

History 72j
Reading Seminar: Tues. 1–3 pm
Robinson 106

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Ethnic Cleansing and the Making of Nation-States

The 20th century was arguably the most violent in history. Varying estimates tally 150–200 million killed through war, genocide, terrorism, intentional famine, or other forms of violence. A substantial portion of these deaths can be tied to projects to remake state and regional demographics by eliminating unwanted or enemy ethnic groups. In this reading seminar we examine the nexus of 20th-century ‘nation-building’ and ethnic cleansing through five case studies: the Armenian genocide, East Central Europe during and after World War II, the partition of India, the Yugoslav wars of succession, and the Rwandan genocide.

These cases will allow us to focus on comparative analysis of the following issues: What defines ethnic cleansing and how does it relate to genocide? How do movements for national homogeneity emerge? When and why does ethnic difference matter? How is this difference created and enforced? How do we define perpetrators and victims? How do we weigh long-term vs. short-term causes? What are the legacies of imperial and colonial rule? How are these acts remembered and what are the implications of categorizing events as ethnic cleansings or genocide? As a reading seminar, this course is also intended to highlight issues in historical writing and interpretation. We will engage key debates from the various case studies; analyze methodologies, narrative techniques and uses of evidence; and compare academic histories to other disciplines and forms of writing, such as journalistic accounts. The course requirements are as follows:

Participation (15%)

Regular participation in seminar discussions is an essential part of your performance in the course. You will be assessed on the quality of oral discussion and engagement with the material rather than quantity of comments. Attendance is mandatory and unexcused absences will adversely affect your grade. Students with excused absences must submit an *additional* three-page response paper as a make-up assignment for each missed class. All students must also visit my office hours once by the end of September.

Online Discussion Forum (15%)

You will be expected to contribute regularly to the online blog on the course website and read its contents. This forum is intended as a low-stakes environment in which to test out your ideas and ask questions. You are expected to offer your thoughts (1-2 paragraphs) on the material *ahead* of each class meeting, no later than midnight Monday night. Your posting can take several forms: You can address a discussion question; offer a close reading of a passage; develop your own questions; or explain your frustrations or doubts, to name but a few possibilities. So long as you show intellectual curiosity and respect others, your contributions are welcome. You should be active on the blog almost every week. (You may take off three weeks from writing but must still keep up with reading others’ contributions.) As an interactive discussion forum, you are expected to respond to and build off students’ ideas. Other comments, post-class discussion, links to articles, etc. are also encouraged on the blog. At the end of the semester, you will submit a representative portfolio of your work from the blog (3-5 entries).

Class Discussion Leader (10%)

You are required to lead discussion for the first 25-30 minutes of one class. You should begin with a 5-7 minute presentation where you engage the readings *and* students' blog entries to set the agenda for class discussion. You are expected to offer 3-5 explicit questions which you see as the key issues, and then moderate discussion. Feel free to be creative in your presentation and techniques: debates, breakout groups, multimedia aids, handouts, etc. are all encouraged. As discussion leader you will also be responsible for posting an analytic summary (2-3 paragraphs) of the issues discussed in class to the course blog within 24 hours after class ends.

Three Response Papers (30%)

You will be required to submit three response papers, each 3-4 pages in length, for any week you choose during the semester. These are intended as short analytic writing exercises, and should address a theme that emerges in the week's readings. Response papers are due in the online dropbox by 1 p.m. Tuesday (i.e. at the *start* of class). You should also contribute to the blog the same week you write a response paper; while you can adapt portions of your paper, you should *not* simply copy and paste your entire essay.

Final Paper (30%)

A final paper of 10-12 pages will be due Dec. 9. Your essay must compare an important issue from the course (causes, perpetrators, victims, representations, historiographical debates, etc.) across two, or possibly three, different cases of ethnic cleansing. At least one (or more) of the cases should *not* be covered in the course. While you will need to make use of several outside sources, your work is intended as an analytic essay rather than a research paper. A one-page précis outlining the problem you wish to address will be due in class on Nov. 9. A draft, at least five pages long, is due Dec. 2.

Extensions on all assignments will only be granted for serious emergencies, and an unexcused late paper will be marked down 1/3 grade each day. *Plagiarism is a serious offense and will result in referral to the Harvard Administrative Board.* All written work must be done on your own and must be originally produced for this course (i.e. no double submissions).

The following books are available for purchase and also on reserve at Lamont Library:

- D. Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide*
- M. Mazower, *Hitler's Empire*
- C. Browning, *Ordinary Men*
- Y. Khan, *The Great Partition*
- Silber & Little, *Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation*
- P. Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You...*
- M. Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*

All other readings, marked with a (*), will be available electronically on the course website.

Week 1 | Sept 7: Introduction

* C. Maier: "Nation and State" in *Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History*

* N. Naimark, *Fires of Hatred*, Introduction, 1-16

Week 2 | Sept 14: Armenia 1 – National Movements and Genocide

- D. Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, 1-111, 134-181

* J. Winter, “Under Cover of War” in: Winter, *America & Armenian Genocide*

Week 3 | Sept 21: Armenia 2 – The Stakes of Genocide

- Bloxham, 185-234

* G. Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres*, 90-109, 150-187, 245-257

* T. Akcam, “Anatomy of a Crime...”, *Journal of Genocide Research* (2005), 7(2)

* Abromowitz and Barkey, “Turkey’s Transformers” *Foreign Affairs*, Nov/Dec, 2009

Week 4 | Sept 28: Situating the Holocaust

* T. Snyder, “Holocaust: The Ignored Reality,” *NY Review of Books*, 16 Jul 2009

- M. Mazower, *Hitler’s Empire*, 15-52, 78-101, 137-222, 245-56, 368-415

* I. Kershaw, “Hitler and the Holocaust” in: *Hitler, The Germans, and the Final Solution*

Week 5 | Oct 5: Holocaust 2 – Assigning Blame

* D. Goldhagen, *Hitler’s Willing Executioners*, 64-106, 239-262

- C. Browning, *Ordinary Men*, Preface, 38-96, 143-189, Afterword

* G. Eley, “Ordinary Germans, Nazism, and Judeocide” in *The ‘Goldhagen Effect,’* 1-32

Week 6 | Oct 12: German Expulsions and the Limits of Comparison

* N. Naimark, *Fires of Hatred*, Ch. 4

* B. Frommer, *National Cleansing*, 1-10, 186-227

* P. Baldwin, “The *Historikerstreit* in Context” in *Reworking the Past*, 3-37

* R. Melson *Revolution & Genocide*, 1-39, 247-257

Week 7 | Oct 19: The Partition of India

- Y. Khan, *The Great Partition*, 1-166, 198-210

* V. Das, “National Honour and Practical Kinship” in Das, *Critical Events*, 55-83

Week 8 | Oct 26: India/Pakistan 2 – Creating and Enforcing Difference

* I. Talbot, *India and Pakistan: Inventing the Nation*, Chs. 1, 5, 6

* A. Jalal, “Nation, Reason and Religion” *Economic & Political Weekly*, 8 Aug 1998

* Talbot & Singh, *Partition of India*, 154-75

* D. Ludden, “Introduction” in *Making India Hindu*, 1-19

Week 9 | Nov 2: The Violent Breakup of Yugoslavia

- Silber & Little, *Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation*, Intro., Chs. 4, 6, 8, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16, 18, 21, 22, 25, 26, 28-30

* S. Power, *A Problem From Hell*, 443-460

Week 10 | Nov 9: Yugoslavia 2 – Historical Frames

* Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts*, Chs. 1-2

* M. Mazower, *Balkans*, Chs. 3-4

* J. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History*, 201-232

* VP Gagnon, *Myth of Ethnic War*, 1-30, 52-86

Final paper précis due (1-page)

Week 11 | Nov 16: The Rwandan Tutsi Genocide

- P. Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You...*, Chs. 1-11, 14, 17, 19, 21

* *Rwanda: Death, Despair and Defiance*, 568-81

* US Security Docs: Browse website, be sure to look at Docs. 3, 5, 6, 13, 14

Week 12 | Nov 23: Rwanda 2 – Colonial Legacies and Regional Violence

- M. Mamdani, 19-131, 234-263

* R. LeMarchand, Preface, Chs. 2, 4, 6

* G. Prunier, “*The Eastern DR Congo*” on *opendemocracy.net*, 18 November 2008

Week 13 | Nov 30: Genocides in History and in the Present

* M. Levene, “Why is the 20th Century the Century of Genocide?” *Journal of World History*, Vol 11.2, 2000.

* L. Scales, “Bread, Cheese and Genocide” in *History*, July 2007.

* C. Gerlach, “Extremely Violent Societies” *Journal of Genocide Studies*, Dec. 2006

* E. Mayroz, “Ever again? The United States, Genocide Suppression, and the Crisis in Darfur” *Journal of Genocide Studies*, Sept. 2008

Collection of blog entries and 5+ page paper draft due Dec. 2

Final paper due Dec. 9