Political Science/International Relations
Academic Year 2019 - 2020

Civil War and Genocide in Rwanda
RI-SP013 - Spring - 6 ECT
Thursdays 10h15-12h00
Room S4

Course Description
This course undertakes a semester long inquiry into the civil war and subsequent genocide in Rwanda (1994) through reading, film, and discussion. The course is structured around a core set of questions: (1) What do we mean by “ethnicity”? How are ethnic identities constructed and why are they resilient? What role do ethnic “markers” play in motivating other-directed behavior, and how does this role shift from periods of relative calm to violence? (2) How does one account for different degrees of individual dissension and group cohesion in the transition from conflict to violence? For localized versus widespread violence? For mass participation in genocidal violence? (3) How do particular episodes and enduring histories of violence affect relations among groups and normalize violence in social discourse? How is violence internalized by participants and non-participants alike? And how does violence spread, both nationally and across borders? (4) In what ways has interethnic violence altered gender relations in Rwanda? (5) How does one go about documenting violence? Is it possible to address the tension between scholarly acts of understanding and actual events? How do observers and fact-finders address issues of uncertainty? Objectivity? (6) Does a feasible set of preventive solutions to mass violence exist? What are the obstacles to its implementation? To begin addressing these questions, as well as others that arise over the course of the semester, we sample from an eclectic set of readings on ethnic violence, civil war, and genocide, as well as a selection of films both documentary and commercial. In-depth analysis of the violence in Rwanda will be used to expose students to the complexity of conflict in the developing world, with concepts like “ethnicity,” “conflict” and “violence” deconstructed to illustrate the multiplicity of interpretations and explanations for this devastating episode. Students will undertake a research project related to the core questions listed above, and present their findings in a symposium at the semester's end.
Syllabus

Course Requirements

Requirement 1: Students are expected to keep up with the assigned readings, which are significant but manageable, and to come to class prepared to discuss them. It is therefore essential that you read the assigned material carefully and critically. Attendance in class is required, active participation is expected, and you should anticipate being called upon. Attendance is also required at weekly film screenings, which will be held on Wednesday nights at 19:00 in A2. Together, attendance and participation comprise 25% of the course grade.

Requirement 2: Students will be assigned to lead class discussion during the semester. As discussion leaders, you are responsible for presenting to the class a detailed summary and critical assessment of the readings and film for your assigned session. Your combined report should last 30 minutes and will count for 25% of the course grade.

Requirement 3: Each student is required to turn in one short (2500 words max, inclusive of all notes and references) discussion papers over the course of the semester. This paper may critically review a film (of your choice) watched in class, or a book or an article (also of your choice). Your paper should not simply summarize the film or reading, but rather speak to its strengths and weaknesses, why the material appealed to you (or why it failed to do so). The discussion paper is due on or before Thursday, April 9th, and will count for 25% of the course grade.

Requirement 4: You are expected to make one 25-30 minute presentation summarizing the findings of original research you have conducted over the course of the semester on a specific aspect of the civil war and genocide in Rwanda. These presentations will constitute 25% of the course grade, and be held during the in-class symposium from April 30th-May 28th. Additional details to follow.

Course Evaluation

The seminar’s success depends on active participation, up-to-date reading, and original research. Evaluation will be based upon the following:

1. Attendance and Participation  25%
2. Class Discussion Leader  25%
3. Discussion Papers  25%
4. Research Presentation  25%

Course Material

The following material is required for the course:

Books
Hatzfeld, Jean. 2007. Life Laid Bare: The Survivors in Rwanda Speak. Other Press.

Articles may be downloaded using the link for each reading on the course moodle. Films will be provided by the instructor and viewed at the Wednesday evening screenings.
Course Schedule

Introduction
Thursday, February 20

Session 1: History of the Genocide
Wednesday, February 26
Film: Shake Hands with the Devil (Directed by Peter Raymont, 2005; Rwanda)
Thursday, February 27


Session 2: Webs of Violence
Wednesday, March 4
Film: Munyurangabo (Directed by Lee Isaac Chung, 2009; Rwanda)
Thursday, March 5

Session 3: Survivors of Violence
Wednesday, March 11
Film: Sometimes in April (HBO Films, 2005; Rwanda)
Thursday, March 12
Hatzfeld, Jean. 2007. *Life Laid Bare: The Survivors in Rwanda Speak*. Other Press

Session 4: Perpetrators of Violence
Wednesday, March 18
Film: The Shooting Dogs (Directed by Michael Caton-Jones, 2005; United Kingdom)
Thursday, March 19

Session 5: Dynamics of Violence
Wednesday, March 25
Film: The Evolution of Violence (Directed by Fritz Ofner, 2012; Germany)
Thursday, March 26

1 The instructor reserves the right to modify the course syllabus during the semester, included but not limited to assigning readings from the “additional reading list” depending on student progress.
Session 6: Violence in Comparative Perspective

*Wednesday, April 1*
Film: S-21 (Directed by Rithy Panh, 2003; Cambodia)

*Thursday, April 2*

Session 7: Violence and the Body

*Wednesday, April 8*
Film: Earth (Directed by Deepa Mehta, 1998; India)

*Thursday, April 9*

Easter Break
Friday 10 to Sunday 19 April, 2020

Session 8: Post-Genocidal Rwanda

*Wednesday, April 22*
Film: Après: Un Voyage dans le Rwanda (Directed by Denis Gheerbrant, 2004; France)

*Thursday, April 23*
IDA at Work Rwanda: From Post-Conflict Reconstruction to Development, *World Bank*.

Research Symposium

*Thursday, April 30*
*Thursday, May 7*
*Thursday, May 14*
*Thursday, May 21: No class, Institute Closed (Ascension)*
*Thursday, May 28*