

# SOC 142: Paradoxes of Genocide

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440 Social Sciences Building

Office Hours:

FR 4PM-5PM

Sign up: <https://www.wejoinin.com/robert.braun>

Zoom: <https://berkeley.zoom.us/j/93947932140>

Spring 2022

170 Social Sciences Building

MW 4-5 PM

## Course description

In this course we will examine one of the most destructive, evil and perplexing forms of social breakdown: genocide - i.e. the on a large scale organized exclusion and killing of populations defined by race, ethnicity, nationality, political affiliation or religion. The class draws attention to the paradoxical nature of genocide. While genocide might seem far removed from our daily activities, it is closely intertwined and made possible by the same social processes that structure our lives. Embracing this paradox enables us to define the undefinable and understand the incomprehensible.

After defining genocide, the first section of this class will provide a brief introduction to 4 cases of genocide: the Holocaust, the Armenian Genocide, the violent dissolution of Bosnia and the Rwanda Genocide. This section will provide the required background for revealing the roots of genocide during the remainder of the class. In section 2 and 3 we will try to make genocide comprehensible. 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.

In section 2, we will look at how large scale processes that we commonly associate with civilization such as modernization, democratization and rationalization cause barbaric mass violence (*macro level*). In section 3, we will look at why individuals, both victims and non-victims, accept or even participate in mass killings (*micro level*). This section will reveal that a lot (but not all) causes of killing are quite banal and ordinary. In section 3 we will also 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*).

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 via the course web site (BCOURSES). Readings are organized by week or topic. To reduce the reading load and costs, we often read carefully thought out selections of books and papers. You should therefore always do the readings as posted on BCOURSES and not look for reading yourself. Let me know immediately if you do not have access to BCOURSES.

## Requirements and Grades

You will take a midterm, final and and write a paper. To keep everyone on track we divide the writing process up in 2 ungraded assignments. The formal requirements and grade calculation are as follows:

- Midterm: 30% of grade.
- Paper 40% of grade.
- Final: 30% of grade

In addition, there will be 2 pass fail assignments to structure the writing process.

## Two Small Assignments

To facilitate the writing process we will require you to submit two short assignments:

1. You will submit a list with your 5 academic sources on **2/16**.
2. You will submit a first 1 page schematic overview of your paper on **4/4**.

## 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
- Guatamala Genocide
- Many others.

You have to submit your case selection on **1/31**. To guarantee sufficient variation in case selection, we will 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 via the library website (marked as EBOOK) or have been put on BCOURSES in files->Reference works (marked as BCOURSES), have to say about your case:

- Paul R Bartrop and Steven Leonard Jacobs. *Modern Genocide: The Definitive Resource and Document Collection [4 volumes]: The Definitive Resource and Document Collection*. ABC-CLIO, 2014 EBOOK
- Dan Stone. *The historiography of genocide*. Springer, 2008 EBOOK
- Ben Kiernan. *Blood and soil: A world history of genocide and extermination from Sparta to Darfur*. Yale University Press, 2008. EBOOK.
- Adam Jones. *Genocide: A comprehensive introduction*. Routledge, 2006. BCOURSES.
- Donald Bloxham and A Dirk Moses. *The Oxford handbook of genocide studies*. Oxford University Press, 2010. EBOOK.
- Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan. *The specter of genocide: Mass murder in historical perspective*. Cambridge University Press, 2003. BCOURSES.

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 prestigious academic 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 **2/16**.

## Paper

You will write a 10 page paper (Times New Roman, 12pt, 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 academic sources you collected for yourself.
2. Write an introduction in which you preview what you will do (.5 page).
3. Give a general overview of how the violence unfolded (*4 pages*).
4. Explain whether this episode qualifies as a genocide or not. This requires you to apply a definition (*1 page*).
5. Deploy three 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 2 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. The final paper is due on **5/16**.

## Plagiarism

We will use software and other techniques to detect plagiarism and fraud. Even the most minor case of plagiarism or fraud can result in a F for the entire course. We will discuss plagiarism in lecture. Contact your instructor if you are still unsure about what plagiarism is after these discussions.

## Office Hours

My office hours will be held weekly on Fridays between 3 and 5 pm. Please sign up for office hours in advance via <https://www.wejoinin.com/robert.braun>. You can come to my office (440 Social Sciences Building) or meet me via zoom (<https://berkeley.zoom.us/j/93947932140>).

## Contingency

We intend for this class to take place in person. However, in case of emergency (forrest fires, pandemics etc.) we will switch over to zoom. A zoom link for this class will be provided during the first week of class. Classes will be recorded via course capture.

## INTRODUCTION

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### 1/19: Paradoxes of genocide

- Read syllabus.
- <https://exhibitions.ushmm.org/burmas-path-to-genocide/chapter-1>
- Benjamin Madley. Patterns of frontier genocide 1803–1910: the aboriginal tasmanians, the yuki of california, and the herero of namibia. *Journal of Genocide Research*, 6(2):167–192, 2004. Selection.

### 1/24: Defining the undefinable

- Reread the paper assignment. If you have any questions ask them at the start of lecture.
- Adam Jones. *Genocide: A comprehensive introduction*. Routledge, 2006. Selection.
- Samantha Power. *A problem from hell: America and the age of genocide*. Perseus Books Group, New York, NY, 2013, 61-70.
- **Questions:**
  - 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: Slavery, aerial bombing, UN sanctions against Iraq, 9/11. Why or why not?

## PART I: CASES OF GENOCIDE

### 1/26: Explaining the inexplicable Holocaust I

- Doris L Bergen. *War and genocide: A concise history of the Holocaust*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2016, Chapters 1 & 2.
- **Questions:**
  - Why the Jews?
  - Why the Germans?

### 1/31: Explaining the inexplicable Holocaust II

- **Submit your case on BCOURSES->Assignments.**
- Doris Bergen. Occupation, imperialism and genocide 1939-1945. pages 219-245. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2008
- **Questions:**
  - Why then (and not XX years earlier or later)?
  - Why mass murder?

### 2/2: Armenia and comparing unique cases

- John M Cox. *To kill a people: Genocide in the twentieth century*. Oxford University Press, 2016, p. 41-57.
- Robert Melson. Revolutionary genocide: on the causes of the armenian genocide of 1915 and the holocaust. *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 4(2):161-174, 1989
- **Questions:**
  - What were the most important preconditions for the Armenian genocide?
  - Compare and contrast the Armenian genocide and the Holocaust. What can we learn from doing this? What not?

## 2/7: Rwanda and negative cases I

- Helen M Hintjens. Explaining the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 37(2):241–286, 1999, Selection.
- **Questions:**
  - What were the most important preconditions for the Rwanda genocide?
  - Differences and similarities with Armenian genocide and the Holocaust?

## 2/9: Rwanda and negative cases II

- **Submit 5 academic sources!**
- Scott Straus. Retreating from the brink: Theorizing mass violence and the dynamics of restraint. *Perspectives on Politics*, 10(2):343–362, 2012
- **Questions:**
  - According to Straus what are negative cases?
  - What can we learn from them?

## 2/14: The illusion of Bosnian harmony

- Christina M Morus. Violence born of history/history born of violence: A brief context for understanding the Bosnian war. In *The Development of Institutions of Human Rights*, pages 65–81. Springer, 2010
- **Questions:**
  - How did Bosnia break down so fast?
  - Differences and similarities with Rwanda genocide, Armenian genocide and the Holocaust?

## 2/16: Professor travelling

- **Submit 5 academic sources on BCOURSES->ASSIGNMENTS**
- Perhaps no class (assuming a return to normal travel situation).

## 2/21: President's day

- No class!

## PART II: MACRO-LEVEL EXPLANATIONS

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### 2/23: Civilized barbarity

- Eric Weitz. *The Modernity of Genocides*. The specter of genocide: Mass murder in historical perspective. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, MA, 2003
- Zygmunt Bauman. *Modernity and the Holocaust*. Cornell University Press, 1989, Selection.
- **Questions:**
  - How do Weitz and Bauman link modernity to genocide?
  - Do their arguments help explain the Holocaust, the Armenian genocide, the Rwanda genocide and the Bosnian genocide? What parts? What not?

### 2/28: Ancient fault lines contemporary violence

- Daniel J. Goldhagen. *Hitler's willing executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*. Knopf, New York, NY, 1996, Selection
- Ben Kiernan. Twentieth-century genocides: Underlying ideological themes from armenia to east timor. *The Genocide Studies Reader*, 2009
- **Questions:**
  - How do Goldhagen and Kiernan explain violence?
  - Do their arguments help explain the Holocaust, the Armenian genocide, the Rwanda genocide and the Bosnian genocide? What parts? What not?

### 3/2: The dark side of democracy

- M. Mann. *The dark side of democracy: explaining ethnic cleansing*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, MA, 2005, Selection.
- Jack Snyder. *From voting to violence*. WW Norton, New York, NY, 2000, Chapter 1.
- **Questions:**
  - How do Mann and Snyder link democracy to genocide?
  - Do their arguments help explain the Holocaust, the Armenian genocide, the Rwanda genocide and the Bosnian genocide? Why? Why not?



### 3/7: Unreasonably rational

- Benjamin Valentino. Final solutions: the causes of mass killing and genocide. *Security Studies*, 9(3):1–59, 2000, **Valentino distinguishes between different forms of mass killing. During class and for exams we will be focussing on dispossessive mass killing. However, I kept the discussion of other types in as they might be relevant for your paper.**
- **Questions:**
  - What does Valentino mean when he says that mass killing is a final solution?
  - Why and when is mass killing strategic?
  - Does Valentino’s take on dispossessive mass killings apply to the Holocaust, Armenian genocide, the Rwanda genocide and the Bosnian genocide? What parts? What not?

### 3/9: Predictably irrational

- Manus Midlarsky. *The killing trap: genocide in the twentieth century*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, MA, 2005, Chapter 5.
- **Questions:**
  - What drives genocide according to Midlarsky?
  - Apply this approach to the Holocaust, Armenian genocide, the Rwanda genocide and the Bosnian genocide. Does it work? Why? Why not?

### 3/14: Review session

- Review readings and prepare questions!

### 3/16: Take-home exam (open book)

- Prepare for essay questions!
- **During normal class time.**

### 3/21 & 3/23: Spring break

- No class!

### 3/28: Guest lecture on intervention

- Dr. Aruqaj (FU Berlin)
- Readings tba

## PART III: MICRO- AND MESO-LEVEL EXPLANATIONS

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### 3/30: Guest lecture

- Dr. Aruqaj (FU Berlin)
- Readings tba

### 4/4: Ordinary killers

- **Submit 1 page overview of paper on BCOURSE->ASSIGNMENTS**
- Christopher R. Browning. *Ordinary men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the final solution in Poland*. Harper Perennial, New York, NY, 1993, Selection.
- **Questions:**
  - Why did the police officers start to kill?
  - Why does Browning consider these killers ordinary men?
  - What implications does this have for the likelihood of genocide?

### 4/6: Anti-social identities

- Omar Shahabudin McDoom. The psychology of threat in intergroup conflict: Emotions, rationality, and opportunity in the rwandan genocide. *International Security*, 37(2):119–155, 2012
- OR**
- Ivana Maček. *Sarajevo under siege: Anthropology in wartime*. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, PA, 2009 Selection.
  - **Questions:**
    - According to Maček/McDoom what role does ethnic identity play in the mobilization of violence?

## 4/11: Private motives, public violence

- Mart Bax. Warlords, priests and the politics of ethnic cleansing: a case-study from rural bosnia hercegovina. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 23(1):16–36, 2000

**OR**

- Jan Tomasz Gross. *Neighbors: The destruction of the Jewish community in Jedwabne, Poland*. Princeton University Press, 2001, Selection
- **Questions:**
  - What can we learn from studying local level politics?
  - Why do we overestimate the importance of macro-level cleavages and obedience?

## 4/13: The banality of organized violence I

- John Mueller. The banality of ethnic war. *International Security*, 25(1):42–70, 2000, Selection.
- Jean Hatzfeld. *Machete season: The killers in Rwanda speak*. Macmillan, 2005, Selection.
- **Questions:**
  - Why does Mueller call ethnic war banal?
  - What role do militias play in the production of genocide?
  - How did Hatzfeld’s respondents change overtime?

## 4/18: The banality of organized violence II

- Testimony Herak
- Tzvetan Todorov. *Facing the extreme: Moral life in the concentration camps*. Macmillan, New York, NY, 1997, Selection.
- **Questions:**
  - How does power shape individual decision making?
  - Compare Herak, Hatzfeld’s respondents and Browning’s police officers. Similarities? Differences?

## 4/20: Unforeseen, yet unavoidable with hindsight

Murat Somer. Cascades of ethnic polarization: Lessons from Yugoslavia. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 573(1):127–151, 2001

### Questions:

- What according to Somer explained the rapid polarization in Yugoslavia?
- Why do we sometimes fail to foresee outbursts of violence that appear unavoidable with hindsight?

## 4/25: Deviant heroes

- Claire Andrieu, Sarah Gensburger, and Jacques Semelin. *Resisting Genocides. The Multiple Forms of Rescue*. Columbia University Press, 2011, Chapters, 6, 23 & 29

- **Questions:**

- What are the differences and commonalities between the rescuers that Ternon, Viret and Tec discuss.
- What implications does this have for the assistance for victims of mass persecution?

## 4/27: Review session

- Review and prepare questions?

## 5/13: Take-Home Exam (Open Book)

- Prepare for essay questions!
- **8-11am!**

The final paper is due on 5/16.

