

Introduction to Holocaust and Genocide Studies

Class meets MWF from 2-3 pm in BUR 116

This course is an introduction to Holocaust and Genocide Studies. This is an expansive academic field that covers global topics and many different disciplines. In this course, we explore the topic of genocide through a variety of perspectives and in different historical contexts. As an introductory class and as the prerequisite course for students minoring in Holocaust and Genocide Studies, the course will familiarize you with important concepts and terms, a selection of historical case studies, and, through a series of micro-perspectives, a deeper understanding of the dynamics of genocides.

The course is organized into thematic modules consisting of several units. These are in turn composed of reading, watching, and writing segments. Every unit has an individual writing assignment or an in-class group writing assignment. These frequent, short writing assignments are meant to help you navigate and engage actively with the materials. By reading and watching actively and articulating your ideas, you will build tools for understanding genocide across time and place. Individual writing assignments are to be submitted before class. The group ones, based on your in-class discussion of the materials you prepared, will be submitted at the end of class after your group has completed its work.

Our course is in person and attendance and participation is required and makes up a significant amount of your grade.

Mette Koechs Nielsen, who is the teaching assistant for our course, and I will schedule regular office hours and are also be available by appointment.

Connect

– visit the course website often and reach out to me and Mette with questions and concerns

Explore

– make time to study - read, watch, and write – expand your horizons by immersing yourself in the material

Engage

– record your experiences, impressions, and reflections on our course, the materials we are exploring together and the discussions we have.

Learning is a journey – be open to new perspectives and make the most of it by connecting, exploring, and engaging!

People

Course Instructor: Dr. Tatjana Lichtenstein (lichtens@austin.utexas.edu)
Office hours: TBD GAR 2.138

Teaching Assistant: Mette Koechs Nielsen (mette.nielsen@utexas.edu)
Office Hours: M/Th 8-9 pm on Zoom (make appointment)

Learning Outcomes and Expectations

- a) Understand the concept of genocide, its history and applications
- b) Examine select historical case studies, the connections between them, and compare their differences and similarities
- c) Explore how the study of genocide informs our understanding of human behavior, past and present, and the ways in which genocidal events shape our world

Weekly Structure of the Course

It is key that you keep up the work – reading, watching, and writing – from week to week.

In university courses, the main part of your learning takes place studying, discussing the materials with your peers and instructors, and through writing (effective note-taking and writing actions) **not** through lecture delivery.

This might be different than what you are used to. It is important for you to engage with the materials regularly and in the different ways suggested (read/write/watch). This allows you to get the most out of the course materials and the lectures, it makes for better learning; and you become a better writer and thinker (in that order: **writing is thinking**).

All course materials are **required** and accessible through our Canvas page.

Course Policies

Creating a productive and inclusive learning environment is our shared responsibility

The course and the syllabus may be adjusted in response to changing circumstances during the semester.

It is your responsibility to read through all parts of the syllabus and clarify any question you might have before the 12th class day.

Preparation for Class

I expect you to prepare the assigned materials **before** you come to class and keep notes on the readings and other materials. Every class day, the materials listed are items you

should read and watch before our class on that day. The individual writing assignment should be completed as part of your preparation for class.

If possible, I strongly encourage you to take notes (in class and at home) by hand.

Studies show, as does my experience, that learning outcomes significantly improve when students do note-taking by hand.

Regarding electronic equipment in the class room

The use of electronic equipment, such as laptops and tablets, is allowed only for the purposes of class activities. These are a) taking notes b) consulting with readings, and c) completing group assignments. **Phones should be kept off and away from your desk.**

Failure to adhere to the course policy regarding the use of electronic equipment will be penalized by lowering your overall course grade.

If necessary, designated note takers will be appointed for students with documented needs.

Attendance and Participation

Lectures and class discussions are a significant part of this course. Therefore, **attendance and participation are required**. Again, you are expected to have done the readings and watched the visual materials before you come to class. This will allow you to participate in group work, to ask questions, and to do well on in-class assignments.

Although this course is lecture-based, in reality, the discussion and debate of ideas is central to every meeting. All viewpoints and perspectives are welcome as long as they meet the following criteria: they are delivered in a **respectful manner** and they are **informed by the course materials**. Your participation grade depends on your having done the readings/watched the films, written your responses before class as well as your ability to engage with the materials and your fellow students.

You are expected to be on time for class

If you are consistently late or leave class early, this will affect your course grade. If you have any concerns about this, please contact me in the beginning of term.

Respect and Civility

In this course, you will be encountering disturbing historical events and be presented with new perspectives on events you might have learned about earlier in your education. Some of these materials might be difficult to absorb emotionally and/or challenge some of your existing beliefs. These are all normal parts of delving deeply into a subject at the college level. Be open to the learning process and to other students in the class who are also examining the materials and sharing their responses.

All viewpoints and perspectives are welcome as long as they meet the following criteria: they are delivered in a **respectful manner** and they are **informed by the course materials.**

We live in uncertain and contentious times. It is all of our responsibility to create a respectful and inclusive learning environment in our class. In your discussion contribution, take special care to ensure that your tone and word choice is respectful and civil.

Students with Disabilities

Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations. Please discuss your documented needs with me no later than the first week of class so we can implement appropriate accommodations in a timely manner. The SSD office often operates with significant delays, do not delay having a conversation with me even as you await the SSD documentation. <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd>

Course Flag

This course carries the Global Cultures flag. Global Cultures courses are designed to increase your familiarity with cultural groups outside the United States. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from assignments covering the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one non-U.S. cultural group, past or present.

Academic Flexibility (all students)

Should you need extensions or other forms of flexibility with regards to course work during the semester, please be in touch. I can do a lot to help you succeed in this class, but in order to be able to develop a strategy with you, you need to reach out to discuss the accommodation you need. For students with documented disabilities, please see below for additional information.

Religious Holidays and Military Service Accommodations

If you will be absent due to religious holidays or military service, please inform me per email as soon as you can. Policies about accommodations can be found [here](#).

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, **cheating** on assignments or examinations; **plagiarizing**, which means representing as your own work any material that was obtained from another source, regardless how or where you acquired it or misrepresenting as your own work any part of work done by another; submitting the same paper, or substantially similar papers; **unauthorized collaboration or collusion** (you are expected to complete all assignments independently); and any use of AI to complete assignments. **Any act of academic dishonesty will result in immediate referral to Student Judicial Services and an F for the course.**

http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acadint_plagiarism.php

Office Hours

Office hours are times set aside specifically for meetings between students and instructors.

I encourage you to schedule to come to office hours at least once during the semester and preferably early on. It is a chance for us to get to know each other a little better and for me hear about your interest in the topic.

Both Mette and I are available to talk assignments, note taking techniques and other things with you, but we are also here to learn about you, your interests and thoughts about the material.

Furthermore, we can also guide you in solving many academic or other problems or obstacles you might encounter, not least by helping you figure out where to get support be that the Writing Center or UT Counseling and Mental Health Center.

To schedule a meeting, you don't need to have a specific question or concern – my door is open during office hours. You can make an appointment to meet with Mette on her calendly link. If it makes you more comfortable feel free to invite a friend or come as a small group from class. Those are often great conversations

COVID-19 Practices

Do not come to class if you feel sick. Take any precautions against COVID infection that you find necessary such as masking, handwashing, and social distancing.

If you test positive and need to quarantine, please fill out this [form](#) to document your absence (Class Absence Notification Request). Students who test positive for COVID and need to quarantine will be allowed to access recordings of the class for the duration of their quarantine.

Medical Documentation

Class absence notification requests and medical documentation for absences and requests for extensions on assignments must be provided promptly and before the due date.

Accommodations cannot be made after the fact unless there was a true emergency (see [here](#) for examples of emergencies or crisis).

Grading

Grades

Attendance and Participation	25%
Individual Reading and Film Responses (Pass/Fail)	25%
In-Class Group Activities (Pass/Fail)	15%
Essay I	20%
Essay II	15%

*Instructions for essays will be posted on the course website.

*If the COVID-19 situation changes and makes this grading scheme impractical, adjustments will be made.

Weekly Writing Assignments

“Write” [submit under “Write” in assignments on Canvas]

- Each unit has a question for discussion. Reflect on this question as you study all the materials in the units.
- Your answer must reflect the assigned readings/films/other materials. This is not an opinion piece, but your response to the work you have done studying the materials.
- You should prepare these short responses and submit them *before* class.
- On the rare occasion that you will need an extension, please contact me per email before the assignment is due.
- Your response should be no shorter and no longer than 200 words (plus/minus 5 words).
- The responses are graded on a pass/fail basis (in Canvas: “complete” or “incomplete”).
- As a whole they form 25% of your course grade.
- The assignment is due at 2 pm (before class) on the class day. After that it is late and you will receive “incomplete” on that day’s assignment.
- Feel free to pose a question you might have about the materials and the course as a whole at the end of your responses (doesn’t count towards the 200 words).
- It is your responsibility to upload your answer correctly before it is due.

“In-Class Writing Activities” [submit under “Group Write” in assignments on Canvas]

- Activity in class in a small group of at least 2 and no more than 3 people. I expect you to change group members either from week to week or every couple of weeks. I will also assign groups in the course of the semester.
- Group members discuss and formulate a response to the question together – submit via Canvas no later 2:50 pm i.e., at the end of class that same day.
- Each entry should start with the names of the group members; the group should choose one person to submit.
- Your responses should be no more than 250 words (not including the names of group members listed at the top of the page that has your answer)

- The group assignment depends on you coming to class prepared, with your notes and with access to the readings. Your group discusses the question posed and how the readings/films relate to the week's question. You can work on your answer in a google doc. When you are ready to submit, one group member does so before the end of class that day.
- Graded on a pass/fail basis. These submission form 15% of your overall course grade.

Course Schedule

Module I: Introduction to the Course, Learning Objectives, Writing, Tips

Week 1

M 8/21 Introduction to the Class

W 8/23 Orientation and more introductions

Read (before class):

*The syllabus and explore our Canvas page (modules, assignment etc) and other students' intros.

Write down any questions you have and bring them to class.

Write (before class in discussion section on Canvas):

In a few sentences tell the class a bit about yourself (name - what would you like to be called), hometown, hobby and/or what you are passionate about, and why you decided to sign up for the class (or what kind of topics are you anticipating) (max 200 words).

F 8/25 Testing the Format

Watch (before class):

“Conventional Revolution: Raphael Lemkin and the Crime Without a Name.” [15 min]
Facing History and Ourselves.

In-Class Small Group Discussion and Activity:

What motivated Raphael Lemkin to pursue the work he did? What was he trying to achieve?

Module II: Concepts, History, Topics

Week 2

M 8/28 Naming the Crime: Background of the UN Genocide Convention

Read:

“The United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, December 9, 1948”

Samuel Totten and Henry Theriualt, “An Overview of the UNHG: An Analysis of Each Article,” 17-36, in *The United Nations Genocide Convention: An Introduction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020)

Write:

Most often when people think of genocide, they think of mass murder. But as the reading shows, acts of genocide are more than mass killing. Explain why that is and how the “acts” are connected to the definition of genocide?

W 8/30

Genocide and Other Human Rights Violations

Read:

*“List of Crimes against Humanity” (As defined in Rome Statute/International Criminal Court)

*Samuel Totten and Henry Theriualt, “‘Genocide’ Distinguished from Other Forms of Major Human Rights Violations: Crimes against Humanity, War Crimes, and Ethnic Cleansing,” 69-80, in *The United Nations Genocide Convention: An Introduction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020)

Write:

What are the most important ways that the definitions and acts of the crime of genocide and crimes against humanity differ?

F 9/1

The Paradox

Watch:

“Watchers of the Sky” (2013) [120 min]

In-Class Small Group Discussion and Activity:

Raphael Lemkin was driven by his perception of a paradox: “Why is the killing of a million a lesser crime than the killing of an individual?” Drawing on the film, why has it proven so difficult to hold people accountable for genocide since 1948? (max. 250 words)

Week 3

M 9/4

No Class Labor Day

W 9/6

Genocide Studies

Read:

*Adam Jones, “Bounding Genocide: Comparative Genocide Studies,” 22-51, in *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2017).

Write:

In the reading for today, you encounter a list of different definitions of genocide. As you read, note their common aspects and in what areas they differ. Pick the definition that you consider most useful and explain why you chose it.

F 9/8

Gender and Genocide

Read:

Adam Jones, "Gendering Genocide," 625-659.

In-Class Small Group Discussion and Activity:

We often associate genocidal killings with murders of women and children. Adam Jones argues that it is not the whole story. Explain.

Week 4

M 9/11

Blood and Soil / Racial Purity and Power

Read:

Ben Kiernan, "Introduction," 21-40, *Blood and Soil: A World History of Genocide and Extermination from Sparta to Darfur* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2007).

Write:

What shared elements of genocide does Kiernan identify? Then pick one of these and explain and what that aspect entails.

W 9/13

Scientific Racism

Read:

Robert W. Sussman, "Introduction," 1-10, in *The Myth of Race: The Troubling Persistence of an Unscientific Idea* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014)

Watch:

"The Origin of Race in the USA" [10 min]

<https://pbswisconsin.org/watch/origin-everything/the-origin-of-race-in-the-usa-wbm41s/>

Write:

The materials for today make two claims: 1) The meaning of "race" changes over time. 2) Geneticists have shown that among humans, biological races do not exist. Yet, the concept of race is still a reality. Drawing on the reading and the short film, explain why that is?

F 9/15

Creating a Framework for Analysis

In-Class Small Group Discussion and Activity:

Are Kiernan's four components of genocidal ideology present in this image [image = TBD]?

Module III: Historical Case Studies

* In this section, we examine a selection of historical cases of genocide, their similarities and differences, and how they might relate to each other.

Week 5

M 9/18 Settler Societies: From Removal....

Read:

Excerpt from Ben Kiernan, "Genocide in the US," 165-168, 310-334.

Watch:

"Trail of Tears" episode 3 of "We Shall Remain: American Through Native Eyes" (PBS, 2009) [75 min]

Write:

Drawing on the readings and the film, what motivations fuel genocidal practices?

W 9/20 to Genocide

Read:

Jeffrey Ostler, "Genocide and American Indian History," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedias American History* (published online March 2, 2015)

<https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199329175.013>

Daniel Headrick, *Humans versus Nature: A Global Environmental History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), p 236-243.

Write:

In what ways did the destruction of natural resources become genocidal in North America? Bring the two readings together in your answer.

F 9/22 The First Genocide of the 20th C: German South-West Africa

Read:

Leonor Faber-Jonker, "Rivers of Blood and Rivers of Money': The Herero and Nama Genocides in German Southwest Africa, 1904–1908," in *The Cambridge World History of Genocide* vol. 2 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2023)

In-Class Small Group Discussion and Activity:

What long-and short-term causes were behind the German settlers' genocide of the Herrero and the Nama?

Week 6

M 9/25 The Genocide of the Armenians

Watch:

“The Armenian Genocide” (France/arte, 2006) [53 min]

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GJ6RxRP_yPc

Write:

How did the Turkish authorities’ use the term “temporary relocation” as a cover for genocide against their country’s Armenian population? Compare this to the rationale for relocating the Cherokees that we watched and read about in prior assignments.

W 9/27 Nazi Germany: The Racial State

Watch:

“Science and the Swastika: Hitler's Biological Soldiers” (UK, 2001) [48 min]

Write:

Can the Nazi authorities’ attack on people with disabilities —which was not a program of mass murder at the outset—be considered genocidal?

F 9/29 Genocide in the Soviet Union

Read:

James E. Mace, “Soviet Manmade Famine in the Soviet Union,” in *Centuries of Genocide: Critical Essays and Eyewitness Accounts*, edited by Samuel Totten (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2022), 103-136.

In-Class Small Group Discussion and Activity:

The reading for today includes several eye witness accounts. In what ways do these testimonies add to your understanding of genocide in the Soviet Union?

Week 7

M 10/2 WWII and Genocide

Watch:

“History of Antisemitism” [10 min]

“The Path to Genocide” [40 min]

Write:

What is the relationship between conspiracy theories and mass murder in the case of the Nazi genocide of Europe's Jews?

W 10/4 Cambodia

Watch:

“The Missing Picture: Recreating Stories of the Khmer Rouge” (France/Cambodia, 2013) [96 min]

Write:

The filmmaker chose to use mixed media to make this film about the Cambodian genocide. How does his choice of media affect the story he is telling? Do you think it is an effective form of documentation of genocide, why or why not?

F 10/6 Cold War Genocide: Guatemala

Read:

Marc Drouin, "Understanding the 1982 Guatemalan Genocide," 81-103, in *State Violence and Genocide in Latin America: The Cold War Years* edited by Marcia Esparza, Henry R. Huttenbach, and Daniel Feierstein (New York: Routledge, 2010).

In-Class Small Group Discussion and Activity:

Marc Drouin's study explains how violence in Guatemala developed from crimes against humanity (the violence against political reformers and community leaders, for example) to genocide (the destruction of a people). How were racial ideology and political conflict intertwined in the genocide in Guatemala?

Week 8

M 10/9 Rwanda

Read:

Robert Melson, "Modern Genocide in Rwanda: Ideology, Revolution, War, and Mass Murder in an African State," 325-338, in *The Spector of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective*, edited by Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

Watch:

“Ghosts of Rwanda” (USA, 2004) [117 min]

Write:

Taking the reading and the film together, what stood out to you as especially significant about the genocide in Rwanda?

Begin Module IV: Micro Perspectives

W 10/11

Neighbors: Rescue

Read:

Nicole Fox & Hollie Nyseth Brehm, “I Decided to Save Them”: Factors that Shaped Participation in Rescue Efforts during Genocide in Rwanda,” in *Social Forces* vol. 96, no. 4 (June 2018): 1625-1648. Page 4 of 7

Write:

Does this research challenge or confirm your assumptions about rescue during mass violence?

F 10/13

Neighbors: Allies or Enemies?

Read:

Jan T. Gross, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2011), 14-23.

In-Class Small Group Discussion and Activity:

What kinds of roles do Jews’ non-Jewish neighbors play in genocide as reflected in the reading?
Make a list of the ways in which non-Jews in Jedwabne became implicated in the attack on the town’s Jews.

Week 9

Essay I Focus

M 10/16

Workshop Essay: Group 1 (A-K)

W 10/18

Workshop Essay Group 2 (L-Z)

F 10/20

No Class – Essay I Focus (750 words) due F 10/20 at 3 pm

*The assignment will be posted F 10/13 at 3 pm.

Module IV (continued): Micro-perspectives

Week 10

M 10/23

Perpetrators: Gender

Read:

*Christopher R. Browning: “One Day in Jozefow: Initiation to Mass Murder,” 300-315, in *Nazism and German Society, 1933-1945*, edited by David Crew (New York: Routledge, 1994).

Write:

According to Christopher Browning how did male gender ideals shape people’s behavior in Reserve Police Battalion 101?

W 10/25

Enablers

Read:

Doris L. Bergen, *Between God and Hitler: Military Chaplains in Nazi Germany* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 147-171.

Write:

Did military chaplain act as enablers of genocide, according to Doris Bergen. Why or why not?

F 10/27

Machete Season

Read:

* Jean Hatzfeld, *Machete Season: The Killers in Rwanda Speak* (New York, Picador, 2003), 10-16, 36-40, 47-51, 60-65, 66-70, 71-76, 82-87, 157-164 (total 40 pages).

In-Class Discussion and Writing:

In what ways did the behavior and motivations of Hutu perpetrators in Rwanda strike you as similar and different to those you encountered in German-occupied Eastern Europe?

Week 11

Micro-perspectives: Victims

M 10/30

“The most diabolical part”

Read:

Primo Levi, “The Grey Zone” from *The Drowned and the Saved*.

Write:

In this essay, Primo Levi, a survivor of Auschwitz, discusses the way in which Nazi authorities sought to make their victims complicit in genocide. What was the Sonderkommando and why did Levi use these men as an example to explain what he meant by "grey zone"?

W 11/1

Forms of Resistance

Watch:

“Who Will Write Our History” (USA, 2018) [96 min]

Write:

If resistance is defined “as any act, which carried a certain risk, intended to foil the perpetrators’ intentions,” then can the group Oneg Shabbat’s activities be understood as resistance?

F 11/3

Enduring Survival

*Jean Hatzfeld, *Life Laid Bare: The Survivors in Rwanda Speak* (New York: Other Press, 2006), 7-18, 80-88, 89-117, 133-148 (62 pages)

In-Class Small Group Discussion and Activity:

How does the title of this unit (“Enduring Survival”) relate to the victims’ experiences in Hatzfeld’s book?

Module V: Reflections on Prevention and Accountability

Week 12

M 11/6 Study Day – No Class (instruction will follow)

W 11/8 Defining War Crimes, Genocide, and Justice: Historical Frames for Russia's Current Full-Scale War against Ukraine

Guest Speaker: Dr. Steven Seegel, Department of Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies, UT Austin <https://liberalarts.utexas.edu/slavic/faculty/ss98865>

Watch: “Beyond the Peace,” (Ukraine, 2023) [30 min]

Write: TBD

F 11/10 Group Discussion

In-Class Small Group Discussion and Activity:

Pick one aspect of Dr. Seegel’s talk that you found important. Explain why you chose that point and relate it to a topic in genocide studies we have discussed in the course of this semester.

Week 13

M 11/13 Early Warning Signs of Mass Atrocities: How Do We Know, and What Do We Do?

*Guest Speaker: **Andrea Gittleman**, Policy Director, Simon-Skjodt Center for the Prevention of Genocide, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC.

<https://www.ushmm.org/genocide-prevention/simon-skjodt-center>

Read:

The website of the Simon Skjodt Center for the Prevention of Genocide highlights several of the center’s areas of focus. One is the “Early Warning Project.” Explore the project and its different aspects carefully, then respond below.

Write:

Explain what the “Early Warning Project” is, highlight an area of their work that you find particularly interesting and explain why.

W 11/15

Bringing a Case to Trial

Watch:

“Granito: How to Nail a Dictator” (USA, 2011) [104 min]

Write:

In what ways is the work done by the scholars, lawyers, film makers, and activists, part of a process of accountability? Does it go beyond legal accountability?

F 11/17

Recovering the Traces of the Crime

In-Class Small Group Discussion and Activity:

Drawing on the materials of this module, what is the significance of the recovery and identification of human and archival remains?

Thanksgiving Week – No Class (11/20-11/24)

Week 14

M 11/27

Making People Listen – Residential Schools

Watch:

“Our Spirits Don’t Speak English” (USA, 2008) [80 min]

Write:

In what ways can the practice of residential schools be considered genocidal?

W 11/29

What difference does it make?

Group Write:

“Why is the killing of a million a lesser crime than the killing of an individual?” Decades after the passing and ratification of UNGC, Raphael Lemkin’s question still resonates. Why do you think that is?

F 12/1

Final Discussion

Essay II instructions will be released by 8 am; read the assignment carefully and bring your questions to class for discussion.

Week 15

M 12/4

Essay II Student Consultation

*Dr. Lichtenstein Office Hours – noon to 3 pm in GAR 2.138

*TA Office Hours – TBD

**Essay II due Thursday 12/7/2023 at 3 pm