

Sociology 325
Genocide and Social Theory
Professor Thomas Cushman
Wellesley College, Fall 2004

This is an advance seminar which we will explore the social phenomenon of genocide from an interdisciplinary perspective. We will read recent work by historians and sociologists who have tried to understand genocide in modernity, that is, its expressions in the 20th century. We will focus, as well, on the analysis of several cases: the Armenian genocide, the Holocaust, Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda, and Sudan. Upon completion of this seminar, students will have an advanced knowledge of some of the most current thinking on the problem of genocide in modernity.

Reading List

Omer Bartov, *Mirrors of Destruction: War, Genocide, and Modern Identity*. Oxford University Press

Eric D. Weitz, *A Century of Genocide: Utopias of Race and Nation*. Princeton University Press, 2003

Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*. Cornell University Press, 1991

Michael N. Barnett, *Eyewitness to a Genocide*, Cornell University Press, 2002

There is also a set of readings on electronic reserve on our course conference, which are an integral part of the class. We will also have three guest speakers who are world authorities on genocide and social theory.

Course Requirements

This is an intensive class, which requires attendance at all seminar sessions and active participation. Students are expected to be prepared for each seminar by doing all required readings. In addition, there will be a short one-page assignments each week which will help you focus attention on key issues and serve as the basis for vigorous class discussions.

The major part of the grade for the course will be based on an independent research project which will result in a paper of no less than 20 pages. This project will entail close collaboration with the instructor throughout the semester. The final paper will constitute 50 percent of your grade for the semester and is due on the last day of final exams.

There will be one short essay of 6-8 pages due at the mid-term, which will constitute 20 percent of your grade for the semester.

The remaining 30 percent of the grade will be determined by class attendance and participation.

Course Schedule

September 9: Orientation to the Course

September 16: Legal, Sociological, and Moral Definitions of Genocide and "Democide"

R.J. Rummel, "Megamurders", *Society*, 29:6 (Sept./Oct). pp. 47-52 (ER)

Frank Chalk and Jonassohn, Kurt, "Genocide: An Historical Overview," *Social Education*, Feb. 1991, pp. 92-96. (ER)

Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, 1944, pp. 79-90 (ER)

George J. Andreopoulos (ed.). *Genocide: Conceptual and Historical Dimensions*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994. Read all of Part 1, "The Conceptual Dimensions of Genocide." (ER)

Jean-Paul Sartre. *On Genocide*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1968, pp. 57-85 (ER)

Please examine the following website to familiarize yourself with the parameters of mass killing in the 20th century: <http://www.hawaii.edu/powerkills/welcome.html>

Please peruse the following websites as examples of the use of the rhetoric of genocide:
<http://www.masskilling.co.uk/>
<http://aidsbiowar.com/page1.htm>

September 23: Legal, Sociological, and Moral Definitions of Genocide (cont): The Problem of Commensurability

In addition to continuing discussion of topics from September 16, we will be doing an in-class experiment on the problems of defining genocide, the details of which will be discussed in class on Sept. 16. Continue reading as above.

September 30: The Armenian Genocide and Genocide Denial as A Sociological Problem

Eric Weitz, Prelude, Introduction, and Chapter One

In class film: **Armenia : genocide denied (34 minutes)**

Richard G. Hovannisian, "Etiology and Sequelae of the Armenian Genocide," pp. 111-140 in George J. Andreopoulos (ed.), *Genocide: Conceptual and Historical Dimensions*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994. (ER)

R.G. Hovannisian. "Denial of the Armenian Genocide in Comparison with Holocaust Denial" and "Professional Ethics and the Denial of the Armenian Genocide" in Hovannisian, ed. *Remembrance and Denial: The Case of the Armenian Genocide.*" (ER)

Petition of Scholars and Writers, "Taking A Stand Against The Turkish Government's Denial of the Armenian Genocide and Scholarly Corruption in the Academy" (To be distributed)

Please read carefully the statement at the following website:

<http://www.turkishembassy.org/governmentpolitics/issuesarmenian.htm>

October 7: Guest Speaker, leading genocide scholar Erik Markusen will visit the seminar and discuss the case of Darfur, Sudan, as genocide.

Some readings on the current problem in Sudan will be provided

October 14: Please note: We will meet for one hour and then attend a seminar by Professor Jeffrey Alexander of the Department of Sociology at Yale University at 4:00.

Eric Weitz, Chapter Three
Begin reading Omer Bartov

October 21: Sociological Perspectives on the Holocaust, continued

Omer Bartov, in entirety

October 28: Sociological Perspectives on the Holocaust

Continue discussions of Bartov

Introduction to Role Theory

George Orwell, "Shooting an Elephant" from *Inside the Whale*. London: V. Gollancz, 1940. (ER)

We will watch the film "Obedience" which documents the experiments by the social psychologist Stanley Milgram. The film is 45 minutes long.

Begin reading Bauman

November 4, Guest Speaker Eric D. Weitz visits the seminar to discuss his book, *A Century of Genocide*.

Complete Weitz

November 11, Sociological Perspectives on the Holocaust

Bauman, in entirety

November 18, Professor Cushman will be away: Term Paper Research Day. Detailed outline of final research project, with bibliography is due by Tuesday, November 23.

December 2: Genocide in Bosnia

Please watch the film "Bosna!" (117 minutes), on reserve at Clapp Library, before the seminar

Michael Ignatieff, "Homage to Bosnia", review essay in *The New York Review of Books*, April 24, 1994 (ER)

Roy Gutman. *A Witness to Genocide*. New York: Macmillan, 1992, pp. 28-101 (ER)

Norman Cigar. *Genocide in Bosnia: The Policy of "Ethnic Cleansing"*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1995, Chapters 5, 6, and 7, pp. 47- 106 (ER)

December 9: Rwanda and the Problem of Prevention

Please see the film "The Triumph of Evil" on reserve (60 minutes), before the seminar.

Michael Barnett, in entirety

Thomas Cushman, "Is Genocide Preventable?: Some Theoretical Considerations," *Journal of Genocide Research* (ER)