

Political Science/International Studies 439

Spring 2020

“The Comparative Study of Genocide”

Professor Scott Straus (pronouns: he/him/his)

LECTURE

Social Science 6102

Tuesdays/Thursdays 1:00-2:15pm

OFFICE HOURS

Mondays 3-5 pm

303 North Hall

sstraus@wisc.edu

TEACHING ASSISTANT

Kaden Paulson-Smith (pronouns: they/them/theirs)

Email: paulsonsmith@wisc.edu

Office Hours: Tues., 11:00am – 12:45pm, College Library, Open Book Café

SECTION SCHEDULE

DS#	Time	Location
303	Mon., 12:05 – 12:55pm	Ingraham Hall 225
302	Mon., 1:20 – 2:10pm	School of Education L151
304	Tues., 9:55 – 10:45am	Sewell Social Sciences 6310
305	Thurs., 2:25 – 3:15pm	Sewell Social Sciences 6310

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 and heinous outrage belonging mostly to courts and philosophy 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? What can be learned from the causes of genocide to prevent it? 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, as well as contemporary Myanmar, China, and Syria. 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, as they do whenever genocide is the topic of study, our main objective will be to examine the determinants of genocide and related forms of mass violence.

Learning Outcomes

1. Define and understand the concept of genocide.
2. Review and reflect on theories of genocide.
3. Develop an understanding of cases of mass violence in world history.
4. Apply empirical material from cases to assess theory.
5. Explore the uses of comparison in the social sciences.
6. Apply knowledge of cases to genocide prevention and processes of political and social radicalization.

Number of Credits: 4

REQUIRED TEXTS

Doris Bergen, *War & Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust*, 3rd Edition (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2016).

Joe Sacco, *Safe Area Gorazde: The War in Eastern Bosnia, 1992-1995* (Seattle: Fantagraphics Books, 2000).

Scott Straus, *Making and Unmaking Nations: War, Leadership, and Genocide* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015).

Loung Ung, *First They Killed My Father: A Daughter of Cambodia Remembers* (New York: HarperCollins, 2000).

* These books will be available at the UW Bookstore. Many are available used. In particular, the Bergen second edition would be fine, and cheaper, if you wish. 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 the electronic readings on the Canvas website for the course. All readings that are not in one of the required books may be accessed through the Canvas site.

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 be asked to prepare three discuss questions or comments each week; Kaden will provide details in their sections. 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.

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 10-11 pages in length, double-spaced with 12-point font (excluding references). Your name, the date, and the course number should be at the top of every page. Please use the Chicago Manual of Style for references. We would like you to upload your paper to the course Canvas site. The deadline for the paper is the beginning of class on April 28th. Every 24 hours that the papers are late you will receive a four-point 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; is the argument persuasive and supported by the material 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 upload to the Canvas site for the course no later than April 2nd. 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

I strongly encourage you to ask questions during the lectures. Even though there will be 65ish students in the class, please raise concerns or seek clarifications if a point is unclear.

SECTION SWITCHING

Section switching in the course will be possible. Please email your request to Kaden by the end of the first week of classes, i.e. by Friday January 24th at noon. We will do our best to accommodate as many students as possible, but we cannot guarantee a spot in another section.

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.

EDUCATIONAL ACCESSIBILITY

The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. The McBurney Center implemented a new electronic accommodation and case management system called McBurney Connect starting Summer 2018. Through McBurney Connect, students generate a Faculty Notification Letter for each class section in which they are requesting accommodations. The notification letters will replace the laminated student VISAs (Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations plan) and will be sent to course instructors of record via email. I will work either directly with you or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide instructional

accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA. Find more information at <https://mcburney.wisc.edu> or by emailing mcburney@studentlife.wisc.edu.

Should you need an accommodation, please contact Kaden or me as early in the semester as possible in order to coordinate necessary arrangements.

Course Outline and Schedule

I. INTRODUCTION

January 21: Course Introduction and Contemporary Myanmar

Fortify Rights and the USHMM, “‘They Tried to Kill Us All’: Atrocity Crimes against the Rohingya in Rakhine State, Myanmar, November 17, 2017, pp. 1-16.

Aung San Suu Kyi, “Transcript: Aung San Suu Kyi Speech at the ICJ in Full,” *Al-Jazeera*, December 12, 2019, available at <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/12/transcript-aung-san-suu-kyi-speech-icj-full-191212085257384.html>

II. History and Definitions of “Genocide”

January 23: Raphael Lemkin and the U.N. Genocide Convention

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

January 28: Definitions of Genocide and their Problems

Samantha Power, *A Problem from Hell*, pp. 61-85.

David Scheffer, “Genocide and Atrocity Crimes,” *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 1:3 (2006), pp. 229-250.

Scott Straus, *Making and Unmaking Nations*, Chapter 1.

III. THEORIES OF GENOCIDE

January 30: Macro Theories

Gregory Stanton, “The Eight Stages of Genocide,” in Samuel Totten and Paul Bartrop, *The Genocide Studies Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 127-129.

Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 1-33.

Scott Straus, *Making and Unmaking Nations*, Chapter 3.

United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, “Framework for Analysis: A Tool for Prevention,” 2014, pp. 10-24.

February 4: Macro Theories (cont)

Barbara Harff, "No Lessons Learned from the Holocaust? Assessing Risks of Genocide and Mass Political Murder since 1955," *American Political Science Review* 97:1 (2003), pp. 57-73.

Benjamin Valentino, "Why We Kill: The Political Science of Political Violence against Civilians," *Annual Review of Political Science* 17:1 (2014), pp. 89-103.

Early Warning Project, "Countries at Risk for Mass Killing 2019-2020: Statistical Risk Assessment Results," November 19, 2019.

February 6: Micro and Meso Theories

Stanley Milgram, *Obedience to Authority: An Experimental View* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), pp. 1-12.

James Waller, *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 29-49.

Ervin Staub, *The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and Other Group Violence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 13-34.

Robert Braun, "Religious Minorities and Resistance to Genocide: The Collective Rescue of Jews in the Netherlands during the Holocaust," *American Political Science Review* 110:1 (2016), pp. 127-147.

February 11: Micro and Meso Theories (cont)

Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York: Knopf, 1996), pp. 1-24.

Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: Harper Collins, 1998), pp. 159-189.

IV. THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

February 13, 18

Ronald Suny, *They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else: A History of the Armenian Genocide* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), pp. xi-xxii, 208-327.

V. THE HOLOCAUST

February 20, 25

Doris Bergen, *War & Genocide*, pp. 1-127.

February 27, March 3

Doris Bergen, *War & Genocide*, pp. 129-310.

**** IN-CLASS MID-TERM March 5**

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

March 10, 12

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

***** SPRING BREAK *****

March 24

Norman Naimark, *Stalin's Genocides* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), pp. 1-29.

VII. THE DISSOLUTION OF YUGOSLAVIA

March 26

Start Joe Sacco, *Safe Area Gorazde*

March 31, April 2

Finish Sacco: *Safe Area Gorazde*

Edina Becirevic, *Genocide on the Drina River* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), pp. 81-143.

Recommended for background on the case:

Steven Burg and Paul Shoup, *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention* (New York: Routledge, 2000), Chapters 2-4.

***** PAPER WORKSHEETS DUE April 2*****

VIII. RWANDA

April 7

Scott Straus, *Making and Unmaking Nations*, Chapter 9.

April 9: No Class, Passover

April 14, 16

Scott Straus, *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power, and War in Rwanda* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), pp. 95-152.

Hollie Nyseth Brehm, "Subnational Determinants of Killing in Rwanda," *Criminology* 55:1 (2017), pp. 5-31.

Marie Berry, "From Violence to Mobilization: Women, War, and Threat in Rwanda," *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 20:2 (2015), pp. 135-156.

IX. NEGATIVE AND CONTEMPORARY CASES

April 21: Côte d'Ivoire and Mali

Straus, *Making and Unmaking Nations*, Chapter 5-6.

April 23: Syria and China

Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arabic Republic, "I Lost My Dignity: Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in the Syrian Arabic Republic," Human Rights Council, March 15, 2018, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/IICISyria/Pages/Documentation.aspx>.

Human Rights Watch, "Eradicating Ideological Viruses: China's Campaign of Repression against Xinjiang's Muslims," Human Rights Watch, September 2018, pp. 1-26.

Recommended: *New York Times* report on leaked cables: Austin Ramzy and Chris Buckley, "The Xinjiang Papers" <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/11/16/world/asia/china-xinjiang-documents.html>

X. AMERICAN INDIANS IN THE UNITED STATES

April 28

Benjamin Madley, "Reexamining the American Genocide Debate: Meaning, Historiography, and New Methods," *American Historical Review* February (2015), pp. 98-139

***** PAPERS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS April 28*****

XI. FROM CAUSES TO PREVENTION; COURSE CONCLUSION

April 30

Presidential Study Direction 10, available online at
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/08/04/presidential-study-directive-mass-atrocities>.

Straus, *Making and Unmaking Nations*, Conclusion and Appendix.

Samantha Power, *A Problem from Hell*, pp. 503-516.

Samantha Power, *The Education of an Idealist: A Memoir* (New York: Dey Street/HarperCollins, 2019), pp. ix-xii, 359-390.

XIII. FINAL EXAMINATION

May 4, 10:05 pm-12:05 pm, location to be announced