

History 4935-06, Senior Seminar: Studies in Comparative Genocide

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Office Hours: Tues. 12:20-1:20
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This course examines key problems related to the topic of genocide. It discusses historical, theoretical and legal issues that have arisen since the definition of the crime by the United Nations in 1948. Students will be introduced to recent debates and alternative theoretical models and approaches to the topic and encouraged to work out their own ideas. We focus particular attention on specific cases of genocide or genocidal acts including what happened to the Armenians and the Jews in the first half of the 20th century. We also consider Nazi crimes against other groups and examine as well, the "ethnic cleansing" that occurred in the Soviet Union during the Second World War. We study cases of ethnic cleansing in the early post-war era, and then turn to more recent events. This part of the course includes examination of genocidal atrocities and mass crimes in places such as Cambodia, Rwanda, and Yugoslavia.

Research Essay: The major component of this course is the research essay. Students select a topic in consultation with Professor Gellately. A one-page description of a topic with a preliminary list of primary and secondary materials is due on February 10 in class. One week later a two-page description of the final topic, with a list of primary and secondary sources is due in class.

A preliminary outline of the argument of your essay, together with the sources, is due in class on March 23 (5-6 pages). The final version of the essay should be fifteen (15) type-written pages in length. The research should explore "primary" sources as well as "secondary" ones.

Course Format: The class meets once per week to discuss the readings and students' individual research projects. Active participation in class discussions of the readings and presentations is very important, and to encourage it a relatively high percentage of the final grade is based on it.

Class Presentation: Each student is expected to offer a class presentation on the subject of their research. Presenters are encouraged to use visuals, including maps, power-point, slides, or news-clips.

Mark Distribution:

summary of your essay's argument due in class, March 23	15 percent
research essay due at the start of our last class, April 20	40 percent
class participation	25 percent
class presentation	20 percent

Class attendance is mandatory.

Textbooks:

Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan (eds.), The Specter of Genocide (Cambridge University Press paperback)
Samantha Power, A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide (Perennial paperback);
Norman M. Naimark, Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleaning in 20th Century Europe (Harvard University Press paperback);
Philip Gourevitch, We wish to inform you that tomorrow we will be killed with Our families: Stories from Rwanda (Farrar Straus and Giroux paperback)
Christopher R. Browning, Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland (Harper- Collins Paperback)

Optional textbooks:

Alan Adelson (ed), The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak (Oxford paperback);
Miron Dolot, Execution by Hunger (Norton paperback);
Stephane Courtois et al, The Black Book of Communism (Harvard paperback);
Robert Gellately, Backing Hitler: Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany (Oxford University Press paperback)

Class Schedule:

Jan. 13	Introduction to the course
Jan. 20	Definitions and UN Resolution Reading: Power, pp. 1-85; Gellately and Kiernan, 3-26; 53-73
Jan. 27	"Precedents" and the Armenians Reading: For precedents, read Gellately and Kiernan, 117-139; 141-162 On the Armenians, read Naimark, 1-56

For general theory and the Third Reich, read Gellately and Kiernan, 97-113; 241-263

Feb. 3 Nazi Germany

Reading: Browning, the book

Feb. 10 Soviet Union

Reading: Gellately and Kiernan, 215-239
Naimark, 85-138

Note: The one-page description of the major research essay topic, with some primary and secondary sources, is due in class

Feb. 17 Ethnic cleansing in Post-War Europe and Bali, Indonesia

Reading: Naimark, 108-138;
Gellately and Kiernan, 289-305

Note: The two-page description of the final choice of the research essay topic, with more primary and secondary sources, is due in class

Feb. 24 Cambodia

Reading: Power, 87-154
Gellately and Kiernan, 307-323

Mar. 2 Yugoslavia

Reading: Naimark, 139-184
Power, 247-327

Mar. 8-12 Spring Break

Mar. 16 Rwanda

Reading: Gourevitch

Mar. 23 Presentations (1)

Note: All summaries of the argument in your essays (with sources) are due in class.

Mar. 29 Evening Lecture by Christopher Browning.
Time and place t.b.a.

Mar. 30 Presentations (2)

Apr. 6 Presentations (3)

Apr. 13 Presentations (4)

Apr. 20

Research essays are due at the start of our final class.

Concluding discussion

Reading: Gellately and Kiernan, 373-380
Power, 503-516