

POLITICS OF GENOCIDE

84:313 | Fall Semester 2021 | 3 credits

TTh, 9:40-11:10am in Sage 2218

"There aren't just bad people that commit genocide; we are all capable of it. It's our evolutionary history." – James Lovelock, British scientist

BULLETIN COURSE DESCRIPTION

"In this course, we examine the sad phenomenon of genocide from two distinct perspectives in our discipline: comparative politics and international relations. In the beginning of the course, we look inside the state to get an idea of the social, economic and political situations that make a state more susceptible to genocide and see if there are indicators common to most genocides. The second part of the course examines several genocides in detail. In the final section of the course, we attempt to figure out why preventing and punishing genocide and other crimes against humanity is so difficult, and evaluate the methods used for prosecution and punishment to date."

FALL 2021 COURSE DESCRIPTION

Would we know genocide when we see it? In the beginning of the course, we will look inside the state to get an idea of the social, economic and political situations that make a state more susceptible to genocide and see if there are indicators common to most genocides. The second part of the course will look at several genocides in detail. In the final section of the course, we will attempt to figure out why preventing and punishing genocide and other crimes against humanity is so difficult, and evaluate the methods used for prosecution and punishment to date.

I want to be clear that this course will NOT be a reflection on what happened in these various genocides; it will not be a tour of history's tragic events. Instead, it will be an honest look at the nature of states and the individuals who run them in order to determine why this particular event seems to happen with some regularity. If we know what makes genocide more likely to happen, why can't we prevent it? If we know what it is when we see it, why can't we punish those who bring it about?

PREREQUISITES

Although I am willing to sign interested students from any discipline into this course, students who have completed Political Science 101 (Introduction to Comparative Politics) or 115 (Introduction to International Relations) may find that those courses provide a useful foundation for concepts and issues addressed in this course. I do not intend to cover material from these courses extensively here, so some knowledge will be assumed. Students who are struggling with the course because of the lack of background knowledge should see me for background readings and feel free to discuss them with me at any time.

It is my strong preference that political science majors *complete their introductory courses* before enrolling in upper-division courses I teach.

BASIC COURSE INFORMATION

Professor Tracy H. Slagter
Ph.D., University of Iowa (2006)

Office Hours: MW, 10:30-12:00pm

(in-person or via MS Teams)

Office Location: Sage Hall 4626

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REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

The following book is available at the university bookstore or via online retailers. Buying a used copy is fine and encouraged!

Totten, Samuel & Paul R. Bartrop, eds. 2009. *The Genocide Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge.

If you are on Twitter, I highly encourage you to follow [@AuschwitzMuseum](https://twitter.com/AuschwitzMuseum). It puts this class in perspective.

Additional readings will be available to you on Canvas or via Polk Library's online databases. *Please bring your textbook and readings to class with you each meeting.*

COURSE FORMAT

This is an upper-division course in Political Science, and as such it will be taught in a seminar style as much as is practical. This means that lecturing will be minimal and that student input is required for the course to be successful (and fun). As such, I expect that students will attend class each week prepared to discuss the readings — completing the readings ahead of time is essential.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

After successfully completing this course, students should be able to do the following:

- *Initiate and sustain* a prolonged group discussion that has value to and includes all participants;
- *Develop* an effective working relationship with a group of colleagues in pursuit of a common goal;
- *Explain* the many definitions of genocide and why such definitions are important for the detection, prosecution, and punishment of this crime;
- *Understand* the difference between genocide and other crimes against humanity;
- *Compare* different historical genocides as well as contemporary instances to search for patterns of violence;
- *Assess* the changing nature of sovereignty when looking at international responses to this crime; and
- *Integrate* accumulated knowledge into a coherent set of arguments about a current government's behavior.

The course readings and assignments have been chosen in pursuit of these outcomes.

GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS

I use a **93/90/87** grading scale in this course (which means that 93 is the cut-point for an A, 90 for an A-, 87 for a B+, etc.). Your grade will be determined as follows:

- *Participation (10%)*: This grade includes answering and asking questions, showing up to office hours, and offering insight into group discussions. If you show up for class every session but never say a word, you can expect, at maximum, a C for this portion of your grade.
- *Group Discussions (15%)*: The class will be divided into four large groups, and each of these groups will have multiple opportunities to lead and sustain a discussion. Consult the group discussion rubric (distributed in class and on Canvas) to know which group you're in. In these discussions, each participant will earn the same grade for the day. More details will follow on the first day of class.
- *Take-Home Midterm Essay (30%)*: You will receive the essay prompt one week before the paper is due, and your response must be 6-8 pages in length. It will require no additional reading but close analysis of what we have read in the first part of the course.
- *Genocide Trial (45%)*: The defining project of this course is a mock trial in which students serve as prosecution and defense teams for an individual indicted on the charge of genocide. A panel of students will also serve as judges for the case. This is a project that requires an extensive time commitment and involves cooperative group work. Please note, however, that *this project replaces a research paper and final examination*; allocate your time and effort accordingly.

COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS

Until the University administration says otherwise, all students are expected to wear a mask covering their nose and mouth during our class time. This is regardless of vaccination status. Students can receive a free COVID-19 vaccine on campus and I encourage everyone to do so. I am fully vaccinated.

If you are feeling sick, please do not come to class. *If you test positive for COVID-19*, you are expected to self-isolate for a minimum of 10 days. In both instances you will be able to get notes/information from a classmate and/or from me.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

A college education is intended to develop your skills, knowledge, and confidence. Graded assignments are designed to work on these items. Thus, to gain the skills, knowledge, and confidence of a college-educated person all graded work is to be your own. When you are directed to work alone, an assignment or test must be done by you, its primary ideas are to be your own, and any outside materials should be dealt with properly (quoted when using someone's words and cited when quoting or referencing them in any other way). When your instructor directs you to work in teams, the work is to be done by the team. More information can be found here: <https://uwosh.edu/politicalscience/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2020/08/Academic-Honesty.pdf>

GRIEVANCES

The Department of Political Science is committed to offering you a high-quality classroom or online experience, and we take your feedback very seriously. If you have concerns about anything related to this course, assignments, or teaching method, you are encouraged to first speak with your instructor directly. If you are not comfortable speaking with the instructor, you are invited to speak with the Chair of the Department of Political Science, Dr. James Krueger. He can be reached at kruegerj@uwosh.edu. Should he be unable to resolve your concerns, he will guide you

to appropriate resources within the College of Letters and Science.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you have or think you may have a learning difference or a disability—a mental health, medical, or physical impairment—that would limit your access to learning or demonstrating your knowledge in this course, please contact the Dean of Students Office. If you already have an accommodation, please let me know in the first week of class. Note that this class *may* be recorded for accommodation purposes.

STUDENT RIGHT TO KNOW ACT (1990)

Students are advised to see the following URL for disclosures about essential consumer protection items required by the Student Right to Know Act of 1990: <https://uwosh.edu/financialaid/consumer-information/>

POLITICAL SCIENCE MAJORS

If you are currently a Political Science major or if you think you might be one of our majors in the future, it is important that you save your graded coursework from this class. Seniors in our department are required to take Political Science 401, a seminar in which students' progress through the major is surveyed and a professional digital presentation of their work is created. This portfolio can then be used to showcase your work to graduate/professional schools or employers.

CHANGES

I reserve the right to change any part of this syllabus at any time in order to accommodate the needs, interests, and pace of this particular group.

Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments

- September 9 What is happening to the Uyghurs?
READ: Khatchadourian, Raffi. "Surviving the Crackdown in Xinjiang." *New Yorker*, April 12, 2021. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2021/04/12/surviving-the-crackdown-in-xinjiang> **and also:** read this syllabus all the way through!
- September 14 "Lemkin's Law"
READ: Totten and Bartrop, Articles 1.1 (Lemkin), 1.2 (LeBlanc), 1.4 (UNGC)
WATCH: *Watchers of the Sky* (available on Canvas)
- September 16 Alternative Definitions: What's in a Name?
READ: Totten and Bartrop, Articles 2.1 (Charny), 2.2 (Smith), and 2.3 (Fein)
- September 21 Not Genocide
READ: Totten and Bartrop, Articles 3.1 (Bell-Fialkoff), 3.2 (Mann), 3.3 (Harff)
- September 23 Crimes Against Humanity (CAH)
READ: Totten and Bartrop, Articles 3.4 (Schabas), 3.5 (Semelin), and 5.3 (Sharlach)
- September 28 Intent | *Dolus Specialis*
READ: Totten and Bartrop, Article 1.3 (Bergsmo); **and also**
Lewy, Guenter. 2007. "Can there be genocide without the intent to commit genocide?"
Journal of Genocide Research 9: 661-674. (Canvas)
- September 30 **NO CLASS: Dr. Slagter at a conference.**
- October 5 Explanations | Intergroup Animosity
READ: Totten and Bartrop, Articles 4.1 (Staub) and 4.4 (Stanton)
- October 7 Explanations | The Goldhagen/Browning Debate
READ: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "The 'Willing Executioners'/'Ordinary Men' Debate." April 8, 1996. https://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/Publication_OP_1996-01.pdf (read only the Goldhagen and Browning contributions) **and also:**
Darley, John M. 2004. "Social Organization for the Production of Evil." Chapter 21 in Jost and Sidanius, eds., *Political Psychology: Key Readings*. New York: Psychology Press. (Canvas)
- October 12 Explanations | Role of Elites and Strategy
READ: Valentino, Benjamin A. 2004. "The Strategic Logic of Mass Killing." Chapter 3 in *Final Solutions: Mass Killing and Genocide in the 20th Century*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. (Canvas)
- October 14 Group Meetings for the Trial Project: ATTENDANCE REQUIRED
Midterm Examination prompt distributed
- October 19 Namibia and Armenia
READ: Totten and Bartrop, Articles 6.1 (Melson) and 6.2 (Kiernan)
- October 21 Holocaust
READ: Bartov, Omer. "Seeking the Roots of Modern Genocide." Chapter 4 in Gellately and Kiernan, eds., *The Spectre of Genocide*. New York: Cambridge University Press **and also**

Gellately, Robert. 2003. "The Third Reich, the Holocaust, and Visions of Serial Genocide." Chapter 11 in Gellately and Kiernan, eds., *The Spectre of Genocide*. New York: Cambridge University Press. (Both available on Canvas)
WATCH: *Night and Fog* (see Canvas)

October 26

👑 **Midterm Examination DUE**
NO CLASS | Take a break.

October 28

Former Yugoslavia
READ: Totten and Bartrop, Article 5.3 (Sharlach)
WATCH: *An Inevitable Breakup* (see Canvas)

November 2

Rwanda
READ: Totten and Bartrop, Article 6.3 (Levene); **and also** Lemarchand, René. 2002. "Disconnecting the threads: Rwanda and the Holocaust reconsidered." *Journal of Genocide Research* 4: 499-518. (Canvas)

November 4

Changing Notions of Sovereignty
READ: Totten and Bartrop, Article 5.5 (Totten); 7.2 (Maogoto), 7.3 (Jentleson) and 7.4 (ICISS)

November 9

Nürnberg & International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY)
READ: Totten and Bartrop, Articles 10.1 (Ball), **and also** Earl, Hilary. 2013. "Prosecuting Genocide before the Genocide Convention." *Journal of Genocide Research* 15(3): 317-337.

November 11

ICTY
READ: 11.1 (Akhavan and Johnson), 11.2 ("Krstic")
WATCH: *Hunting Mladic: International Justice at Work* (see Canvas)

November 16

Trial Group Meetings

November 18

International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR)
READ: Totten and Bartrop, Articles 12.1 (Uvin and Mironko), 12.3 (Lyon and Drumbl) and 12.4 ("Historic Judgement")

November 23

Trial Group Meetings/Meetings with Dr. Slagter
Finalize arguments, briefs, etc. Be sure everyone knows the plan moving forward.

November 25

NO CLASS: Thanksgiving Break

November 30

The International Criminal Court (ICC)
READ: Totten and Bartrop, Chapter 14 readings (all)
WATCH: *Prosecutor* (see Canvas)

December 2

Trial: final preparations, questions, last team meetings, rules
👑 **Prosecution and Defense Papers DUE**
ATTENDANCE REQUIRED

December 7

Trial: Day 1
👑 **Judges' Papers DUE**
ATTENDANCE REQUIRED

December 9

Trial: Day 2

ATTENDANCE REQUIRED

December 14

Trial: Day 3

ATTENDANCE REQUIRED

December 16

Trial: Day 4 (Conclusions, reactions)

👑 Written final judgment from Judges DUE

ATTENDANCE REQUIRED