

Political Science/International Relations

Academic Year 2019 - 2020

Civil War and Genocide in Rwanda

RI-SP013 - Spring - 6 ECT

Thursdays 10h15-12h00

Room S4

> PROFESSOR

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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:

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|---------------------------------|-----|
| 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

Fujii, Lee Ann. 2009. *Killing Neighbors: Webs of Violence in Rwanda*. Cornell University Press.
Hatzfeld, Jean. 2006. *Machete Season: The Killers in Rwanda Speak*. Picador.
Hatzfeld, Jean. 2007. *Life Laid Bare: The Survivors in Rwanda Speak*. Other Press.
Prunier, Gérard. 1997. *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide*. Columbia University Press.
Taylor, Christopher. 1999. *Sacrifice as Terror: The Rwandan Genocide of 1994*. Berg.

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 Schedule¹

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

Prunier, Gerard. 1997. *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide*. Columbia University Press.

Mamdani, Mahmood. 2001. *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism and the Genocide in Rwanda*. Princeton University Press, pp. 41-102 and 132-158.

Session 2: Webs of Violence

Wednesday, March 4

Film: Munyurangabo (Directed by Lee Isaac Chung, 2009; Rwanda)

Thursday, March 5

Fujii, Lee Ann. 2009. *Killing Neighbors: Webs of Violence in Rwanda*. Cornell University Press.

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

Hatzfeld, Jean. 2006. *Machete Season: The Killers in Rwanda Speak*. Picador.

Straus, Scott 2004. "How Many Perpetrators Were There in the Rwandan Genocide?" *Journal of Genocide Research* 6(1), pp. 85-98.

Session 5: Dynamics of Violence

Wednesday, March 25

Film: The Evolution of Violence (Directed by Fritz Ofner, 2012; Germany)

Thursday, March 26

Bhavnani, Ravi and David Backer. 2000. "Localized Ethnic Conflict and Genocide: Accounting for Differences in Rwanda and Burundi." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 44(3), pp 283-307.

Bhavnani, Ravi. 2006. "Ethnic Norms and Interethnic Violence: Accounting for Mass Participation in the Rwandan Genocide." *Journal of Peace Research* 43(6), pp 651-669.

Gould, Roger. 1999. "Collective Violence and Group Solidarity: Evidence from a Feuding Society." *American Sociological Review* 64(3), pp. 356-380

Verwimp, Philip. 2006. "Machetes and Firearms: The Organization of Massacres in Rwanda." *Journal of Peace Research* 43(1), pp 5-22.

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

Hinton, Alexander. 1998. "Why Did You Kill? The Cambodian Genocide and the Dark Side of Face and Honor." *Journal of Asian Studies* 57(1), pp. 93–122.

Mamdani, Mahmood. 2007. "The Politics of Naming: Genocide, Civil War, Insurgency." *London Review of Books* 29(05), pp. 5-8.

Varshney, Ashutosh. 2001. "Ethnic Conflict and Civil Society: India and Beyond." *World Politics* 53(3), pp. 362-398.

Zur, Judith. 1994. "The Psychological Impact of Impunity." *Anthropology Today* 10(3), pp. 12–17.

Session 7: Violence and the Body

Wednesday, April 8

Film: Earth (Directed by Deepa Mehta, 1998; India)

Thursday, April 9

Taylor, Christopher. 1999. *Sacrifice as Terror: The Rwandan Genocide of 1994*. Berg.

Scary, Elaine. 1985. *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*. Oxford University Press, pp. 27-59.

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

Hintjens, Helen. 2008. "Post-Genocide Identity Politics in Rwanda." *Ethnicities* 8, pp. 5-41.

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

Lemarchand, René. 2006. "Consociationalism and Power Sharing in Africa: Rwanda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo," *African Affairs* 106(422), pp. 7–12.

Mehler, Andreas. 2009. "Peace and Power Sharing in Africa: A Not So Obvious Relationship." *African Affairs* 108(432), pp. 453-473.

Prunier, Gérard. 2008. "Rwanda After the Genocide." For *ISN Insights*, 19 September 2008.

Research Symposium

Thursday, April 30

Thursday, May 7

Thursday, May 14

Thursday, May 21: No class, Institute Closed (Ascension)

Thursday, May 28