

## **Introduction to Holocaust and Genocide Studies**

Class meets TTh from 3:30-5:00 pm in BUR 136

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 genocidal violence.

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 Taber, who is the teaching assistant for our course, and I will schedule regular office hours and are also 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](mailto:lichtens@austin.utexas.edu))

Office hours: Mon and Tue 2-3 pm in GAR 2.138

Teaching Assistant: Mette Koechs Taber ([mette.nielsen@utexas.edu](mailto:mette.nielsen@utexas.edu))

Office Hours: Mon 7-8 pm and Th 7:30-8:30 pm on Zoom (make appointment using this [link](#))

## 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 notetaking 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 12<sup>th</sup> 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/or watch before our class on that day. The individual writing assignment should be

completed as part of your preparation for class. All the readings and the various documentaries and video clips are required. Everything is available for free via the Canvas page except for one (1) documentary that requires a Netflix subscription. Please make the necessary arrangements to stream that film as there is an attachment assigned to it (due date 11/14).

**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.

There will be one in-class (Th 10/31), handwritten test in this class. Please make sure to make appropriate accommodations if you need to well in advance of the test date.

**Regarding electronic equipment in the classroom**

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, 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 our shared 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. The classroom is a space for sharing ideas and perspectives, it is a place where listening to each other matters as much as speaking with each other.

### **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 per email ([lichtens@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:lichtens@austin.utexas.edu)). I can do a lot to help you succeed in this class, but to be able to develop a strategy with you, you need to reach out to discuss the specific accommodation you need. For students with documented disabilities, please see above 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/acaint\\_plagiarism.php](http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acaint_plagiarism.php)

### **Office Hours**

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

I encourage you to come to office hours at least once during the semester and preferably early on. It is a change 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 conversation

### **COVID-19 and Other Health Practices**

**Do not come to class if you feel sick.**

**Take any precautions** against COVID and other infections that you find necessary such as masking, handwashing, and social distancing.

To document class absences officially, please fill out the Class Absence Notification Request Form: <https://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sos/absencenotificationrequest.php>

### **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 (graded)	25%
*Individual Write (Pass/Fail)	35%
In-Class Group Write (Pass/Fail)	15%
**In-Class Test (Th 10/31) (graded)	25%

\*Instructions for all assignments and the test will be posted on the course website.

\*\*If you have accommodations through UT Disability & Access, then you must secure a testing site for this date at the start of the fall term.

## 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.
- Your response should be no shorter and no longer than 200 words (plus/minus 5 words). Longer or shorter responses will fail.
- You must use parenthetical citations when you are drawing on examples from the materials as evidence in support of your claim. Examples of parenthetical citation is (Kiernan, “Genocides in Cambodia, 35) = (Last name of author, part of title that identifies the source, the number of the specific page where your evidence is located)
- The citations do not count towards your word count of 200 words.
- Do not use direct quotation in these short responses. Instead, use your own words and citations to show whose work or ideas you are using.
- You should prepare these short responses and submit them *before* class. No late submissions.
- On the rare occasion that you will need an extension, please contact me per email before the assignment is due.
- The responses are graded on a pass/fail basis (in Canvas: “complete” or “incomplete”).
- As a whole they constitute 35% of your course grade.
- The assignment is due at 3:30 pm (before class) on the class day. After that it is late, and you will receive “incomplete” on that day’s assignment.
- It is your responsibility to upload your answer correctly before 3:30 pm when 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 reserve the right to assign groups during the semester.
- 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. Your response is no more and no less than 250 words (+/- 5 words and not including the names of group members, state the word count directly below the names of the group members)
- Group members discuss and formulate a response to the question together – one group member submits on behalf of the group via Canvas no later 4:45 pm i.e., at the end of class that same day. Each entry should start with the names of the group members.
- We will begin the group activity at the start of class (3:30 pm) or no later than 4 pm (i.e. I might have lecture or other materials to discuss before we break into groups).
- Please note: Every class period runs from 3:30-4:45 pm on Tue and Th.
- 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

**T 8/27                      Introduction to the Class (syllabus, writing, other assignments, office hours)**

**Th 8/29                      Naming the Crime | Write Student Introductions | In-class Group Work**

\*Instructions: Read through 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.

#### **Read (before class):**

\*Samuel Totten and Henry Theriault, "An Overview of the UNGC: An Analysis of Each Article," 17-36, in *The United Nations Genocide Convention: An Introduction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020) [19 pages]

\*"The United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, December 9, 1948"

#### **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 you are anticipating) (max 200 words).

#### **In-Class Small Group Discussion and Activity:**

Most often when people think about acts of genocide, they think of mass murder. But as the reading shows, acts of genocide are more than mass killing. Explain how the "acts" are connected to the UNGC's definition of genocide?

### Module II: Concepts, History, Topics

#### Week 2

**T 9/3                      Atrocity Crimes**

Read:

\*Scott Strauss, "What Is Being Prevented? Genocide, Mass Atrocity, and Conceptual Ambiguity in the Anti-Atrocity Movement," 17-30, in *Reconstructing Atrocity Prevention* edited by Sheri P. Rosenberg, Tibi Galis, Alex Zucker A (New York: Cambridge University Press; 2015). [13 pages]

\*Bridget Conley and Alex de Waal, “Genocide, Starvation, and Famine,” 127-149 in *The Cambridge World History of Genocide*, vol. I. [22 pages]

**Write (in assignment section on Canvas under “write”)**

What is the “zone of overlap” that Scott Strauss describes between the four mass atrocity crimes (genocide, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing and war crimes)? Why might “mass atrocity” be a more useful term than genocide when studying mass starvation and famine?

**Th 9/5                      Gender and Genocide**

Read:

Adam Jones and Wendy Lower, “Genocide and Gender: Dynamics and Consequences,” 103-126 in *The Cambridge World History of Genocide* vol. I, edited by Ben Kiernan, TM Lemos, Tristan S. Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023). [23 pages]

In-Class Small Group Discussion and Activity:

We often associate genocidal killings with images of men murdering women and children. Adam Jones and Wendy Lower argue that it is not the whole story. Explain how the reading on gender and genocide problematizes this image.

**Week 3**

**Tu 9/10                      Dynamics of Violence**

Kenneth L. Marcus, “Accusation in a Mirror,” in *Loyola University Chicago Law Journal* vol. 43, no. 2 (2012): 357-393. [36 pages]

Write:

How does the author define “accusation in a mirror” and what are the elements of this strategy that makes it an “almost invariable harbinger of genocide”? (Marcus, “Accusation,” 361).

**Th 9/12                      Genocidal Ideologies: 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 University Press, 2007). [19 pages]

In-Class Group Discussion and Activity:

Identify Ben Kiernan’s four components of genocidal ideology 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 4

T 9/17

### Colonialism, Racism, and Race Science

Watch:

“Race: The Power of an Illusion,” Part 2: “The Story We Tell” (2003) [58 min]  
[https://search.lib.utexas.edu/permalink/01UTAU\\_INST/9e1640/alma991001219059706011](https://search.lib.utexas.edu/permalink/01UTAU_INST/9e1640/alma991001219059706011)

Write:

This documentary focuses on American history and the intersection between territorial expansion, social and economic hierarchies, and political and cultural changes.

Drawing on this episode, consider why racial ideologies can play a key role in incitement to genocide and genocidal violence?

Th 9/19

### Frontier Genocides: The United States

Read:

Karl Jacoby, “‘The Bloody Ground’: Nineteenth Century Frontier Genocides in the United States, 283-411, in *The Cambridge World History of Genocide* vol II, edited by Ned Blackhawk, Ben Kiernan, Benjamin Madley, and R Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023) R, eds [28 pages]

Watch:

“Trail of Tears” episode 3 of “We Shall Remain: America Through Native Eyes” (PBS, 2009) [75 min]  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1iiYKetYYmI>

In-Class Group Discussion and Write:

Karl Jacoby argues, “either option – resistance or acquiescence – opened Natives to the possible loss of population foundational to the definition of genocide.” (Jacoby, “The Bloody Ground,” 391). How is the dilemma faced by Natives, as discussed by Jacoby, reflected in the history of the Cherokee as depicted in the documentary?

## Week 5

T 9/24

### The First Genocide of the 20<sup>th</sup> 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,” 634-656, in *The Cambridge World History of Genocide* vol. 2 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2023) [22 pages]

Watch: “Namibia: Genocide and the Second Reich” (BBC, 2005) [59 min]

Write:

Germany took 'possession' of what is today Namibia in 1884. Twenty years later, German settlers and military personnel among others perpetrated the twentieth century's first genocide against the Herero and Nama people, a process that lasted until 1908.

Using the reading and the film, explain why?

## **Th 9/26                      Mass Atrocity and "Refashioning of Society"**

Read:

Norman Naimark, "Genocide in Stalinist Russia and Ukraine, 1930-1938," 162-185, in *The Cambridge World History of Genocide*, vol. III. [23 pages]

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

In-Class Group Discussion and Write: The mass atrocities described in the reading and the documentary were perpetrated by large numbers of party activists and medical professionals among others. How did 'a vision for the future' allow these 'soldiers' to justify their actions in the Soviet Union and in Nazi Germany?

## **Week 6                      War and Genocide**

### **T 10/1                      The Holocaust**

Read:

Excerpts from Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* (1925) and Reichstag Speech Jan 30, 1939

Watch:

"Why the Jews: History of Antisemitism," USHMM [10 min]

"The Path to Genocide" USHMM [38 min]

Write:

TBD

### **Th 10/3                      The Holocaust**

Read:

Mary Fulbrook, "Systematic and Ad Hoc Persecution and Mass Murder in the Holocaust Killings in Eastern Europe outside the Camps," 235-257, in *The Cambridge World History of Genocide* vol. III [22 pages]

Watch:

"A Warning from History: The Road to Treblinka," episode 5 (1997) [48 min]

<https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x41e9mh>

In-Class Group Discussion and Write:  
TBD

## Week 7

### T 10/8                      WWII and Cycles of Violence

Mark Mazower, *The Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000), read only 212-223 (chapter 7: A Brutal Peace, 1943-1949, 212-249).

New York Times Forum: [The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and the Long Shadow of 1948](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/02/01/magazine/israel-founding-palestinian-conflict.html) (Feb 1, 2024)  
<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/02/01/magazine/israel-founding-palestinian-conflict.html>

Write:

The extreme human and material destruction of the Second World War set in motion new cycles of violence, including massive ethnic cleansing campaigns, that transformed Eastern Europe in particular. How can one connect the excerpt from Mark Mazower's chapter to the round table discussion, convened by the New York Times, on developments in Palestine leading up to 1948?

You won't be able to cover every point but choose one or two points and write a response that brings the materials together.

### Th 10/10                      Genocide in 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:

"7 Days in Kigali: The 1994 Rwandan Genocide" (2014) [59 min]  
<https://www.kanopy.com/en/utexas/video/538301>

Write:

As news of the genocide underway in Rwanda reached western media, according to Human Rights Watch, "many people called the genocide a spontaneous outburst of ethnic violence on a massive scale" (a narrative also promoted in reports about the mass atrocities in the Balkans at the time).

Drawing on the readings and the film, to what extent was the 'appearance of spontaneity' an image deliberately orchestrated by the perpetrators? Why or why not.

## **Week 8                      Cold War Genocide**

### **T 10/15                      Cambodia**

Read:

Ben Kiernan, "The Genocides in Cambodia, 1975-1979," 518-549, in *The Cambridge World History of Genocide*, vol. III. [31 pages]

Watch:

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

[https://search.lib.utexas.edu/permalink/01UTAU\\_INST/9e1640/alma991004236349706011](https://search.lib.utexas.edu/permalink/01UTAU_INST/9e1640/alma991004236349706011)

Write:

What aspect/s of the genocides in Cambodia as discussed in the article by Ben Kiernan, do you think the filmmaker and survivor captures most effectively?

### **Th 10/17                      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).

Watch:

PBS Newshour excerpt: "From Guatemalan Soil, Unearthing Evidence of Genocide" [15 min]

<https://youtu.be/dOIJ1-7LDQs?si=F2kYdHoBa1M1Oxku> [see next page for write]

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 9                      Finding Justice & Test Preparation**

### **T 10/22                      Recovering the Traces of the Crime**

Watch:

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

[https://search.lib.utexas.edu/permalink/01UTAU\\_INST/9e1640/alma991058263447006011](https://search.lib.utexas.edu/permalink/01UTAU_INST/9e1640/alma991058263447006011)

In-Class Small Group Discussion and Activity:

Drawing on the different perspectives presented in the film, what is the significance of the recovery and identification of human *and* archival remains for post-genocidal justice?

**Th 10/24**                      **No Class: Study Day for Test – extended office hours, see Canvas for details.**

**Week 10**                      **Atrocity Prevention & Thursday In-Class Test**

**T 10/29**                      “Early Warning Signs of Mass Atrocities: How Do We Know, and What Do We Do?”

Guest Speaker: Dr. Ashleigh Landau, Research Associate for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's Simon-Skjodt Center for the Prevention of Genocide.

Read:

Scott Strauss, *Fundamentals of Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention* (Washington, D.C.: USHMM, 2016), 113-171 (chptrs 5-7)

Write:

The three chapters by Scott Strauss discusses the framework and challenges of mass atrocity prevention. Choose one aspect of atrocity prevention that you found interesting and/or surprising and explain why you chose it. At the end of your answer formulate one question you might like to pose to Dr. Landau when she visits out class.

**Th 10/31**                      **In-Class Test (75 min)**

\*This is a hand-written, blue book test, no aids allowed. You must purchase one or more blue books and bring them to the test (available at UT Coop and other locations on campus)

\*The test covers all materials from 8/26 through and including 10/29.

\*If you have accommodations through UT Disability & Access, then you must secure a testing site for this date at the start of the fall term.

**Week 11: Module V - Micro Perspectives**

**T 11/5**                      **Neighbors: Rescue**

Read:

Nicole Fox; Hollie N. Brehm; and John G. Gasasira, “The Impact of Religious Beliefs, Practices, and Social Networks on Rwandan Rescue Efforts During Genocide,” in *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal*, Vol. 15, Issue 1 (2021): 97–114.

Write:

What impact does religion (in the forms discussed in the article) have on people’s rescue activities? Did the reading challenge or confirm your assumptions about religion and rescue during mass violence?

**Th 11/7**                      **Neighbors: Allies or Enemies?**

Read:

Jan T. Gross, Excerpt from *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2011), 14-23. [9 pages]

Watch: “My Neighbor, My Killer,” (The Gacaca Film Series, 2009) [80 min]

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 12                      Micro-Perspectives: Perpetrators**

**T 11/12                      *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].

Write:

Do the perpetrators interviewed by the journalist Jean Hatzfeld explain why they killed? What similarities and differences in their reflections emerge?

**Th 11/14                      Dynamics of Mass Killing**

**No Class                      Expanded Individual Write (400 words)**

Watch: “Ordinary Men: The Forgotten Holocaust” (2022, 58 min)

Available on Netflix: <https://www.netflix.com/title/81672035>

Write:

In what ways did the behaviors, motivations, and dynamics among Hutu perpetrators in Rwanda strike you as similar and different to those discussed in the documentary on “ordinary men” in German-occupied Eastern Europe?

You cannot cover every relevant comparison in this short writing assignment and your task is not to be comprehensive. Rather focus on making a concise argument about one or a few aspects of perpetrator dynamics. The task here is to be able to formulate a clear claim/thesis and support it with relevant evidence (examples) from *Machete Season* and “Ordinary Men.”

(400 words (pass/fail))

**Week 13                      Micro-perspectives: Victims**

**T 11/19                      Forms of Resistance**

**No Class – Expanded Individual Write (400 words)**

Watch:

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

[https://search.lib.utexas.edu/permalink/01UTAU\\_INST/be14ds/alma991005611909706011](https://search.lib.utexas.edu/permalink/01UTAU_INST/be14ds/alma991005611909706011)

Write:

Until the 1960s, many scholars of the Holocaust and other mass atrocities perceived resistance mainly as armed and violent actions taken by the victims. Since then, this ‘narrow’ definition of resistance has expanded considerably, with one definition being “any act, which carried a certain risk, intended to foil the perpetrators’ intentions.”

The film about the group Oneg Shabbat explores their activities mainly through the words and work of its members. Keeping the above definition of resistance in mind, did the victims themselves (in this case as reflected in the Oneg Shabbat members and their subjects) understand their activities as resistance?

Make an argument using evidence from the film.

(400 words (pass/fail))

**Th 11/21**

**“The most diabolical part”**

Read:

Primo Levi, “The Grey Zone,” 22-51, in *The Drowned and the Saved* (New York: Abacus Books, 1987). [29 pages]

In-Class 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”? Does Levi’s observations have wider implications for our understanding of mass atrocity?

**Week 14**

**Thanksgiving Week – No Classes (11/25-11/29)**

**Week 15**

**Reconciliation & Final Discussion**

**T 12/3**

**Native American Boarding Schools**

Watch:

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

Read:

Keynote Remarks by Kevin Gover, Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs, Sep 8, 2000 [1 page]

<https://www.bia.gov/sites/default/files/dup/assets/as-ia/opa/pdf/idc1-032248.pdf>

Secretary Haaland Announces Major Milestones for Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative (Jul 30, 2024)

<https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/secretary-haaland-announces-major-milestones-federal-indian-boarding-school>

Write: Drawing on the three sources presented here (the documentary, the keynote remarks, and the press release) identify the preconditions necessary for a process of reconciliation to begin?

**Th 12/5                      Final Discussion**

Write: Choose one recurring theme from this class that you consider significant for your understanding of genocide as mass atrocity. Write 250 words in which you explain the theme, its significance, and two concrete examples where you encountered it.