

POLITICAL SCIENCE 333, GENOCIDE
Professor Fred Shepherd, Fall 2006
Office Hours: MW 9:30-11:00, DBH 111
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This is a course about genocide, defined as an attempt to exterminate a distinct racial, cultural or ethnic group of people. The twentieth century has been described as the age of genocide: roughly 60 million people were victims of campaigns that fall under the definition of genocide. The pace of death and destruction shows no signs of slowing in the twenty-first century. This course will attempt to understand what might seem impossible to understand: why people and institutions embark on genocide; the conditions which give rise to these efforts; and the extent to which current global political trends either bolster or constrain would-be practitioners of genocide.

The course will, at the outset, focus on personal and psychological issues in attempting to understand how one group of human beings can attempt to exterminate another. It will then move to assess the provocative thesis that genocide emerged out of European colonialism, and to look closely at the American experience with genocide. The rest of the course will be devoted to in-depth study of four cases of genocide. First, it will examine the Holocaust—the German-led destruction of European Jews—as the prototypical case of genocide. The course will conclude with three more recent cases: political violence in Guatemala—which I describe as a “near-genocide”; the 1994 genocide in Rwanda; and the ongoing genocide in the region of Sudan known as Darfur.

ASSIGNMENTS

Each reading assignment will be accompanied by a brief reading quiz. I will expect students to write three papers, each on a precise topic taken from one or more sections of the course. . Toward the end of the semester, students will be expected to craft a literature review: students will first hand in a list of articles and a chosen theme, then, after feedback from me, a completed literature review. The course will end with a comprehensive final exam. Finally, each student will receive a class participation grade, reflecting his/her in-class contribution.

Almost one quarter of the semester grade will come from each student’s participation in group activities. At the start of the semester, I will craft five groups. These groups will then collaborate on reading quizzes, to be taken after individual reading quizzes are handed in. Groups will also work together on student presentations. I will assign one group to each such day designated in the syllabus. Grades earned as a group will be subject to modification by periodic Peer Evaluations. These Evaluations will help those who have worked hard on behalf of the group, and will lower the grades of those who have not done their share of work.

ATTENDANCE AND HONESTY

Plagiarism and cheating have become an issue in this Department in recent years. Please refer to Samford’s policy on academic honesty in your student handbook. I hope to treat my students as adults; please do not make it an issue. This class will depend heavily on student participation. After three absences, students will lose 2% of their participation for each absence. More than six absences will result in a complete forfeiture of the class participation portion of the grade; repeated absences will also most likely hurt student Peer Evaluation scores.

Samford University complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations must make their requests by contacting Disability Support Services located in Counseling Services on the lower level of

Pittman Hall, or call 726-4078 or 726-2105. I will grant reasonable accommodations only upon written notification from Disability Support Services.

BOOKS:

James Waller, Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing, 2002

Sven Lindqvist, "Exterminate All the Brutes," 1996

Doris Bergen, War and Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust, 2002

Beatriz Manz, Paradise in Ashes: A Guatemalan Journey of Courage, Terror and Hope, 2004

Linda Melvern, Conspiracy to Murder: The Rwandan Genocide, 2004

Gerard Prunier, Darfur: The Ambiguous Genocide, 2005

I will also require that students pick up free copies of the New York Times in their dorms.

GRADE BREAKDOWN

Individual Grades:		Group Grades: (modified by peer evaluations)	
3 Papers, 12% each	36%	18 Quizzes, 2/3% each	12%
Final Examination	12%	Student Class and other activities	10%
18 Reading Quizzes, 2/3% each	12%		
Literature Review List and Theme	3%		
Literature Review	7%		
Class Participation	8%		

COURSE OUTLINE

Weeks 1-3: Individuals, Races and Genocide

August 28: Introduction

August 30: Groups and Genocide

Waller, pp v-xiv, 3-22, 29-49

September 4: Personality and Genocide

Waller, pp 55-87, 94-123

September 6: Human Nature and Perpetrators

Waller, pp 133-168, 175-196

September 11: Genocide and "the Other"

Waller, pp 202-229, 236-257, 267-280

September 13: Student Presentations on Cases from Waller

Week 4: European Colonialism and Genocide

September 18: European Colonialism

Lindqvist, pp ix-x, 2-88

September 20: European Genocide

Lindqvist, pp 90-172

Paper Due September 25

Week 5: Genocide in the United States?

September 25: Student Presentations on U.S. Genocide

September 27: Race and the southern United States

Flannery O'Connor, "A Displaced Person"

Weeks 6-7: The Nazi-led Destruction of European Jews

October 2: Origins and Buildup to Nazism

Bergen, pp vii-xi, 1-80

October 4: Nazism and War
Bergen, pp 81-160
October 9: War and Genocide
Bergen, pp 161-228
October 11: Video
Paper Due October 11

Week 8 (October 18): Lecture on Genocide and the Rise of Human Rights

Weeks 9-10: Incomplete Genocide in Guatemala
October 23: Introduction, Roots of Genocide
Manz, pp 1-90
October 25: War and Genocide
Manz, pp 91-182
October 30: The Legacy of Genocide
Manz, pp 183-246
November 1: Student Presentations on U.S. Policy and Genocide

Weeks 11-12: Genocide in Rwanda
November 6: Background to Genocide
Melvern, pp 1-100
November 8: Genocide in Rwanda
Melvern, pp 101-195
November 13: Genocide and its Aftermath
Melvern, pp 196-282
November 15: Video
Paper Due 15 November

Weeks 13-14: Genocide in Sudan/Darfur
November 20: Historical Background
Prunier, pp 1-53
November 27: The Move to Genocide
Prunier, pp 54-123
November 29: Genocide in Darfur
Prunier, pp 124-165
Literature Review List and Topic Due November 29

Week 15: Current Issues
December 4: Student Presentations
December 6: Student Presentations

Literature Review Due at Final
***Final Examination: Monday 11 December, 1:00