Political Science/International Studies 318

Fall 2013

“The Comparative Study of Genocide”

Professor Scott Straus

LECTURE
Engineering 1800
Tuesdays/Thursdays 2:30-3:45

OFFICE HOURS
Wednesdays 2:30-4:30 pm
224 North Hall
sstraus@wisc.edu

TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Dacil Keo: dqkeo@wisc.edu
Sections: 302, 304, 308

Taylor Price: tprice2@wisc.edu
Sections: 303, 305, 307

Anna Weisfeiler
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Sections: 306, 309, 310

SECTION SCHEDULE

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will examine the origins and forms of what a legal scholar once called an “odious scourge”: genocide. For years, genocide mainly referred to the Nazi attempt to exterminate the Jews during World War II. However, since the end of the Cold War events in Eastern Europe, Central Africa, and elsewhere have drawn scholars’ attention to genocide as a political phenomenon that may be studied across regions and time periods. This course is designed to introduce students to the major debates surrounding the study of genocide: how should “genocide” be defined? What problems exist with the concept of “genocide”? Is genocide primarily an international crime belonging to courts and tribunals or is it a macro-social event that social scientists can study? What are the major theories explaining genocide and how effective are these theories? Is every case unique or do all the cases demonstrate consistent patterns? Finally, how might genocide be prevented? The course will draw attention to these questions through the study of particular cases: in particular, the Armenian genocide, the Holocaust, Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge, the dissolution of Yugoslavia in the late 1990s, and Rwanda in 1994. The course will also take stock of “negative cases”—places that have the theoretical ingredients of genocide but where some other outcome occurs. Although ethical and policy concerns will underlie the discussion of each case, as they do whenever genocide is the topic of study, our main objective will be to examine the determinants of genocide.
**REQUIRED TEXTS**


* These books should be available at the UW Bookstore. You may also order them from an online bookseller. Copies of each of the books should also be on reserve at the College Library.

**E-RESERVES**

In addition to the books for sale, I will place a number of electronic readings on the learn@uw website.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS
The formal assignments for the class are the following: attendance and participation in a
discussion section, an in-class midterm examination, a research paper, and a final
examination. Students are expected to attend all lectures and to keep up with weekly
reading assignments. Students are also expected to attend and to participate regularly in
discussion sections. Students will also be asked to prepare discussion questions for
section at least once during the semester. The midterm will be a combination of
identification questions and short essays. The final, which will be comprehensive, will be
a combination of identifications, short essays, and a long essay.

TERM PAPER
You will have a choice on the paper assignment. You may do one of three things. First,
you may take a case of genocide or non-genocide not covered in class and compare that
case systematically to one that we have studied in class. The comparison should be
empirically and theoretically oriented. In what ways are the patterns of violence similar?
If they are different, are those differences significant and what explains them? Overall,
what does the comparative analysis tell you about theories of genocide? Second, you may
design your own approach to genocide prevention, proposing one military means of
intervention and one non-military means of intervention. Your proposal must be
empirically and theoretically grounded. That means you want to develop a proposal on
how outsiders can act based on your analysis of what drives genocide in the first place.
You need to specify which outsiders would implement your proposal. Third, you may
write on a topic of your choosing. If you choose the latter, you must do so in careful
consultation with your Teaching Assistant, and you must be clear to develop, specify, and
answer a research question.

The final paper should be 8-10 pages in length, double-spaced with 12-point font. Your
name, the date, and the course number should be at the top of every sheet of the paper.
Staple all pages. The papers themselves are due at the beginning of class on December
10th. Every 24 hours that the papers are late you will receive a full letter grade deduction.

The papers will be graded on the quality of writing, research, and argument. Writing
refers to the quality of grammar, syntax, organization, and overall presentation of the
work. Research refers to the independent research that you do, both the quality and
quantity of outside material that you consult for the paper. Argument refers to the overall
analysis and claims that you make in the paper. To receive an “A,” you must demonstrate
excellence on all three dimensions of the paper.

We shall require that you complete a worksheet for the paper, which you should deliver
to your Teaching Assistant not later than November 5th. The worksheet must specify what
the general focus of your paper is; identify at least four sources that you intend to
research; and specify an initial research question, hypothesis, or proposal (depending on
which assignment you choose).
**Grading**
Mid-Term examination: 20%
Paper: 30%
Final Examination: 25%
Discussion Section: 25%

**Grading Breakdown**
The grading scale used in the class is the standard scale used in most courses on campus:
- A: 93-100
- AB: 88-92
- B: 83-87
- BC: 78-82
- C: 70-77
- D: 60-69
- F: 59 or lower

**Classroom Discussion**
Given the number of students enrolled in the class, there will be little allotted time for open discussion. However, should you have a question about the reading or lecture, please raise your hand and pose the question when called upon. I will expect you to demonstrate a common level of respect for your classmates and the instructor when speaking.

**Section Switching**
Section switching in the course will be possible. Our strong preference is that you seek to switch to another section taught by your current Teaching Assistant. If your schedule does not permit switching into one of your TA’s other sections, then please email both your current TA and the TA whose section you wish to enter. Please make your request by the end of the first week of classes, i.e. by Friday September 6th at noon. We will do our best to accommodate as many students as possible.

**Academic Honesty**
All work must be your own. Undocumented borrowing of someone else’s work or ideas is plagiarism, an academic crime that results in disciplinary action. If you are caught plagiarizing or cheating, I will report the offense and expect to fail you in the class.

**Disabilities and Special Needs**
If you have special needs or a disability, you should contact your Teaching Assistant or me as early in the semester as possible in order to coordinate necessary arrangements.
Course Outline and Schedule

I. INTRODUCTION

September 3: Course Introduction

September 5: NO CLASS (Religious Holiday)

II. History and Definitions of “Genocide”

September 10: Raphael Lemkin and the U.N. Genocide Convention

Samantha Power, A Problem from Hell, pp. xi-xxi and 1-60.

September 12: Definitions of Genocide and Their Problems; Alternative Approaches and Concepts

Samantha Power, A Problem from Hell, pp. 60-85.


III. THEORIES OF GENOCIDE

September 17: Macro Theories


September 19: Macro Theories (cont)


**September 24: Micro Theories**


**September 26: Micro Theories (cont)**


**IV. THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE**

**October 1,3**


**V. THE HOLOCAUST**

**October 8, 10**

October 15, 17


**IN-CLASS MID-TERM October 22**

**VI. COMMUNIST MASS KILLING WITH A FOCUS ON CAMBODIA UNDER THE KHMER ROUGE**

October 24

Start Loung Ung, *First They Killed my Father*.

October 29, 31

Continue Loung Ung, *First They Killed my Father*, read through p. 174


**VII. THE DISSOLUTION OF YUGOSLAVIA**

November 5

Start Joe Sacco, *Safe Area Gorazde*

November 7: NO CLASS

November 12, 14

Finish Sacco: *Safe Area Gorazde*

Samantha Power, *A Problem from Hell*, pp. 391-442

**VIII. RWANDA**

November 19, 21


November 26

November 28: No Class, Thanksgiving

IX. Negative Cases

December 3: Côte d’Ivoire


X. DILEMMAS OF INTERVENTION

December 5: Doctrines and Problems


December 10: Cases—Kosovo, Darfur, and Libya


*** PAPERS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS DECEMBER 10***

XI. CONCLUSION

December 12: Syria, Conclusion, and Review for Final

XII. FINAL EXAMINATION

December 19, 7:45 am!!!!!!