

## **Modern Genocide and Mass Violence**

**Fall 2017**

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**Office Hours:** M-F 11am-12n for drop in  
and by appointment

### **About the Course:**

In the twentieth century, mass violence occurred at unprecedented scales. Genocide, the attempt to systematically annihilate entire groups of people based on race and other ascribed characteristics, is one particular form of such brutality. This course will examine genocide through a broad comparative framework. Students will investigate why these horrendous acts happened to such an extraordinary extent in the modern world, what political, social, cultural and economic factors led humans to target specific groups of people for extermination, how societies have sought to make sense of these atrocities, and whether the international community can prevent or intervene in mass killings.

### **Course Objectives:**

- To understand how the term genocide is defined
- To distinguish between genocide and other types of mass violence
- To identify and interpret political, social, cultural, and economic factors leading to different cases of genocide in the twentieth century
- To examine the effectiveness of humanitarian intervention in stopping genocides
- To express both written and oral opinions clearly and elegantly and defend them with the use of evidence

### **Text and Readings:**

Scott Strauss *Fundamentals of Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention* (2016)

Samantha Power *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide* (2007)

Roméo Dallaire, *Shake Hands With the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda* (2004)

International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, *The Responsibility to Protect* (2001)

A significant number of additional readings from academic books, journals and primary sources, will be posted on Moodle throughout the course. I will also refer you to the ABC-CLIO Modern Genocide Database available via the IRC website. [courses.imsa.edu](http://courses.imsa.edu) (Modern Genocide and Mass Violence F17)

## **Components of the Grade:**

### **Weekly Participation – 20%**

- Students are expected to complete readings assigned for each class and contribute to class discussions. Student comments need to demonstrate thoughtful consideration of core ideas in the assigned texts.

### **Response Papers – 30% (3 x 10%, 3-4 pages each)**

- At the end of Units 1, 2, and 3, students will submit a response paper of 3-4 pages that addresses one major theme covered in a selection of primary and secondary sources from the assigned reading list. The paper will advance a specific argument based on key points in the texts, examine underlying issues raised in the readings, and evaluate existing interpretations of relevant ideas. You will be provided with a prompt for these papers in advance of their due date.

### **Responsibility to Protect (R2P) World Summit Participation – 10%**

- During the last week of the semester, students acting as a UN task force on genocide prevention will host a multi-day mock conference addressing the strengths and weaknesses of the UN Responsibility to Protect principle. The goal of this conference is to produce a proposal on recommended revisions to R2P.
- Each student is a diplomat representing a specific UN Member State as part of an international task force for the UN Office on Genocide Prevention. You will be tasked with reviewing the efficacy of the UN Responsibility to Protect (R2P) principle and revising this document to suit today's needs.

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### **Prevention of Genocide Group Policy Paper – 20% (10-12 pages)**

- Throughout the second half of the semester, students will work in groups of 2-3 conducting research on the UN Responsibility to Protect principle. Each group will produce a policy paper outlining how R2P might be revised to address one specific issue raised in one of the first three units in the course. The draft policy paper is due at the beginning of the R2P World Summit. During the World Summit, representatives will review and revise each policy paper. The final version of the policy paper is due at the end of the semester.

### **Quizzes – 10%**

- Quizzes will be given periodically throughout the semester to hold students accountable for reviewing content on a regular basis.

## **Assignment Policies:**

All written work will be submitted via the website Turnitin.com (I will provide you with details of how to access the site for this course). When given the prompt for each assignment you will also be given a due date and time. This time is binding (as the ability to upload the assignment will be locked afterwards). Late papers will lose one full letter grade for each day they are late.

There are no make-up quizzes for unexcused absences. Excused absences will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

## **Additional Expectations:**

### **Classroom Behavior**

Above all, I expect you to respect your classmates. Social Science courses offer the opportunity for students to express a wide variety of opinions, but an open mind and respect are necessary for us to learn from one another. Part of learning the social sciences, however, is understanding that opinions must be backed up with evidence. As such, I expect all debates to be of the scholarly variety. Finally, I expect this professionalism to extend beyond the classroom, be it office hours, e-mail correspondence or any other interaction you might have with me or your classmates. I also understand that technology and devices are a part of the learning process. That said, it is easy to become distracted when devices are in front of us. I expect students at IMSA to employ proper judgement when it comes to the use of devices in classrooms. Phones used improperly during class will be taken and handed over to Student Life. Improper computer usage will result in a decrease in one's participation grade and/or dismissal from class accompanied by an unexcused absence.

### **Academic Integrity**

All of the work you turn in for this course should be your own. Booth, Colomb, and Williams in their book *The Craft of Research*, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003) state:

"You plagiarize when, intentionally or not, you use someone else's words or ideas but fail to credit that person. . . . You plagiarize even when you do credit the source but use its exact words without using quotation marks or block indentation. . . . You [also] plagiarize when you paraphrase a source so closely that anyone putting your work next to it would see that you could not have written what you did without the source at your elbow."

Claiming as your own the work of others, in whole *or in part*, will result in an immediate failure (here no credit) for the assignment and referral to Student Affairs for disciplinary action. See the IMSA Student Handbook for specific details. Such activity can result in being dismissed from IMSA, so if you are in doubt, come see me.

## **Course Outline**

Below you will find the **tentative outline** for the semester. Be aware that these topics and dates are **subject to change**. This is especially important since we will take this course at your pace (i.e. if we need to spend more time on certain topics, we will). As such, consult Moodle, your e-mail and/or in class announcements for up to date changes.

**AGAIN:** These readings are subject to change....additional readings will be added at my discretion and will still be considered required for the course.

### **Unit 1: Defining Genocide (4 Weeks)**

- Introduction of case studies:, Holocaust, Cambodia, Guatemala, Rwanda, Bosnia, Sudan
- Historical and sociological perspectives
- The UN and legal definitions
- Defining mass violence

#### **Selected readings:**

- Raphael Lemkin, "Genocide," *American Scholar* 15, no. 2 (1946): 227-230.
- UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment on the Crime of Genocide
- Mark Levene, "Why is the Twentieth Century the Century of Genocide?" *Journal of World History* (2000): 305-36.
- Christian Gerlach, "Extremely Violent Societies: An Alternative to the Concept of Genocide," *Journal of Genocide Research* (2006): 455-471
- Readings from ABC-CLIO on specific cases
- Chapters from Strauss

### **Unit 2: Structure of Genocide (5 weeks)**

- Political and social context
- Perpetrators and victims
- Gender and mass violence
- Technology of extermination

#### **Selected Readings:**

- Dallaire, 135-167.
- Philip Short, "Fires of Purgation," *Pol Pot: Anatomy of a Nightmare* (2004).
- Greg Grandin, "History, Motive, Law, Intent: Combining Historical and Legal Methods in Understanding Guatemala's 1981-1983 Genocide," in *The Specter of Genocide*
- Elisa von Joeden-Forgey, "Gender and Genocide," in *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies*.
- Selections from Power

### **Unit 3: Remembering Genocide (3-4 weeks)**

- Interpretation and education
- Collect memory and responsibility
- Contemporary implications

**Selected Readings:**

**(readings in the section are subject to change)**

- Uli Linke, "Archives of Violence: The German Holocaust and the Politics of Memory," in *Annihilating Difference* (2002).
- Cathy J. Schlund-Vials, "A Transnational Hip Hop Nation: praCh, Cambodia, and Memorialising the Killing Fields," *Life Writing* 5, no. 1 (Apr 2008): 11-27.
- Beatrice Manz, "Terror, Grief, and Recovery: Genocidal Trauma in a Mayan Village in Guatemala," in *Annihilating Difference*.
- Miroslav Kis, "Revenge of Forgiveness," *Religion and the War in Bosnia* (1998)

**Unit 4: Prevention and Humanitarian Intervention (4 weeks)**

- Rwanda and Bosnia: UN (in)action
- Responsibility to Protect: genocide prevention and intervention in current international affairs
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**Selected Readings:**

- Thomas Cushman, "Is Genocide Preventable? Some Theoretical Considerations," *Journal of Genocide Research* 5, no. 4 (2003): 523-542.
  - Alex J. Bellamy, "Responsibility to Protect and the Problem of Military Intervention," *International Affairs* 84, no. 4 (2008): 615-639.
  - Dallaire, *Shake Hands with the Devil*, excerpts
  - Reports and documents from the UN Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide
  - Responsibility to Protect Document
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