.
- Mao’s Cultural revolution.
- Killing of Herero’s in Namibia.
- Many others.

For your assignments, presentation and paper you will have to collect and read additional literature on your own. You will have to read at least 5 academic sources. Your 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, have to say about your case:

In addition, there are three high quality journals dedicated to the study of genocide—the Journal of Genocide Research, Genocide Studies and Prevention and Holocaust and Genocide Studies—that you might want to consult.

To guarantee sufficient variation in case selection, I will circulate a case selection sheet on 1/30 and reserve the right to assign you, in consultation, a different case. On 2/1 you will have a one-on-one meeting with your professor (1808 Chicago Avenue, room 103). During that meeting you have to bring a draft of assignment 3. A sign up sheet for the meetings will be made available on 1/18.

**Assignments**

Students will have to complete 5 small assignments. The five assignments together build up to part of your presentation/paper and will be graded as pass/fail.

1. Summary assignment (<1 page).
2. Intertextual dialogue assignment (<1 page)
3. Literature and Citations assignment (<1/2 page)
4. Apply theory assignment (<1 page)
5. Schematic paper outline (<1 page)
6. Intro and conclusion assignment (<1 page)

Assignments will be distributed via CANVAS a week before they are due. I will often ask you to bring drafts of your assignments to class for peer editing. Assignments need to be submitted hard copy during class time.
Presentation

You will give a 15 minute presentation about the episode of mass killing you choose. In your presentation you will:

1. Use three of the 5 sources you collected.

2. Explain why this episode qualifies as a genocide. This requires you to apply definitions (1 min).

3. Give a general overview of how the violence unfolded (5 minutes).

4. 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 (5 minutes).

5. Draw out similarities between your case and cases discussed in class or explain why you think your case is incomparable (4 min).

Use slides, maps and pictures to illustrate your work. Also provide your audience with all relevant citations. Presentations take place the last week of class. I will randomly assign time slots.

Paper

Your final paper builds on your presentation. You will write a 10 page paper in which you explain the same genocide you picked for your presentation. However, there are 2 additional requirements:

1. You need to consult 5 instead of 3 academic sources.

2. Apply four instead of three perspectives.

3. The paper is due the first Tuesday after reading week before midnight (3/20).

1/9: Introduction

- Syllabus Soc 376/Poli SCI 390. CANVAS.
- University of Denver John Evans Study Report, pp. iii-V and 88-90. AVAILABLE ONLINE HERE.
1/11: Library Introduction

- Professor traveling
- Jason Kruse will lead our seminar
- B234 in the Lower Level of the University Library

1/16: Definitions and Origin

- I will distribute Assignment 1 via CANVAS.

1/18: Macro-Level Explanations 1

- Bring draft of Assignment 1.
- Sign up for one-on-one meeting in class.

1/23: Macro-Level Explanations 2

- DUE: Assignment 1.
- I will distribute assignment 2 via CANVAS.
1/25: Micro-Level Explanations

- Bring draft of Assignment 2.
- TED-talk Zimbardo on the psychology of evil. AVAILABLE ONLINE HERE.

1/30: Meso-level Explanations

- DUE: Assignment 2.
- Case selection due in class.
- I will distribute Assignment 3 via CANVAS.
- Alex Alvarez. *Genocidal crimes*. Routledge, 2009, Chapter 4. CANVAS.

2/1: One-on-one meetings

- Bring draft of Assignment 3.
- Chicago Avenue, room 103 at allocated time.

2/6: Holocaust Macro

- DUE: Assignment 3.

2/8: Holocaust Micro and Meso

- I will distribute Assignment 4 via CANVAS.

**2/13: Armenia Macro and Comparisons**

• Bring draft Assignment 4.

• Adam Jones. *Genocide: A comprehensive introduction*. Routledge, 2006, Chapter 4. CANVAS.


**2/15: Rwanda Macro and Negative Cases**

• DUE: Assignment 4.

• I will distribute Assignment 5 via CANVAS.


**2/20: Rwanda Micro and Meso**

• Bring draft of Assignment 5.


**2/22: Cambodia Macro, Micro and Meso**

• DUE: Assignment 5.

• I will distribute Assignment 6 via CANVAS.


**EITHER**


**OR**


### 2/25: Intervention

• Bring draft of Assignment 6.

**CHOOSE 2 OF THE FOLLOWING:**


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


### 2/27: Resisting Genocide

• DUE: Assignment 6.


3/1: Student presentations
• Schedule TBA

3/6: Student presentations
• Schedule TBA

3/8: Finish Presentations/Review
• Schedule TBA