

## **Genocide in Comparative Historical Perspective**

**Professor Douglas Greenberg**

**SAS Honors Seminar (01:090:295:07)**

**Class Meeting: M 9:50AM-12:50PM**

**Brett Hall Seminar Room - College Ave Campus**

**Office Hours: Wednesday 9 AM-11:30 AM**

**Van Dyck 104**

This seminar focuses mainly upon a comparison of four twentieth-century genocides: the Turkish Genocide of the Armenians (1915-1917), the Holocaust (1933-1945), the Pol Pot "auto-genocide" in Cambodia (1976-1979), and the Rwandan Genocide (1994). Our aim will be to understand the historical roots, immediate causes, implementation, and aftermath of these four acts of collective state-sponsored violence and then to attempt to make comparisons among them.

We will begin by considering some of the theoretical and definitional issues that genocide poses. Then we will examine genocide as a global phenomenon by looking at some examples of genocide from around the world. Having covered these preliminary problems, we will then move on to our main focus: the Armenian, Jewish, Cambodian, and Rwandan genocides. Using secondary sources, we will focus on historians' interpretations of each of the four cases. Then we will compare the historians' versions of events to the memory of the genocides recorded by victims and perpetrators. Finally, we will turn our attention to the representation of our four cases studies in feature and documentary films.

Our main aim in all of this is both to comprehend genocidal violence as a particularly vicious form of state policy and also as a human and personal experience of terror and murder. To do so, we will have to confront not only killers and their victims, but bystanders and survivors. This material is disturbing for many reasons, of course. It also poses profound questions about human behavior and human nature that we will also consider.

Requirements: The course will require you to do four things: read (or in the case of films, watch) the assignments, think about what you have read or seen, speak about it, and write about it. I will expect each of you to write two 5-7 page essays, each responding to the readings for one session of the course. In addition, instead of a final examination, each student will be required to write a 10-15 page paper responding to one of the eight films assigned for viewing in the last two weeks of the course. The short papers will each count as 15% of your grade, and the final essay will count as 20%. More is said about these exercises below.

On class meetings: Please come to class on time. Lateness is disruptive, especially in a seminar setting. Our meetings will last from 9:50 to 12:50 on Monday mornings in the Brett Hall

Seminar Room; please note that you will need your Rutgers ID Card in order to be admitted to Brett Hall. You can expect that we will take a break for about 20 minutes at about 11:10 and resume our discussion at 11:30. These times will vary, of course, from week to week as we will try to take a break at a natural point in the discussion.

On class discussions: This is a discussion course. I expect you to be prepared to speak in class, and class discussion is 50% of your grade. For some, speaking in class does not come easily, and I understand that. Please remember, however, that there are very few right or wrong answers in this course. Your 50% is more associated with how much you contribute and how well prepared you are than with my judgment about whether what you say is right or wrong. I will ensure that everyone speaks in class by occasionally calling upon you whether you volunteer or not. I do this not to embarrass you but rather to ensure that you are included in the discussion and that your ideas are not ignored and receive the respect of your fellow students, as well as my own.

On academic honesty: This course takes an especially collaborative approach to learning. Over the course of the semester, I may ask some of you to prepare a response to a particular document or reading and present it to the rest of the class. I may also occasionally ask you to work in groups, especially in the second half of the semester. Collaboration, in other words, is something I want to encourage. There is, however, a line between collaboration and violations of academic integrity that I hope you will not cross. The University has a clear policy on academic integrity which you can find at <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu>.

On attendance: This is a seminar. By definition, therefore, class time cannot be made up. If you miss more than one meeting of the seminar, therefore, I will reduce your grade by one letter grade for each class you miss. Three late arrivals count as one absence.

On disabilities: Students who may be requesting accommodations due to disabilities should familiarize themselves with procedures and policies regarding disability support services at the following website: <http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/>. If you are seeking accommodations, please begin filing paperwork as soon as possible as the documentation review can take several weeks. I also encourage you to speak with me about these issues at the beginning of the term. I will keep all such conversations strictly confidential.

On technology in the classroom: Generally, I can see no reason why anyone would ever have an academic reason to look at a phone during class. Computers and tablets are a different matter. If you bring a computer or other device into the class, please use it only for taking notes or other tasks directly related to our discussions. If you use it for another non-academic purpose and I discover it, I will bar you from bringing your device to subsequent classes.

On office hours: Please take advantage of my office hours and do not hesitate to make another appointment with me if my office hours are inconvenient. My objective in this course is simple: I want you to succeed and to have some fun doing it. I know, however, that the material will sometimes be very challenging. If you are having trouble, please don't hesitate to ask for my help. I will be happy to give you as much time as you need. In addition, you may sometimes

feel that we haven't fully addressed a particular problem or that you didn't have the chance to raise questions that you thought were especially important or that something I said was completely wrong. Office hours are for that too.

### **Book Purchases**

All readings for the course will be drawn from the following books, as well as from materials uploaded to SAKAI and from websites noted in the schedule below. Students should purchase the following books. Used copies of these books can usually be purchased either at the bookstore or through Amazon.com. E-book editions are available as Kindle books from Amazon.

1. Samuel Totten and Paul R. Bartrop, eds. The Genocide Studies Reader (New York, 2009) [ISBN 10: 0-415-95395-2; paperback edition. There is no e-book edition available so far as I know.
2. Samuel Totten and William S. Parsons, eds. Centuries of Genocide: Essays and Eyewitness Accounts (FOURTH EDITION, New York, 2013) [ISBN 978-0-415-87192-1]. Paperback edition. Please be sure you purchase the Fourth Edition as earlier versions of this book are quite different in content. There is also an e-book version of this book available [ ISBN: 978-203-86781-5].
3. Dan Stone, ed. The Historiography of Genocide (New York, 2008) [ISBN 978-0-230-27955-1] paperback edition. There is no e-book version available, so far as I know.
4. Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan, eds. The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective, (Cambridge, 2003) [ISBN 0521527503] paperback edition. There is also an e-book edition available.
5. Peter Balakian, The Black Dog of Fate (New York, 1997) [ISBN: 0767902548] paperback edition. There is an e-book version available.
6. Primo Levi, Survival in Auschwitz (New York, 1996) [ISBN: 9562915301]. There is also an e-book version available.
7. Chanrithy Him, When Broken Glass Floats (New York, 2000) [ISBN: 0393322106]. There is also an e-book version available.
8. Jean Hatzfield, Machete Season (New York, 2005) [ISBN: 0312425031]. There is also an e-book version available.

### **Websites**

There are also literally dozens of websites on genocide and on particular genocides that you may find helpful as we go along. Here are a few of the best:

<http://www.yale.edu/cgp/>

[http://www.ppu.org.uk/genocide/g\\_genocide\\_intro.html](http://www.ppu.org.uk/genocide/g_genocide_intro.html)

[http://www.genocidearchiverwanda.org.rw/index.php/Welcome\\_to\\_Genocide\\_Archive\\_Rwanda](http://www.genocidearchiverwanda.org.rw/index.php/Welcome_to_Genocide_Archive_Rwanda)

<http://www.ushmm.org/genocide/>

<http://www.armenian-genocide.org/index.htm>

<http://sfi.usc.edu/>

## **Assignments**

In addition to doing weekly assignments and participating in class discussions, all students will also be responsible for writing two five- to seven-page essays.

These essays should constitute a response to a weekly assignment that makes a coherent argument about it. In weeks when films are assigned the same rule applies. Drafts are due at the class session when the readings are discussed. I will read your essays carefully, make suggestions for revision, and give you the opportunity to revise and resubmit the essay for grading. Students writing essays in any given week will have a special responsibility for framing our discussions although, of course, everyone is responsible for doing all the reading. I will explain the details of these assignments at the first meeting of the seminar. These essays will count as 30% of your final grade.

In addition, each student will be responsible for writing a 10-15 page paper due during exam week at noon on December 18. The assignment for this paper will be to write a critical analysis of two of the films assigned in the last two weeks of the course (one feature and one documentary on the same genocide) in light of the reading and other work you will have done throughout the semester. Your job will be to compare the two films, assess them from a scholarly, as well as an artistic, perspective and to offer an assessment of the extent to which they faithfully recreate the human experience of genocide. This final exercise will count as 20% of your grade. I will say more about the writing assignments at our first meeting.

## **Class Schedule**

### **Some Notes:**

***Readings through October 28 are analytical pieces that address aspects of genocide from an interpretive point of view. These assignments require careful attention to the arguments the authors make and to the evidence they present.***

***The reading assignments from November 4 through November 25 are memoirs and reminiscences from people who survived genocides or perpetrated them: primary sources. These assignments are longer than those in the earlier part of the course, but your response to them depends not on capturing an argument but on identifying with the circumstances they describe and interpreting the memories they recount. In addition, instead of reading books on the Holocaust and the Rwandan genocide, you will have the opportunity to watch video testimonies of genocide survivors instead. I will tell you more about that when we get further into the course.***

***The final group of assignments for the seminar are not reading assignments. They are films. In one week, they are feature films made for mass market release by Hollywood. In the other week, they are documentaries. In both cases, you may want to take some notes as you watch since films of this kind require the same concentration and intelligent response that you will bring to the reading assignments.***

- September 9**                    **Introductions**
- September 16**                **Definitions and Theories of Genocide**
- The Genocide Studies Reader, ix-77
- The Historiography of Genocide, 9-41; 71-92
- September 23**                **Examples of Genocide I: California, Australia, Namibia, and Ukraine**
- Centuries of Genocide Optional readings for this assignment are primary sources about each of the four genocides.
- California: 17-45 [48-53 optional],
- Australia: 55-71 [71-87 optional],
- Namibia: 89-101 [101-114 optional]
- Ukraine: 157-168 [168-189 optional]
- September 30**                **Examples of Genocide II: Bangladesh, East Timor, Guatemala, Iraqi Kurdistan, and Darfur**
- Centuries of Genocide Optional readings for this assignment are primary sources about each of the five genocides.
- Bangladesh: 249-265 [265-276 optional]
- East Timor: 279-306 [306-315 optional]
- Guatemala: 355-371 [371-393 optional]
- Iraqi Kurdistan: 395-411 [411-419 optional]
- Darfur: 513-556 [556-577 optional]
- October 7**                    **Case Studies of Genocide I: Armenia, the Holocaust, Cambodia, and Rwanda**
- Centuries of Genocide Optional readings for this assignment are primary sources about each of the five genocides.

Armenia: 117-140 [140-155 optional]

The Holocaust: 191-211 [211-247 optional]

Cambodia: 317-339 [339-353 optional]

Rwanda: 447-469 [469-475 optional]

**October 14**      **Case Studies of Genocide II: Armenia, the Holocaust, Cambodia, and Rwanda**

The Historiography of Genocide, 344-400, 468-486, 517-542

**October 21**      **Comparing Genocides I**

The Genocide Studies Reader, 120-133, 234-242

Douglas Greenberg, "Citizenship, National Identity, and Genocide", in René Provost and Payam Akhavan, eds., Confronting Genocide (New York, 2011). This article is available on the course Sakai site and it may also be downloaded at [http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007%2F978-90-481-9840-5\\_5](http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007%2F978-90-481-9840-5_5)

The Specter of Genocide, 3-52, 325-338

**October 28**      **Comparing Genocides II**

The Specter of Genocide, 53-96, 117-139, 189-213, 373-380

**November 4**      **Remembering Genocide I: Armenia**

Peter Balakian, The Black Dog of Fate

**November 11**      **Remembering Genocide II: The Holocaust**

Primo Levi, Survival in Auschwitz or research in the USC Shoah Foundation Archive on video testimonies of the Holocaust (details for accessing the archive will be distributed in a separate handout).

**November 18**      **Remembering Genocide III: Cambodia**

Chanrithy Him, When Broken Glass Floats, 1-250

**November 25**      **Remembering Genocide IV: Rwanda**

Jean Hatzfeld, Machete Season or research in the USC Shoah Foundation Archive on video testimonies of the Rwandan genocide (details for accessing the archive will be distributed in a separate handout).

**December 2                      Representations of Genocide I: Feature Films**

All of the films below have been placed on reserve in Alexander Library for you to view.

Ararat (Armenia), Schindler's List (Holocaust), The Killing Fields (Cambodia), Hotel Rwanda (Rwanda)

**December 9                      Representations of Genocide II: Documentary Films**

All of the films below have been placed on reserve in Alexander Library for you to view.

The River Ran Red (Armenia), The Last Days (Holocaust), Enemies of the People (Cambodia), Ghosts of Rwanda (Rwanda)

***This course satisfies the SAS Core Goal: WCD (t, u, v)***

***Student is able to:***

***(t)--Communicate effectively in modes appropriate to a discipline or area of inquiry***

***(u)--Evaluate and critically assess sources and use the conventions of attribution and citation correctly***

***(v)—analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights***