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, informal groups, 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, Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. Students will explore and present a fifth case on their own.

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.
Readings
All required readings are available digitally via the library website (marked as EBOOKS) or in the files section of the course web site (marked as BCOURSES).

Class participation
Each week, you will do the required readings before coming to class. Those readings form our shared core of knowledge about the week’s subject matter. But, it will be our discussion in the course that really helps us to integrate, critique, and extend these readings. I expect each of you to be a regular and constructive participant in these discussions and ask that you engage with one-another seriously and respectfully.

Requirements and Grades
You will take a midterm, participate in class discussions and write a paper. To keep everyone on track we divide the writing process up in 3 graded assignments. The formal requirements and grade calculation are as follows:

- In class midterm: 25% of grade.
- Class participation 15% of grade.
- Assignment 1: Case description: 10% of grade.
- Assignment 2: Presentation of paper 10% of grade.
- Assignment 3: Final paper 40% of grade.

Case Selection
For the assignments as well as for the final 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:

- Stalin’s genocides against national minorities.
- Mao’s Cultural revolution.
- Killing of Herero’s in Namibia.
- East Timor Genocide
- Darfur Genocide
Guatemala Genocide

Many others.

To guarantee sufficient variation in case selection, I will circulate a case selection sheet on 2/10 and reserve the right to assign you, in consultation, a different case.

For your assignments 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 are available online (marked as EBOOK) or have been put on course reserve (marked as COURSE RESERVE) in the Undergraduate library, have to say about your case:

- Dan Stone. The historiography of genocide. Springer, 2008 COURSE RESERVE

Academic books can be recognized by the fact that they are published by academic presses (e.g. Cambridge University Press). Non-exhaustive lists of academic generalist journals, most of which publish high quality research on genocide, can be found below:

- History: AVAILABLE ONLINE HERE.
- Sociology: AVAILABLE ONLINE HERE.
- Political science: AVAILABLE ONLINE HERE.
• Anthropology: AVAILABLE ONLINE HERE.
• Psychology: AVAILABLE ONLINE HERE.
• Economics: AVAILABLE ONLINE HERE.

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. If you have a source you are unsure about consult your professor. You have to submit your list of references on 2/24.

Paper

You will write a 10 page paper (Times New Roman, 10pt, double-spaced, 1 inch margins all around) providing a causal explanation of the episode of mass killing you choose. The writing process is divided up in 8 steps. In your paper you will:

1. Summarize the 5 sources you collected for yourself.
2. Write an introduction in which you preview what you will do (.5 page).
4. Explain whether this episode qualifies as a genocide or not. This requires you to apply a definition (1 page).
5. Deploy four explanations introduced in this class to explain why this episode of mass killing took place OR explain why none of the perspectives are useful.
6. Use these explanations to draw out similarities between your case and at least 3 cases discussed in class OR explain why you think your case is incomparable OR analyze a negative case (point 5 & 6 together 4 pages).
7. Write a conclusion (.5 page).
8. Give a brief 10 minute presentation on your paper in class (ALSO GRADED ASSIGNMENT DUE ON 4/20 or 4/27).
9. The final paper is due the first Monday after RRR week.

1/27 California Genocide

• Read syllabus. BCOURSES.
2/3 Definitions and Origins


- John M Cox. *To kill a people: Genocide in the twentieth century*. Oxford University Press, 2016 Chapter 1. BCOURSES.

- For discussion:
  - Compare the UN convention (p. 12-13) with the definitions provided in Jones box 1.1. (p. 16-20) What are the differences, similarities, weaknesses and strengths for the study of genocide?
  - Closely read the UN convention and a few definitions from box 1.1. When using these definitions, do you think the following episodes of mass killing are genocides: Atlantic Slavery, aerial bombing, UN sanctions against Iraq, 9/11. Why or why not?
  - Why is the Armenian genocide a genocide?
  - What caused the Armenian genocide?
  - Contrast and compare the Armenian genocide with the California Genocide.
  - Is genocide ever justified?

2/10: Macro-Explanations

- Case selection due in class


- For discussion:
You will be reading a wide range of explanations for Genocide. Identify the key actors and causal logic in each of them. How do they compare?

Which explanations do you find most compelling?

Would you be able to combine the different explanations? If so how?

2/17: Micro- & Meso-Explanations


For discussion:

- You will be reading a wide range of explanations for killing. Identify the causal logic in each.
- Would you be able to combine the different explanations? If so how?
- Why does Somer think killing is both unexpected and inevitable in hindsight?
- How does Kalyvas link the micro and macro levels of analysis.

2/24 Holocaust Macro

- 5 references due in class


For discussion:

- Compare and contrast Bergen’s explanation of the Holocaust with the macro-level explanations introduced in week 3.
3/2: Holocaust Micro & Meso


For discussion:
- Compare and contrast these readings with the micro-level explanations provided during week 4.
- Browning and Goldhagen partly study the same group of people. How do their accounts of what happened compare?

3/9: Midterm

- Prepare for short answer questions.

3/16 Rwanda Macro and Negative Cases


For discussion:
- Compare and contrast Hintjens explanations with causes of the Holocaust, the Armenian Genocide and your own case.
- Straus introduces the idea of a negative case. What does he mean by that? Could you think of a negative case for your own research paper?

3/23 & 3/25: Spring Break

3/30 Rwanda Micro and Meso

- Case description due in class

**For discussion:**

– Look at all the statistical tables in the book. How do they relate to the Overall argument Straus is trying to make.

– Compare and contrast his argument to the micro theories we have been discussing as well as the readings by Gross, Browning and Goldhagen.

**4/6: Balkans I**

- Guest lecture Dr. Bujar Aruqai (FU Berlin)
- Readings tba.

**4/13: Balkans II**

- Guest lecture Dr. Bujar Aruqai (FU Berlin)
- Readings tba.

**4/20: Presentations**

**4/27: Presentations**