

PSYCHOLOGY OF GENOCIDE

PSYC 4650

Fall 2015



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Course description:

Although humankind has seen, perpetrated, and suffered ethnopolitical violence (EPV) through the millennia, the 20th and 21st centuries CE are marked by a proliferation and intensification of such events. This course will focus on the psychological factors that affect the unfolding of EPV events, with relevant historical and biographical information presented to provide appropriate context. The course will begin with a brief overview of the area before going on to discuss the roles played by different categories of participants. These categories include instigators, perpetrators, bystanders, resisters, rescuers, victims, survivors, and third-party nations. The course will include a field trip to local sites of relevance (e.g., museums, memorials, etc.).

Required course materials:

Waller, J. (2007). *Becoming evil: How ordinary people commit genocide and mass killing* (2nd ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

Staub, E. (2003). *The psychology of good and evil: Why children, adults, and groups help and harm others*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Additional readings will be posted on the course website.

Course schedule:

Date	Topic	Due dates
Sept. 9	Introduction	
Sept. 16	Causal and precipitating factors; Instigators	
Sept. 23	Perpetrators	
Sept. 30	Field trip 1 (UBC); Presentation by Dr. Martha Salcudean; Q&A	
Oct. 7	International intervention (Guest lecture by Ryan Cross)	
Oct. 14	Field trip 2 (VHEC guided tour & Wallenberg memorial)	
Oct. 21	Bystanders; Presentation by Elizabeth Johnson; Q&A	Essay 1 due
Oct. 28	Resisters and rescuers	
Nov. 4	Victims & survivors (Guest lecture by Dr. Peter Suedfeld); Q&A	Video script due
Nov. 11	<i>Remembrance Day (statutory holiday)</i>	Peer assessments due
Nov. 18	Second (and subsequent) generations	
Nov. 25	Aftermath of genocide (Guest lecture by Dr. Kyle Matsuba)	Video project due
Dec. 2	Memorialization; Final reflections	Essay 2 due

Note: This schedule may be modified during the semester. Students are responsible for being aware of these changes, whether or not they attended the class in which any changes were announced.

Relevant public lectures during the semester:

November 2 at 7pm: Lecture on “Psychology of Good and Evil” at Science World

November 8 at 7pm: Krystallnacht lecture at the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre

Evaluation criteria:

Critical reflection essays x 2 (20% each)	40%	A+	90-100%	C+	64-67
Group video project	30%	A	85-89	C	60-63
Peer assessments	5%	A-	80-84	C-	56-59
Class contribution	25%	B+	76-79	D	50-55
Total	100%	B	72-75	F	0-49
		B-	68-71		

Critical reflection essays (2 x 20% each)

You are required to write two essays over the semester in which you will critically reflect on one or more of the readings from each half of the course. Although not mandatory, your essay may also integrate insights from other empirical studies that you have located via a search using the PsycINFO database. The focus of these essays is on critical reflection, so you should not submit a mere summary of what you have read. For example, you might identify weaknesses in the arguments presented, or compare or integrate perspectives from the different readings. Each essay should include 4 double-spaced pages of writing, not including a title page and the references. Your first essay is **due by October 21** and your second essay is **due by December 2** (submitted on the course website).

Group video project (30%)

The class will be randomly divided into seven groups. Each group will select a specific genocide or episode of EPV to research. Within each group, each member will select one of the following aspects to research: a) historical preconditions, b) instigators, c) resisters/rescuers, d) survivors, and e) aftermath. Each member will then write a script that will serve as the basis for the narration of your video project.

Your ultimate task, as a group, will be to produce a 10-minute video clip (**due by November 25**) that uses engaging visuals to tell the story of that particular genocide. The video clip will be organized into five segments (the different aspects mentioned above), each of which will be roughly 2 minutes long. At the end of the semester all seven video clips will be uploaded to YouTube and published under an open (Creative Commons) license so that other students and instructors may use and build upon your work.

More detailed assignment guidelines will be posted on the course website.

Peer assessments (5%)

Once you have prepared the script for your video segment (**due by November 4**), you will each provide feedback to three of your peers and receive feedback from three of your peers (**due by November 11**). The quality of the feedback that you provide will determine your grade.

Class contribution (25%)

This course is designed to be very experiential – involving class discussions, field trips, interactions with survivors of genocide and guest lecturers, case studies, and audio-visual and interactive media. The success of the class depends upon your active participation. Regular class and field trip attendance is necessary (but not sufficient) for a good class contribution mark. Mid-way through the semester I will provide you with feedback in the form of an interim class contribution mark.

Course policies:

Email Communication:

Please type your course number (PSYC 4650) in the subject line of any email you send to me. Questions appropriate for email are those that can be answered with 1-2 sentence replies. Anything longer than this (e.g., an explanation of a concept) requires a face-to-face meeting.

Punctuality:

Students who arrive more than 10 minutes late will not be admitted into the classroom until the mid-class break. If you do miss a class I suggest that you obtain notes from two classmates.

Late Assignments:

Late assignments will not be accepted but early submissions are welcome.

Laptops, Smartphones, & Electronic Devices:

Laptop users must sit towards the rear of the classroom so as not to distract other students.

Texting or otherwise using your phone during class is disrespectful to your instructor. If necessary, I would prefer that you excuse yourself from the classroom.

You may not make audio or video recordings of the lectures without my prior consent.

Plagiarism and Cheating:

Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. Any instances will result in penalties ranging from a grade of zero on the assignment through a failing grade in the course to expulsion from the university. You are responsible for understanding [the university policies on plagiarism and cheating](#).

Student Rights and Responsibilities:

You are responsible for being aware of your rights and responsibilities, including those specified in [the university policy on student conduct](#).

Reminder re: Honours Degree in Psychology

Thinking of graduate school? An honours degree is required for many graduate programs. Those interested in further study, research, and graduate school may complete a separate one-year, research-focused Honours Program in Psychology. For more information, visit:

<http://www.kpu.ca/arts/psychology/honours>