

USC Shoah Foundation Center for Advanced Genocide Research is dedicated to advancing new areas of interdisciplinary research on the Holocaust and other genocides, specifically discussing the origins of genocide and the conditions that enable people to resist mass violence.

The establishment of the Center as the academic unit of USC Shoah Foundation in 2014 signified an important milestone for furthering international scholarly research on genocide. The Center's mission aligns with USC's strategic vision of creating scholarship with consequences by bringing together experts from different fields to tackle grand challenges facing the world today.

The Center grapples with the most pressing and important questions on the topic of genocide: Why do some people choose to resist mass violence targeting entire populations when others stand by or collaborate? How do violence and its emotional impact change individual behavior? How can digital humanities facilitate and enhance scholarly work and thus improve our understanding of mass violence and its resistance? These questions have been largely neglected by international genocide scholars, but answering them is vitally important to broadening our understanding of the origins and developments of genocide and identifying possible interventions.

Wolf Gruner, USC Professor of History and the Shapell-Guerin Chair in Jewish Studies, is the founding director of the Center and sets its research agenda. An internationally recognized expert on genocide, Gruner has published 11 books and over 60 academic articles and book chapters on the

Holocaust in Europe as well as on mass violence against indigenous people in Latin America.

“The Center, with its innovative research program and affiliated faculty of excellence, aims to establish an intellectual hub in Los Angeles for scholars from all over the world and across disciplines to advance research on genocide and mass violence.”

*Wolf Gruner, director
USC Shoah Foundation
Center for Advanced Genocide Research*

Research Agenda

The Center for Advanced Genocide Research distinguishes itself by focusing interdisciplinary study and attention on three primary research themes to advance the analysis of genocide and systematic mass violence on an international scale. The aim is to transcend the differentiated disciplines to produce innovative approaches and a new global network of scholars.

- **Resistance to Genocide and Mass Violence.** Explore conditions and factors – historically and contemporarily – that enable people, groups, and societies to slow down or stop the course of mass violence. Focus on acts of resistance that inhibit the impact of genocidal ideology and/or defy its policies.

- **Violence, Emotion and Behavioral Change.** Explore the nature of genocide and mass violence and its emotional, social, psychological, historical and physical impacts on individual behavior. Deepen the understanding of the individual experience as reflected in personal testimonies of survivors, witnesses, and perpetrators.

- **Digital Genocide Research.** Examine how large digital data sets, such as the fully



indexed 55,000 video testimonies of USC Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive, can be used for a sophisticated quantitative analysis of complex human phenomena. Seek to establish patterns of behavior in the field of mass violence and its resistance.

Workshops and Conferences

The Center for Advanced Genocide Research organizes annual international workshops and conferences on various topics that fall under the central theme of “Resistance to Genocide.” The Center hosted its first international conference in October 2015 entitled “Singing in the Lion's Mouth: Music as Resistance to Genocide.”

In September 2016 the Center hosted the first ever international conference on the genocide of the Mayan people during the early 1980s in Guatemala. Called “A ‘Conflict’? Genocide and Resistance in Guatemala,” the conference explored a set of atrocities that had been mostly overlooked in the academic literature on genocide and mass violence. The conference brought together experts from Guatemala, Mexico, Europe and the U.S. who conduct research in disciplines such as Political Science, Anthropology, Sociology, Law, Human Rights and International Relations.

In 2017 the Center will host another conference on Digital Genocide studies titled “Digital Approaches to Genocide Studies.”

Fellowship Programs

The Center for Advanced Genocide Research has established a research fellowship program, which convenes an international interdisciplinary community of promising young academics and prominent senior scholars. The Center's fellowships, varying in scope and length, are awarded to international doctoral candidates, post-doctoral students, senior scholars as well as USC undergraduate and graduate students who use the Visual History Archive or other genocide-related resources at USC for innovative research projects across academic disciplines.

The first two cohorts of fellows selected by the Center have explored a diverse range of under-studied topics, including the little-known inter-ethnic violence that unfolded in the Western Ukraine during the Holocaust; the deliberate destruction of tradition and rituals during the Cambodian genocide, which profoundly affected people's sense of ritualized cosmological beliefs about birth, death, marriage, illness and more; the role that religion played in the lives of Jewish victims and non-Jewish aid providers during the Holocaust in the occupied parts of the Soviet Union; and the use of photography in ghettos in Nazi-occupied Poland during World War II.

The Margee and Douglas Greenberg Research Fellowship and the Robert J. Katz Research Fellowship in Genocide Studies are the first two endowed fellowships for the Center. They enable two advanced standing PhD candidates to spend up to a month in residence at the Center every year. The Greenberg Fellowship is the result of a generous gift from Margee and Douglas Greenberg, and the Katz Fellowship in Genocide Studies was named after longtime volunteer and former Board of Councilors Chair Robert J. Katz in recognition of his service to the Institute. Both fellowships are bestowed by a panel of USC researchers and professors who vet proposals for their originality and potential to make advancements in the field through the use of testimonies in the Visual History Archive.

The Center Research Fellowship allows a

senior scholar to spend one semester in residence at the Center. It goes to an outstanding international scholar from any discipline who will advance genocide research through the use of the Visual History Archive and other USC resources. Recipients bring the Center fresh research perspectives, play a role in Center activities, and deliver a public talk during their stay.

The Sara and Asa Shapiro Annual Holocaust Testimony Scholar and Lecture Fund has been established by longtime board member Mickey Shapiro in honor of his parents, who both survived the Holocaust. The fellowship replaces the USC Shoah Foundation Yom Hashoah Scholar in Residency.

The DEFY Undergraduate and Graduate Student Research Fellowship is named after USC Shoah Foundation's student organization. The DEFY Fellowships allow USC students to conduct research at the Center during the summer break.

Interdisciplinary Research Week

Each year, the Center hosts an interdisciplinary team of scholars from different universities for a week. The invited team of scholars works on a particular challenge within the field of genocide studies. The opportunity yields intensive creative discussion across disciplines. The first group hosted by the Center consisted of geographers, historians and art historians from the United Kingdom and the United States who use geographical methods to examine spaces and places of the Holocaust. In their research, the team created maps and other visualizations (geographic information science, or GIS) to illustrate where events of the Holocaust occurred, where and how people moved from place to place, topographical changes, locations of camps and other data. Spending a week at the Center, they explored how survivor testimonies from the Visual History Archive could contribute to, complicate and sharpen their research.

Holocaust and Genocide Resources

The Center for Advanced Genocide Research uniquely positions USC as being the

only world-renowned private research institution with substantial original material from the Holocaust and other genocides. The resources include:

- USC Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive, a collection of over 55,000 video testimonies of survivors and witnesses of the Holocaust and other genocides, including the Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda, the Armenian Genocide and the Nanjing Massacre.

- Feuchtwanger Memorial Library's private papers of German and Austrian emigrants who fled the Nazis. Part of the Special Collections of USC Doheny Library, Feuchtwanger Memorial is named after the famous German-Jewish writer Lion Feuchtwanger, a fierce critic of the Nazis in the run-up to World War II, who fled to Los Angeles in 1941.

- The Holocaust and Genocide Studies Collection at USC Doheny Library, which contains books on almost every facet of the Holocaust and on various genocides, with a total collection of books reaching 20,000 volumes. Within the collection there are more than 2,000 original Nazi books and pamphlets, Jewish publications, rare books and microfilms with original documents such as Nazi newspapers. The collection also houses 300 boxes of original transcripts from the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials, and the 12 trials of the Nuremberg Military Tribunals held between 1945 and 1949.

- The New York Life Collection donated by Vartkes Yeghiayan of documents pertaining to the historic *Martin Marootian et al. v. New York Life Insurance Company*. The suit that not only brought a settlement, but also a measure of justice and public recognition for the 1.5 million victims of the Armenian Genocide.

- The Harry K. Wolff Jr. Collection, donated by David and Andrea Stanley, contains hundreds of artifacts, including detailed letters, Nazi flags, daggers, belts, yellowed copies of Stars and Stripes and uniforms that were collected by Andrea Stanley's father, Harry K. Wolff Jr.

For more information on the Center for Advanced Genocide Research go to cagr.usc.edu.