Course Description and Objectives

This 3-credit course examines the political, legal, and moral issues surrounding genocide, defined as a distinct form of political violence in which forces acting with state support attempt systematically to destroy a target group. Drawing on a range of sources, including eyewitness accounts, documentary films, academic studies, dramatic portrayals, and journalistic reports, the class explores a series of cases involving genocide in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. These include the Armenian Genocide, the Nazi Holocaust, the Yugoslav civil wars, and the genocidal campaigns in Cambodia, Rwanda, and the Darfur region of Sudan. The course also examines developments in international law related to genocide, such as the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and the establishment of war crimes tribunals, efforts by national and international actors to prevent or stop genocidal killings, and attempts to reconcile victims and perpetrators of genocidal acts.

Upon completion of this course, students should have an understanding of genocide as a form of political violence and a war crime under international law, as well as a knowledge of the history of genocide over the past century. Students should also gain a broader appreciation of how common historical experiences and shared norms and values among peoples of different countries and cultures have shaped international responses to genocidal acts in recent decades.

Prerequisites: POLS 228 or 267, or permission of instructor

Course Structure

Individual course sessions will generally consist of seminar – style discussion, with occasional lectures by the professor. Student participation in discussions is a required component of the class. All opinions should be expressed in a manner that is respectful of other students. Students should also expect to receive frequent emails from the professor with information of relevance to the course material.
Required Texts and Recommended Readings

The two required texts for the course are:


Both books are available for purchase at the university bookstore. All other required readings will be posted on either the library e – course reserves or Westernonline. You will need a valid ECOM user name and password to access the supplemental readings on westernonline.wiu.edu. If you have problems accessing Westernonline, please contact University Technology Support Center at 298 – 2704.

The syllabus additionally identifies various recommended readings. These materials are offered as suggestions for further research for student presentations and the final paper, but are not required.

The professor reserves the right to alter and/or add readings wherever appropriate, and to modify course requirements.

Assessment

Attendance and discussion participation (15 percent)

Students are expected to attend each session and come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings. Except in cases of documented illness, family emergency, and institutionally recognized obligation, no make – ups will be allowed. Please note that the use of cell phones and portable electronic devices in class is not permitted.

Reaction Papers (30 percent)

Undergraduate students will write five reaction papers and graduate students will write eight reaction papers over the course of the semester. Reaction papers should critically analyze the readings for a given week and be 2-3 pages in length (double-spaced). Papers are due in the Westernonline Dropbox by noon on Tuesdays. Students may choose to write more than the minimum required reaction papers if they wish. The highest paper scores will be used in computing the final course grade.

Presentation (15 percent)

Each student is expected to give a formal presentation to the class and prepare questions for class discussion. Students will be required to meet with the professor in preparation for their presentation. The professor will assign presentation dates after consulting with the class.

Final Paper (40 points)

The final project for the class is a research paper on a topic selected by students in consultation with the professor. Proposals will be due in class on November 10th and detailed paper guidelines will be distributed later in the semester. Please note that requirements for this assignment will differ for undergraduate and graduate students.
Grading Scale

A 93 – 100
A– 90 – 92
B+ 87 – 89
B 83 – 86
B– 80 – 82
C+ 77 – 79
C 73 – 76
C– 70 – 72
D+ 67 – 69
D 63 – 66
D– 60 – 62
F Below 60

**Academic Integrity and Student Responsibilities**

Academic honesty is expected of all WIU students; cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Please take time to review the University’s academic integrity policy, which is outlined at [http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php](http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php). A more complete catalog of student rights and responsibilities can be found at [http://www.wiu.edu/provost/students.php](http://www.wiu.edu/provost/students.php).

Students who violate the academic integrity policy will fail the assignment at issue with no opportunity for make-ups and will be reported to the Council on Admission, Graduation, and Academic Standards or the Graduate Council.

**Campus Resources for Student Support**

Students with disabilities: In accordance with University values and disability law, students with disabilities may request academic accommodations where there are aspects of a course that result in barriers to inclusion or accurate assessment of achievement. To file an official request for disability-related accommodations, please contact the Disability Resource Center at 309-298-2512, disability@wiu.edu or in 143 Memorial Hall. Please notify the instructor as soon as possible to ensure that this course is accessible to you in a timely manner.

The University Writing Center is available to assist students with general and specific questions on writing assigned in any discipline and at any academic level. The one-on-one assistance available at the Writing Center is valuable for generating ideas, talking about global-level issues such as organization, and even working through grammatical problems. The University Writing Center is located in Simpkins Hall 341. Call for an appointment (298-2815) and be sure to take a copy of an assignment.

**Course Schedule and Readings**

*Week One: August 25 – Introduction*

Syllabus and Class Overview
Film: *Genocide: Worse Than War*

**Week Two: September 1 – Conceptualizing Genocidal Acts**

*Required*

Jones, pp. 1 – 81.

Totten and Parsons, pp. 1 – 16.

*Recommended*


**Week Three: September 8 – Genocide and Colonialism: Indigenous Peoples**

*Required*

Jones, pp. 105 – 148


*Recommended*


**Week Four: September 15 – The Armenian Genocide**

Film: *The Armenian Genocide*

*Required*


Jones, pp. 149 – 187.


**Recommended**


**Week Five: September 22 – The Nazi Genocide I: The Jewish Holocaust**

**Required**
Hitler, A. “Race and People,” (Chapter 11) in *Mein Kampf*.

Jones, pp. 233 – 263.


**Recommended**


**Week Six: September 29 – The Nazi Genocide II: Hitler’s Other Victims**

Film: *Paragraph 175*

**Required**
Jones, pp. 263 – 282.


**Recommended**  


**Week Seven: October 6 – Soviet Union**

**Required**  
Jones, pp. 188 – 232.


**Recommended**  


**Week Eight: October 13 – Postcolonial Genocide I**

**Required**  
Dunn, James, “Genocide in East Timor,” in *Centuries of Genocide,* pp. 279– 316.


**Recommended**  


Week Nine: October 20 – Postcolonial Genocide II

Film: *Ghosts of Rwanda*

**Required**


**Recommended**


Week Ten: October 27 – Former Yugoslavia

Film: *The Death of Yugoslavia: The Gates of Hell*

**Required**


**Recommended**


Week Eleven: November 3 – Congo and Darfur

Film: *On Our Watch*

**Required**
Jones, pp. 368 – 375.


Recommended


Week Twelve: November 10 – Genocide and Justice

Research Paper Proposals Due

Required

Jones, pp. 532 – 566.


Recommended


Week Thirteen: November 17 – Memory and Reconciliation

Required


Jones, pp. 501 – 531.

Recommended
Power, S., A Problem from Hell, pp. 475 – 516


Thanksgiving Break, November 23-27
No Class
Week Fifteen: December 1 – Preventing Genocidal Acts in the Future

Required

Jones, pp. 567 – 609.

Recommended


Week Sixteen: December 8 – Final Lecture and Discussion

Required
Wiesel, Elie, “The Perils of Indifference”

Film: *Night and Fog*

Final Papers Due:
Hardcopy, Tuesday, December 15, 6:00 PM
Westernonline Dropbox, Wednesday, December 16, Noon.