

CONF 625:003 Engaging Conflicts
Genocide & Religion: Prevention, Recovery, Coping
Spring 2018
The School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution
George Mason University

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Meeting Day, Wednesdays 4:30 to 7:10

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Course Description:

S-CAR Engaging Conflicts Courses

This course will provide students an experiential opportunity to consider the relationship between social science theories and conflict analysis and resolution work; and engagement in a variety of forms with real world conflict. The course will provide students the opportunity to engage in research and practice activities, choosing the appropriate modalities for the conflict they are engaging with.

Genocide and Atrocity Prevention

Genocide and Atrocity Prevention is an increasingly important field of research, education, and practice around the world. The course prepares students to understand genocide as a unique phenomenon, and analyze genocide and mass atrocities within a wider spectrum of violence and conflict processes. This will provide students with the ability to apply a Conflict Analysis and Resolution lens to thinking critically and practically about how genocide and mass atrocities occur, how they can be stopped and prevented, and how social and collective recovery efforts can be supported and promoted. Students will also gain skills to analyze the connection between genocide and mass atrocities and economic, social, political, and psychological processes, in cultural and historical contexts.

Genocide and its Legacies in American Contexts and Conflicts (our focus this semester)

Firstly, your professor do not think genocide is a “thing” or a *sui generis* act. Of course, you’re free to disagree this semester—and there are important and valid reasons for doing so. Rather, I think genocide is a social process that develops historically and contingently over time, within the context of social conflicts, contentious conflicts, and especially social, contentious, conflicts between identity groups. Secondly, I do not think justice and reconciliation are “things” or “social occurrences” that can ever be achieved in the aftermath of genocide and mass atrocities (and, maybe even after any conflicts). I think justice and reconciliation are *processes*, or *struggles*, whose meaning for people becomes clear when social movements define them in the negative. In so far as they are acts, I think justice is achieved through the act of attempting to bring justice and reconciliation, not in the outcome of “obtaining justice.” Thus, I think justice and reconciliation—as they are defined according to the needs of those who feel they *lack* justice and reconciliation—are ways of addressing the needs of people in the midst of forms of conflict, or in the aftermath of violence or structural violence. Justice and reconciliation, I believe, are coping mechanism, which especially after episodes of mass violence, become a way for people to try and re-create social relationships and live their best life in the aftermath of atrocities.

In order to explore these issues in greater detail, and to better understand how justice and reconciliation take shape within societies dealing with the aftermaths of mass atrocities, we will take a deep dive into **American society and history**, with a particular focus on religious responses to mass atrocities and their legacies in the context of **American genocides**.

Our semester-long practice projects will be guided by three possible questions:

1. What has been America's experience with genocide?
2. What has been America's experience with grappling, or coming to terms with, past genocides?
3. Can we apply specialized knowledge about the practice of genocide prevention (or post-genocide justice and reconciliation) to American society today?

Course Objectives

Engaging Conflict Course Learning Objectives:

- Students learn to identify and select appropriate practices(s) (as advocates, activists, scholars, analysts and conflict resolution practitioners)
- Students learn to develop research and/or practice projects and skills necessary to implement them
- Students learn to assess the intervention and its resolution and outcomes
- Students are able to identify and develop strategies to address ethical dilemmas encountered while engaging with conflicts

By the end of the semester, students will:

- Understand the conceptual frameworks used to analyze mass violence and mass atrocities
- Understand the connection between conflict and mass violence
- Understand the most common early warning and early prevention systems used to assess the likelihood of mass violence
- Understand the challenges of preventing mass violence and large-scale atrocities

Students will also gain experience in the practice and reflective practice of genocide, atrocity, and mass violence prevention and responses.

Disciplinary Approaches

Course readings span the disciplines of: Anthropology, History, Law, Literature, Music, Political Science, Religion, Social Psychology, Sociology and Theology.

What is Practice?

From Cheldelin, Druckman and Fast, Eds. Chapter 2, "Theory, Research, and Practice."

Practice is the work that professionals do in the field that involve their clients, the range of cases they are called upon to help, and their performance in professional—and, usually conflictual—situations. These include but are not limited to negotiators, facilitators, mediators, consultants, peace builders and other conflict resolvers. Professional practice requires a specialist who encounters certain types of situations again and again, whereby their knowing-in-practice, as Schön (1983) describes it, becomes tacit, spontaneous, and nearly automatic. Over time professional practitioners gain an extraordinary knowledge base that we like to believe has at its

roots both theories derived from scientific research and the wisdom of practical experience. What we know is that at the heart of what it means to be a professional practitioner is the service provided to clients.

What is Reflective Practice?

This course is anchored, theoretically and practically, on applied ethics, a normative value framework that goes beyond the traditional ethical framework of “neutrality.” The course uses “reflective practice” as the method by which we grow as human beings and as theorists, researchers, and practitioners; it refers to the process by which persons learn, with others, from reflection on their experience.

This semester we will engage in the practice, and reflective practice, of genocide and atrocity prevention. Our reflective practice in this field will provide experience that applies to all other fields of Conflict Analysis and Resolution, with the aim to remove barriers between theory and practice, and to cultivate a dedication “praxis,” to better understand and contribute to the solution of serious social conflicts.

Course Requirements

Theory requirement:

- 3 response essays (3,000 words maximum). Must use Chicago Manual of Style Citations, with endnotes and a bibliography.

Paper topics and Due Dates:

Paper 1—Due Feb. 21—Conduct a conflict analysis to assess the atrocity prevention risk of the United States. What would an atrocity prevention intervention look like? What stakeholders would you engage? What institutions across American society would you engage?

Paper 2—Due March 21—What are three legacies of past genocides in the United States? What are the consequences of the failures to effectively handle past atrocities? Given these realities, what is the path forward for peace and reconciliation?

Paper 3—Due April 25—What is the role of religion and/or art in the commission of genocide, resistance against genocide, and possibly the future prevention of genocide in the United States?

Practice requirement:

- Semester long practice project with one of the following:
 - The US Holocaust Memorial Museum
 - DC-Virginia-Maryland based community and advocacy groups
 - National Governments (see below)
 - Local diaspora groups in the Washington D.C. area
 - Local NGOs, as organized and arranged by the student

Reflection:

- Final reflection paper on your experience trying to connect theory and practice (4,000 words maximum). Paper due on the Final Exam day.

Presentations:

- This semester, you will organize into 5 groups (with three students each)
- Each week, one group is responsible for leading the class discussion.
NO POWERPOINTS
- Each week, one group is responsible for carrying the discussion so the presenters are not talking to a blank classroom
- Each group presents twice, and carries the discussion twice

Grading

Most importantly, students will gain hands-on experience engaging in the field of genocide and atrocity prevention. Towards this end, students will be graded according to the following criteria:

Theory, 20%

Presentations (leading class) 20%

Practice, 20%

Presentations (carrying the discussion) 20%

Reflection, 20%

Readings

Required to buy:

1. Cornel West, ed. *The Radical King* (Beacon Press, 2015; ISBN: 9780807034521)
2. Daniel Feierstein, *Genocide as a Social Process: Reorganizing Society under the Nazis and Argentina's Military Junta* (Rutgers University Press, 2014; ISBN: 9780813563176)
3. Zygmunt Bauman, *Holocaust and Modernity* (Polity, 2001; ISBN: 9780745609300)
4. Doris Bergen, *War and Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2016, must get 3rd edition; ISBN: 9781442242289)
5. Angela D. Sims, *Lynched: The Power of Memory in a Culture of Terror* (Baylor University Press, 2016; ISBN: 9781602582668)
6. Reggie L. Williams, *Bonhoeffer's Black Jesus: The Harlem Renaissance, Theology, and an Ethic of Resistance* (Baylor University Press, 2014; 9781602588059)
7. James Cone, *The Spirituals and the Blues* (Orbis Books, 1992; 9780883448434)
8. Kenyatta Gilbert, *A Pursued Justice: Black Preaching from the Great Migration to Civil Rights* (Baylor University Press, 2016; ISBN: 9781481303996)
9. James Cone, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* (Orbis Books, 2013; ISBN: 9781626980051)
10. Carolyn Renée Dupont, *Mississippi Praying: Southern White Evangelicals and the Civil Rights Movement* (New York University Press, 2015; ISBN: 9781479823512)
11. Benjamin Madley, *An American Genocide: The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe* (Yale University Press, 2016; ISBN: 9780300230697)
12. Van Jones, *Beyond the Messy Truth* (NY: Penguin, 2017) 9780399180026

Recommended, but not required

1. James Baldwin, *Going to Meet the Man* (Random House, 2013; ISBN: 978-0679761792)
2. Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Are Watching God* (Harper Collins, 2013; ISBN: 9780061758126)
1. Jens Meierhenrich, *Genocide: A Reader* (Oxford University Press, 2014)
2. Carol Anderson, *Eyes off the Prize: The United Nations and the African American Struggle for Human Rights* (Cambridge University Press, 2003; ISBN: 9780521531580)
3. John Q. Whitman, *Hitler's American Model: The United States and the Making of Nazi Race Law* (Princeton University Press, 2017; ISBN: 9780691172422)
4. Carroll P. Kakel, *The Holocaust as Colonial Genocide: Hitler's 'Indian Wars' in the 'Wild East'* (Palgrave, 2013; 978-1137391674)
5. Malcom X, *The Autobiography of Malcom X* (Any edition)
6. Victoria Barnett, *For the Soul of the People: Protestant Protest Against Hitler* (Oxford University Press, 1998; ISBN: 9780195121186).
7. William Patterson and W. E. B. Du Bois, *We Charge Genocide: The Historic Petition to the United Nations for Relief from a Crime of the United States Government Against the Negro People* (out of print; print from Blackboard and Bring to Class)
8. Sylvester A. Johnson and Steven Weitzman, eds., *The FBI and Religion Faith and National Security before and after 9/11* (University of California Press, 2017; ISBN: 9780520287280)
9. Anton Weiss-Wendt, *The Soviet Union and the Gutting of the UN Genocide Convention* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2017; ISBN: 9780299312909)

Course Schedule (subject to change)

* designates reading on Blackboard

designates selection from required book

For all other readings, it is students' responsibility to:

- 1) Purchase or borrow all course books with enough time to read them before class;
- 2) Retrieve journal articles from the library database; or,
- 3) Request journal articles not available at the Mason library through interlibrary loan

Week 1 Key Concepts

January 24

Genocide, Mass Atrocities, Atrocities, War Crimes, Crimes Against Humanity, Mass Killing, Massacre, Murder, etc.

- *Raphaël Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress* (1944)
- *William A. Schabas, *Genocide in International Law: The Crimes of Crimes* (2009)
- *Mahmood Mamdani, "The Politics of Naming: Genocide, Civil War, and Insurgency," *London Review of Books* (2007)
- **Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, adopted by Resolution 260(III) A of the United Nations General Assembly, December 9, 1948*
- **Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court The Legal Definition, Revised, U.N. Doc. A/CONF.183/9*
- *Hinton, Irvin-Erickson, La Pointe, Introduction to *Hidden Genocides*

Journal Articles:

- David Scheffer, (2006) "Genocide and Atrocity Crimes," *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal*: Vol. 1: Iss. 3: Article 3. Available at: <http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/gsp/vol1/iss3/3>
- Martha Minow, (2007) "Naming Horror: Legal and Political Words for Mass Atrocities," *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal*: Vol. 2: Iss. 1: Article 5. Available at: <http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/gsp/vol2/iss1/5>
- William A Schabas, (2007) "Semantics or Substance? David Scheffer's Welcome Proposal to Strengthen Criminal Accountability for Atrocities," *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal*: Vol. 2: Iss. 1: Article 4. Available at: <http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/gsp/vol2/iss1/4>
- Mark Levene, (2007) "David Scheffer's "Genocide and Atrocity Crimes": A Response," *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal*: Vol. 2: Iss. 1: Article 10. Available at: <http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/gsp/vol2/iss1/10>
- Sheri P. Rosenberg, (2012) "Genocide Is a Process, Not an Event," *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal*: Vol. 7: No. 1. Available at: <http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/gsp/vol7/iss1/4>

Week 2 January 31 What is Genocide?

Daniel Feierstein, *Genocide as a Social Process: Reorganizing Society under the Nazis and Argentina's Military Junta* (Rutgers University Press, 2014; ISBN: 978-0-8135-6317-6)

Discussion:

- Gregory Stanton, *10 Stages of Genocide*. Genocide Watch.
<http://www.genocidewatch.org/genocide/tenstagesofgenocide.html>
- Scott Strauss, *Fundamentals of Genocide Prevention Introduction and Part 1*
<https://www.ushmm.org/confront-genocide/take-action-against-genocide/resources/fundamentals-of-genocide-and-mass-atrocity-prevention>

Week 3 February 7 War and Genocide

Doris Bergen, *War and Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2016, must get 3rd edition; ISBN: 78-1442242289)

Discussion:

- Benjamin Madley, "From Africa to Auschwitz: How German South West Africa Incubated Ideas and Methods Adopted and Developed by the Nazis in Eastern Europe," *European History Quarterly* Vol. 35, No. 3 (2005): 429-464.
- Scott Strauss, *Fundamentals of Genocide Prevention Part 2*
<https://www.ushmm.org/confront-genocide/take-action-against-genocide/resources/fundamentals-of-genocide-and-mass-atrocity-prevention>

Week 4 February 14 Race Thinking

Zygmunt Bauman, *Holocaust and Modernity* (Polity, 2001; ISBN: 9780745609300)

Discussion:

- #Martin Luther King, Jr., "Beyond Vietnam," in *The Radical King*
- *John Q. Whitman, *Hitler's American Model: The United States and the Making of Nazi Race Law* (Princeton University Press, 2017; ISBN: 9780691172422).
- *Carroll P. Kakel, *The Holocaust as Colonial Genocide: Hitler's 'Indian Wars' in the 'Wild East'* (Palgrave, 2013; 978-1137391674).

Week 5 February 21 What would an architecture for prevention look like in the US?

- Scott Strauss, *Fundamentals of Genocide Prevention Part 2 through 5*
<https://www.ushmm.org/confront-genocide/take-action-against-genocide/resources/fundamentals-of-genocide-and-mass-atrocity-prevention>
- James Waller, "It Can Happen Here: Assessing the Risk of Genocide in the United States" <http://www.wfm-igp.org/content/it-can-happen-here-assessing-risk-genocide-us-dr-james-waller-keene-state-college>
- Jim Finkel, "Moving Beyond The Crossroads: Strengthening the Atrocity Prevention Board," *Genocide Studies and Prevention*, Vol. 9: Iss. 2 (2015): 138-147.
- Issues 9.3 and 11.3 of *Genocide Studies and Prevention* <http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/gsp/>

PAPER 1 DUE (see above for paper assignments)

Week 6 February 28 Responses in America: International Law and Human Rights

*William Patterson and W. E. B. Du Bois, *We Charge Genocide: The Historic Petition to the United Nations for Relief from a Crime of the United States Government Against the Negro People* (out of print; print from Blackboard and Bring to Class)

Discussion:

- *Carol Anderson, *Eyes off the Prize: The United Nations and the African American Struggle for Human Rights* (Cambridge University Press, 2003; ISBN: 978-0521531580)
- Ta-Nehisi Coates, "The Case for Reparations," *The Atlantic*.
<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>

Week 7 March 7 Responses in America: Law, Culture and Resilience

Angela D. Sims, *Lynched: The Power of Memory in a Culture of Terror* (Baylor University Press, 2016; ISBN: 9781602582668)

Discussion:

- *Ida Wells, "Lynching Violence"
- *James Baldwin, "My Dungeon Shook: Letter to My Nephew on the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Emancipation," in *The Fire Next Time* (Dial Press, 1963). On blackboard.

Spring Break Mar 12 – Sun Mar 18

Week 8 March 21 Martin Luther King

Cornel West, ed. *The Radical King* (Beacon Press, 2015; ISBN: 9780807034521) Parts 1 to 3

Discussion:

- *The Radical King* Part 4

PAPER 2 DUE (see above for assignment)

**Week 9 March 28 Responses to Direct Violence & Structural Violence:
Art, Music, and the Ethic of Resistance**

Reggie L. Williams, *Bonhoeffer's Black Jesus: The Harlem Renaissance, Theology, and an Ethic of Resistance* (Baylor University Press, 2014; 9781602588059)

Discussion:

- James Cone, *The Spirituals and the Blues* (Orbis Books, 1992; 978-0883448434)

Week 10 Responses to Direct Violence & Structural Violence:

April 4 The Mosque and the Church

Kenyatta Gilbert, *A Pursued Justice: Black Preaching from the Great Migration to Civil Rights* (Baylor University Press, 2016; ISBN: 9781481303996)

Discussion:

- James Cone, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* (Orbis Books, 2013; ISBN: 978-1-62698-005-1)
- *Malcom X, *The Autobiography of Malcom X*, Chapter on “ElHajj Malik Shabazz,” pp. 394-441, esp. p. 423

Recommended—if we had an extra week on the syllabus, I would assign this:

- Victoria Barnett, *For the Soul of the People: Protestant Protest Against Hitler* (Oxford University Press, 1998; ISBN: 978-0195121186).
 - *Kathern Gin Lum and Lerone A. Martin, “American Religion and the Rise of Internal Security: A Prologue,” in Johnson and Weitzman, eds. *The FBI and Religion*. p. 17-31.
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Week 11 Reactionaries and Counter Revolutionaries

April 11

Carolyn Renée Dupont, *Mississippi Praying: Southern White Evangelicals and the Civil Rights Movement* (New York University Press, 2015; ISBN: 978-1479823512)

Discussion:

- James Cone, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* (Orbis Books, 2013; ISBN: 978-1-62698-005-1)
- Emma Green, “A Resolution Condemning White Supremacy Causes Chaos at the Southern Baptist Convention,” *The Atlantic* (January 2017). Available from: <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/06/the-southern-baptist-convention-alt-right-white-supremacy/530244/>

Week 12 The United States and Indian Genocides

April 18

Benjamin Madley, *An American Genocide: The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe* (Yale University Press, 2016; ISBN: 9780300230697)

Discussion:

Andrew Woolford, *The Benevolent Experiment*.

Week 13 OPEN

April 25

PAPER 3 DUE (see assignment above)

Week 14 OPEN

May 2

Final Paper Due

May 9th

Legal Matters

Participation

The professor will begin each class with comments and points of clarification on course readings. The majority of the course will consist of dialogue between students. A successful course will require that students come prepared, read all of the material, participate responsibly in discussions, and listen to the views and ideas of other students. Towards this end, all students will be required take responsibility for leading class discussions on assigned readings.

Attendance & Missed Assignments

Students are expected to attend all classes of the courses. In-class participation is important not only to the individual student, but also to the class as a whole. Because class participation may be a factor in grading, the professor will use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of nonparticipation. Missing 2 classes is grounds for failure.

Students will not be allowed to miss an assigned presentation, unless they arrange to switch readings with a classmate. Otherwise, the presentation will receive a 0 grade.

Late papers will not be accepted.

Technology Policy

Cell phones must be silenced while in class. Excessive text messaging and communicating via social media is not allowed, and will result in an “absence” from the course.

Accommodations & Disability

Any student who suspects she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the professor privately to discuss the student’s specific needs, and provide written documentation from Disability Services. If the student is not yet registered as a student with a disability, she can contact Disability Services. For more information, view the office’s website at <http://ods.gmu.edu>

English Language Learners

The English Language Institute offers free English language tutoring to non-native English speaking students who are referred by a member of the faculty or staff. For more information, please visit their website at <http://eli.gmu.edu>

This course will explore controversial and sensitive subject matter; it is, therefore, expected that students will engage with one another in a respectful manner even when they do not agree with one another.

Academic Conduct & Honor Code

Student are accountable to the following Honor Code: “To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the University Community have set forth this: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, and/or lie in matters related to academic work.”

Plagiarism & Honor Committee

Students are prohibited from: (a) knowingly permitting another student to plagiarize or cheat from one's work, and (b) submitting the same assignment in different courses without consent of the professor.

Should you have any questions about what it means to cheat, plagiarize, steal and/or lie, please consult the website: <http://oai.gmu.edu/understanding-the-honor-code/>

Students should review: "Student Strategies for Preventing Violations" link on the Office for Academic Integrity's website: <http://oai.gmu.edu/preventing-violations/student-strategies-for-preventingviolations/>

Any student found violating the tenets of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee for review.

Honor Code and Plagiarism:

All George Mason University students have agreed to abide by the letter and the spirit of the Honor Code. You can find a copy of the Honor Code at academicintegrity.gmu.edu. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee for review. With specific regards to plagiarism, three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification. If you have questions about when the contributions of others to your work must be acknowledged and appropriate ways to cite those contributions, please talk with the professor.

S-CAR requires that all written work submitted in partial fulfillment of course or degree requirements must be available in electronic form so that it can be compared with electronic databases, as well as submitted to commercial services to which the School subscribes. Faculty may at any time submit a student's work without prior permission from the student. Individual instructors may require that written work be submitted in electronic as well as printed form. S-CAR's policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace or substitute for it.

Grading Scale:

A+	4.00	B+	3.33	C+	2.33	D	1.00
A	4.00	B	3.00	C	2.00	F	0.00
A-	3.67	B-	2.67	C-	1.67		

Sign-up Sheet Schedule

Students will take turns leading a class discussion. No power points are allowed.

Week 2: Group A leads the class
 Group E carries the discussion

Week 3: Group B leads the class
 Group D carries the discussion

Week 4: Group C leads the class
 Group B carries the discussion

Week 5: no group today

Week 6: Group D leads the class
 Group C carries the discussion

Week 7: Group E leads the class
 Group A carries the discussion

Week 8: Group E leads the class
 Group A carries the discussion

Week 9: Group D leads the class
 Group C carries the discussion

Week 10: Group C leads the class
 Group B carries the discussion

Week 11: Group B leads the class
 Group D carries the discussion

Week 12: Group A leads the class
 Group E carries the discussion

Week 13: **Everyone must read:** Madley
 No presentations

Week 14: Conclusion
 No presentations

Group A

- 1
- 2
- 3

Group B

- 1
- 2
- 3

Group C

- 1
- 2
- 3

Group D

- 1
- 2
- 3

Group E

- 1
- 2
- 3