

Thoughts about Genocide

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Course Description:

In this course, we discuss several thinkers who made lasting contributions to genocide studies. We begin with Raphael Lemkin, the Jewish-Polish jurist who coined the term genocide, and explore his understanding of the concept and the distinctive loss he thought was involved in genocide. We then turn to discuss Hannah Arendt's reflections on themes from the attempt at total domination in the concentration camps to the banality of evil, highlighting the many misinterpretations of her thought in Holocaust historiography. We continue with Aimé Césaire's *Discourse on Colonialism*, Tzvetan Todorov's reconstruction of the encounter of Europeans with the Native American Other and Catharine MacKinnon's observations into the meaning of the assaults on women, so common in cases of genocide and other mass atrocities. Finally, we discuss the relations between genocide and modernity analyzed by the school of Critical Theory as well as anthropologist Alex Hinton.

Course Requirements:

Full attendance.

Weekly reading assignments: Students are required to read the assigned items for every week.

Response papers: Students are required to submit two response papers, each three pages long. Each paper should address one of the main themes/thinkers discussed in class integrating at least three sources from the syllabus.

The final grade is determined by attendance, participation in class that reflects engagement with the reading materials, and the response papers.

Final paper: Students may submit a final paper: a short, ten pages long paper or a seminar paper. Short papers are to be submitted by September 30, 2017. Seminar papers are to be submitted by the end of March 2018.

Reading List:

1. What is Genocide?

"Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide," *The United Nations Human Rights Website*:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CrimeOfGenocide.aspx>

Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1973), pp. ix-xv; pp. 79-95.

Raphael Lemkin, "Genocide as a Crime under International Law," *The American Journal of International Law* 41(1) (Jan., 1947): 145-151

Claudia Card, "Genocide and Social Death," in *Genocide and Human Rights: A Philosophical Guide*, ed. John K. Roth (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 238-254.

Shmuel Lederman, "A Nation Destroyed: An Existential Approach to the Distinctive Harm of Genocide," *Journal of Genocide Research* 19(1) (2017): 112-132.

Additional reading:

Thomas M. Butcher, "A 'Synchronized Attack': On Raphael Lemkin's Holistic Conception of Genocide," *Journal of Genocide Research* 15(3) (2013): 253-271.

Douglas Irvin-Erickson, "Genocide, the 'Family of Mind', and the Romantic Signature of Raphael Lemkin," *Journal of Genocide Research* 15(3) (2013): 273-296.

Mira L. Siegelberg, "Unofficial Men, Efficient Civil Servants: Raphael Lemkin in the History of International Law," *Journal of Genocide Research* 15(3) (2013): 297-316.

2. Evil: Radical or Banal?

Hannah Arendt, "Total Domination," in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, Inc., 1968), pp. 437-459.

Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Penguin Books, 1994), pp. 276-298.

Hannah Arendt, "Thinking and Moral Considerations," in *Responsibility and Judgment* (New York: Schocken Books, 2003), pp. 159-189.

Additional reading:

Shmuel Lederman, "History of a Misunderstanding: 'The Banality of Evil' and Holocaust Historiography," *Yad Vahem Studies* 41(2) (2013): 173-209.

3. Genocide and the Making of the Other

Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1984), pp. 127-167.

Additional reading:

David E. Stannard, *American Holocaust: Columbus and the Conquest of the New World* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 57-75.

Benjamin Madley, "Understanding Genocide in California under United States Rule, 1846-1873," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 47(2016): 449-461.

Shamiran Mako, "Cultural Genocide and Key International Instruments: Framing the Indigenous Experience," *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights* 19(2012): 175-194.

4. White Victims, Black Victims, Or: When Genocide Comes Back Home

Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000).

Additional reading:

Benjamin Madley, "From Africa to Auschwitz: How German South West Africa Incubated Ideas and Methods Adopted and Developed by the Nazis in Eastern Europe," *European History Quarterly* 35(3) (2005): 429-464.

Jonathan Hyslop, "The Invention of the Concentration Camp: Cuba, Southern Africa and the Philippines, 1896-1907," *South African Historical Journal* 63(2) (2011): 251-276.

Isabel V. Hull, "Military Culture and the Production of 'Final Solutions' in the Colonies: The Example of Wilhelminian Germany," in *The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective*, eds. Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

Jurgen Zimmerer, "The Birth of the Ostland out of the Spirit of Colonialism: A Postcolonial Perspective on the Nazi Policy of Conquest and Extermination," *Patterns of Prejudice* 39(2) (2005): 197-219.

5. Gendered Genocide

Catherine A. MacKinnon, "Rape, Genocide, and Women's Human Rights," in *Genocide and Human Rights*, ed. Mark Lattimer (Burlington: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 133-144.

Robin M. Schott, "War Rape, Natality and Genocide," *Journal of Genocide Research* 13(1-2) (2011): 5-21.

Sarah Clark Miller, "Moral Injury and Relational Harm: Analyzing Rape in Darfur," *Journal of Social Philosophy* 40(4) (2009): 504-523.

Additional reading:

Helen Fein, "Genocide and Gender: The Uses of Women and Group Destiny," *Journal of Genocide Research* 1(1): (1999): 43-63.

6. Genocide, Modernity and the Question of Ourselves

Theodore Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (London: Verso, 1997), pp. 1-34.

Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), pp. 169-200.

Alex Hinton, "Savages, Subjects, and Sovereigns: Conjunctions of Modernity, Genocide, and Colonialism," in *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History*, ed. Dirk Moses (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010), pp. 440-456.