

Modern Genocide and Mass Violence

Fall 2018

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Office Hours: MTHF 10am-11am for drop in
and by appointment

About the Course:

In the twentieth century, mass violence occurred on 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 with a specific focus on social science research. 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 (Modern Genocide and Mass Violence F18)

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.

World Summit Participation (Group Project) – 20%

- During the last week of the semester, students acting as a UN task force on genocide prevention will host a mock conference addressing the strengths and weaknesses of the UN Responsibility to Protect principle with regard to a specific real-world case.
- Each group will represent a specific UN Member State as part of an international task force for the UN Office on Genocide Prevention.

World Summit Group Policy Paper – 20%

- Throughout the second half of the semester, students will work in groups of 2-3 conducting research on the UN Responsibility to Protect principle with regard to real-world situations. Each group will produce a policy paper outlining their country's position and suggesting actionable ways to move forward. The draft policy paper is due at the beginning of the 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: Readings will be announced in class and posted online.

Unit 1: Defining and Understanding Genocide

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

Unit 2: Structure of Genocide

- Political and social context
- Perpetrators and victims
- Gender and mass violence
- Technology of extermination
- Social Science research on Genocide

Unit 3: Genocide in Film and Narrative

- Exploring films and texts that look at genocide through the perspective of
 - Victims
 - Bystanders
 - Perpetrators

Unit 4: Prevention, Humanitarian Intervention and World Summit

- Rwanda and Bosnia: UN (in)action
 - Responsibility to Protect: genocide prevention and intervention in current international affairs
 - Responsibility to Protect Document
 - Preparation for World Summit
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