



**Georgetown University  
School of Continuing Studies  
Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies**

**Mass Atrocities  
BLHV 247-40  
Spring 2017**

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**Class time** Online

**Class location** 640 Mass Ave NW

**Office hours** By appointment

**Course overview**

This course seeks to help students develop an understanding of some of the major human rights atrocities of recent time, and to consider means of deterring such atrocities in the future. Students will approach this learning from a historical and political perspective, and the course will draw upon literature and film to augment the student's learning. This course asks students to understand and appreciate the prevalence of mass human rights violations in society, and to critically evaluate the international community's response to such violations. Students will examine the Holocaust, the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, ethnic conflict in Bosnia and Kosovo, the Rwanda genocide, and Darfur, among other mass atrocities, and through these examples understand the international crimes of genocide and crimes against humanity. Students will also examine the role of the International Criminal Court, and of the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. Students will consider the concept of Responsibility to Protect, and analyze how this evolving notion in international law should be applied to humanitarian crises. Students will study the use of military intervention to end humanitarian atrocities, and will gain an understanding of the political considerations raised by such atrocities and interventions. Finally, students will look ahead to consider the role of social networks and social media in ending mass atrocities, and will consider the pursuit of justice and reconciliation in the aftermath of mass atrocities as well as the possibilities and limits of forgiveness.

## **Learning Goals**

- Students will understand the major human rights atrocities of recent time in various parts of the world. Students will learn the history of these atrocities and the response of the international community to these tragedies. Students will learn to appreciate the various political considerations raised in such situations.
- Students will understand the development and role of the International Criminal Court and the international tribunals before it, which were developed to try the perpetrators of international crimes, and critically evaluate the existence of such mechanisms.
- Students will learn the contemporary international law principle of Responsibility to Protect and think critically about how this principle should be applied.
- Students will gain an understanding of the increasing importance of social media in preventing mass atrocities and consider how such tools should be used to deter mass violence.
- Students will consider the possibilities and limits of forgiveness with respect to mass atrocities and consider notions of reconciliation in society. Students will learn to appreciate the different viewpoints and challenges associated with this aim.

## **Required Textbooks**

James Waller, *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing* (Second Edition 2007) ISBN-10: 0195314565

Jared Genser & Irwin Cotler, *The Responsibility to Protect: The Promise of Stopping Mass Atrocities in Our Time* (2011) ISBN-10: 0199797765

Simon Wiesenthal, *The Sunflower: On the Possibilities and Limits of Forgiveness* (1998) ISBN: 0-8052-1060-1

Additional readings will be posted to Blackboard.

## **Recommended Text**

Samantha Power, “*A Problem From Hell*”: *America and the Age of Genocide* (2013) ISBN-10: 0465061516

## **Class Participation**

All students are expected to participate in class. This is absolutely critical in an online course. Class participation provides an opportunity for you to demonstrate your understanding of the theories, concepts, and practices learned in the course, and Blackboard is the principal way we will interact for the semester. Success in this course depends on the preparedness and active engagement of all students, and the readings and assignments listed on this syllabus should therefore be done prior to class. Class participation accounts for 10% of your final grade.

## **Essays**

You are required to write two essays during the course of the semester, of 4-5 pages in length. Essays must be submitted to Blackboard by 5pm on the due date. Each essay counts for 20% of your final grade in the course. You are also required to write a short (500-word) reflective essay, which counts for 10% of your final grade.

### **Final Exam**

There will be a take-home, comprehensive final exam. You will be required to answer three essay questions and you will have 72 hours to complete the exam. The final exam constitutes 40% of your final grade in the course.

### **Grading System**

Assignment	Grade
Class Participation	10%
Essays	50%
Final Exam	40%

The following is provided as a guide used for assessing grades in all areas of the grading system.

A	100-93 percent
A-	92-90
B+	89-87
B	86-83
B-	82-80
C+	79-77
C	76-73
C-	72-70
D+	69-67
D	66-60
F	59 and below

### **Attendance**

Students are expected at all meetings of this course. There will be approximately three Zoom conferences for the semester. Additionally, you will be asked to make weekly posts to the Discussion Board. We do understand that from time to time, family, personal or work emergencies may arise. In those circumstances, please contact me immediately. Please note that the BALS attendance policy is strictly adhered to, and more than two absences may result in failure of the course.

### **Late Papers**

Except in rare circumstances, late papers are not accepted. In case of emergency, this rule may be waived with appropriate documentation and cause. Requests for extensions should come prior to the due date of the paper.

### **Incomplete**

Incompletes are given in only the most extraordinary circumstances and with appropriate documentation. Where an incomplete is granted, a grade of "N" shall be granted until the work is handed in and, then, the grade shall be changed accordingly. In no case shall work submitted after the announced date (date will be announced in class) be granted an incomplete. The work shall be delivered no later than 4 p.m. on that day. Failure to adhere to this rule will result in an F.

### **Turnitin.com**

Students acknowledge that by taking this course all required papers must be submitted for a Textual Similarity Review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the terms of use agreement posted on the Turnitin.com site.

### **Disabilities**

If you are a student with a documented disability who requires accommodations or if you think you may have a disability and want to inquire about accommodations, please contact the Academic Resource Center at 202-687-8354 or [arc@georgetown.edu](mailto:arc@georgetown.edu).

### **Extreme weather, Emergencies, and Instructional Continuity**

During inclement weather or other emergencies on a day when we are scheduled to meet face-to-face, check the university's Web site or call (202) 687-7669 for information on whether the university is open. If the university is open, this class will meet. If the university is closed, this class will meet through distance means such as online videoconferencing; check your e-mail for a message from me on how we will proceed in that situation. Due dates for written assignments submitted through Blackboard will not be changed due to campus closings.

### **Georgetown Honor System**

All students are expected to follow Georgetown's honor code unconditionally. We assume you have read the honor code material located at [www.georgetown.edu/honor](http://www.georgetown.edu/honor), and in particular have read the following documents: Honor Council Pamphlet, What is Plagiarism, Sanctioning Guidelines, and Expedited Sanctioning Process. Papers in this course will all be submitted to turnitin.com for checking.

Submitting material in fulfillment of the requirements of this course means that you have abided by the Georgetown honor pledge:

*In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor, and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.*

### **Plagiarism and Citation**

The sources for all information and ideas in your assignments must be documented, following the style rules of the APA or MLA.

In accord with university policy, all incidents of suspected plagiarism or other Honor Code violations will be reported to the Honor Council without fail.

If the Honor Council finds that a student has plagiarized or has violated the Honor Code in any other way, the student will receive a grade of F for the course.

**Policy Accommodating Students' Religious Observances**

The following is university policy:

Georgetown University promotes respect for all religions. Any student who is unable to attend classes or to participate in any examination, presentation, or assignment on a given day because of the observance of a major religious holiday or related travel shall be excused and provided with the opportunity to make up, without unreasonable burden, any work that has been missed for this reason and shall not in any other way be penalized for the absence or rescheduled work. Students will remain responsible for all assigned work. Students should notify professors in writing at the beginning of the semester of religious observances that conflict with their classes.

COURSE SCHEDULE		
Class Week	Area of Focus	Readings/activities
Week 1	<b>Overview</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Overview of human rights and mass violence</li> <li>- The notion of forgiveness</li> </ul>	The Sunflower, Book I, and three excerpts from Book II Waller, pp. 3-31
Week 2	<b>The Holocaust</b>	Assignment due: 500-word reflective essay on The Sunflower (10% of final grade) Waller, pp. 33-97 Readings on BB.
Week 3	<b>The Holocaust</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduction to the Genocide Convention</li> </ul>	Readings on BB. Film/Documentary
Week 4	<b>Cambodia</b>	Posted to BB. Waller, pp. 137-169  Film/Documentary  Essay Due (20% of final grade)
Week 5	<b>Yugoslavia</b>	Readings on BB. Waller, pp. 230-278
Week 6	<b>Rwanda</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Humanitarian Intervention</li> <li>- The Power of Propaganda</li> </ul>	W. Schabas, Hate Speech in Rwanda: The Road to Genocide (posted to BB) Waller, pp. 196-229  Film/Documentary

Week 7	<b><i>The Responsibility to Protect</i></b>	Genser, pp. 3-36  Posted to BB
Week 8	<b><i>The International Criminal Court</i></b>	Posted to BB.  Film/Documentary  Essay Due
Week 9	<b><i>Darfur</i></b>  <b><i>The ICC cont.</i></b>	Film/Documentary  Genser, pp. 235-260  Report of the International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur to the United Nations Secretary-General  Robert Cryer, The Definitions of International Crimes in the Al Bashir Arrest Warrant Decision (posted to Blackboard)
Week 10	<b><i>Democratic Republic of Congo</i></b> - Sexual violence in Eastern Congo	Film/Documentary  Genser, pp. 316-345  Posted to BB.
Week 11	<b><i>USHMM Visit</i></b>	Genser, pp. 298-316
Week 12	<b><i>Social Media and Mass Atrocities</i></b>  <b><i>Review and Recap</i></b>	Waller, pp. 281-303
Week 13	<b>Final Exam</b>	