

HISTORY HIST 3722G

‘Killing Fields’: Genocide in Modern History

Winter 2026

Professor Frank Schumacher

Email: fschuma@uwo.ca

Office: **Department of History, Lawson Hall 2201**

Office Hours: **Friday 1.00-3.00**

This is a draft outline. Please see the course site on OWL Brightspace for a final version.

Course Description

An estimated 200 million people have been killed worldwide in genocides since the beginning of the 20th century. Despite many international efforts to contain this form of mass violence, genocides remain one of the most enduring challenges to humanity.

This seminar comprehensively explores the causes, cases, contours, and consequences of genocides in modern history. The course consists of four parts: during the first part we will examine the conceptual foundations of genocide studies by exploring the work of Raphael Lemkin (who coined the term). To understand the concept’s evolution and its various interpretations we will also study the disciplinary perspectives and theoretical insights of anthropology, history, sociology, law, political science, social psychology, and philosophy.

The second part of the seminar is devoted to historical case studies. We will test some of the conceptual insights from the first part with historical specificity and explore the Armenian genocide, the Holocaust, and the genocides in Cambodia and Rwanda.

In the third part we will apply those historical insights to three of the most important research themes in genocide studies: perpetrators, victims, and gender.

The fourth part explores the consequences of genocides. We will examine the sparse and highly understudied evidence on rescue and resistance, explore the construction and contention of social memory, and study the role of education and justice. Finally, we will discuss the role of military interventions and current and past initiatives at genocide prevention.

Prerequisite(s): Registration in third year or above, any module

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. The decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Syllabus

Upon completion of the course students will be able to:

- Explain the causes, contours, and consequences of genocidal mass violence in modern history
- Assess and discuss the theoretical and methodological contributions of multiple social science disciplines to the study of genocide
- Identify and engage the main arguments in the research literature on human mass violence
- Compare case studies to identify historical patterns and historical specificity
- Analyze and evaluate primary sources and place them in their historical context
- Connect present day issues to historical events and provide historical contextualization for current debates on human mass violence
- Strengthen skills of oral and written communication

Methods of Evaluation

The final grade for this course is based on the accumulated results of one class moderation, a research essay, a seminar journal, and your participation. Please note that 3rd and 4th year history seminars have been exempted from the Senate requirement to provide at least 15% of the final grade prior to the withdrawal deadline.

Moderation:	20%
Research Essay:	35%
Seminar Journal:	25%
Participation:	20%

1. Moderation – 20%

You will serve as moderator for one seminar session; we will determine time slots during the first week of class; you will do the class and presenter readings and provide a **20 minute** presentation, develop a set of discussion questions, and supply a handout to the class.

2. Research Paper

In this seminar you will write a research paper on a mutually agreed topic based on primary sources and a thorough reading of the secondary literature of 20 pages + bibliography; papers should follow the *Chicago Manual Style* conventions, be double-space, and printed in standard size font (i.e. Times New Roman 12pts) with standard margins. Spell-check and staple your paper. HIST 3722G is an essay course and students must pass the required written work in order to achieve a passing grade in the course.

The final essay is due in the department mailbox during business hrs. April 7, 2026 – there is flexibility in the submission of your work but nothing can be submitted after April 9, 2026 end of business day.

3. Seminar Journal

It is important to keep a record of what you read and what we talk about in class. Keep a seminar journal to reflect on our conversation, readings, and any outside input on the topic. Keep track of your questions and record any relevant insights gained through conversations, books, movies, trips etc. Finally, discuss how your views on genocide evolve throughout the seminar. The journal can be typed or legibly handwritten; you have all the artistic freedom to include drawings, poems, etc.

The journal is due in the department mailbox during business hrs. April 7, 2026 – there is some flexibility in the submission of your work, but nothing can be submitted after April 9, 2026 end of business day.

4. Participation

Much of the learning in this seminar is based on discussion and debate; the success of the exercise depends on your completion of the assigned readings, reflection on the material, your prepared attendance, and your active participation in our weekly discussions.

5. Course Specific Conditions

HIST 3722G is an essay course and students must pass the required written work in order to achieve a passing grade in the course.

Students must attend at least 80% (10 out of 13) of the seminar meetings in order to pass the course, regardless of grades received for other assignments. Students must submit all course assignments in order to pass the course.

Course Materials

This is a reading-intensive seminar and the timely completion of the assigned texts is a pre-condition for good discussions. Much of this syllabus has been previously adjusted to pandemic learning conditions; but some indispensable material is either not available in digital format or Weldon Library's contract with publishers severely restricts the number of concurrent users on a digital platform. For my choice of textbook, Routledge only allows three library patrons to use text's digital version at the same time. While this is completely unsatisfactory, it also resembles one of the current challenges in research and learning.

You should purchase the following books which are not available at the Western bookstore:

BLOXHAM, Donald, A. Dirk Moses (eds.), *Genocide. Key Themes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022). [Paperback \$29.28 on amazon.ca]

JONES, Adam, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction. Fourth Edition* (London: Routledge, 2024). [Paperback \$69.56 on amazon.ca]

Course Schedule and Readings

Part One: Concepts and Perspectives

January 7 “A Never-Ending Nightmare: Genocide in Modern History – Course Introduction”

January 14 Concepts and Perspectives I

Class Readings

HÄUSSLER, Matthias, Andreas Stucki, Lorenzo Veracini, “Empire and Genocide”, in: Donald Bloxham, A. Dirk Moses (eds.), *Genocide: Key Themes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022), chapter 7.

JONES, Adam, *Genocide. A Comprehensive Introduction: Fourth Edition* (London: Routledge, 2024), chapter 1.

MOSES, A. Dirk, “The Concept of Genocide and Civilian Destruction”, in: Donald Bloxham, A. Dirk Moses (eds.), *Genocide: Key Themes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022), chapter 1.

Presenter Readings

IRVIN-ERICKSON, Douglas, *Raphael Lemkin and the Concept of Genocide* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

January 21 Concepts and Perspectives II

Class Readings

JONES, Adam, *Genocide*, chapters 3, 10, 11, 12

Presenter Readings

BLACKHAWK, Ned, “The Centrality of Dispossession: Native American Genocide and Settler Colonialism”, in: Ned Blackhawk, Ben Kiernan, Benjamin Madley, Rebe Taylor (eds.), *The Cambridge World History of Genocide Vol. II* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2023), chapter 1.

KIERNAN, Ben, “General Editor’s Introduction to the Series: Genocide: Its Causes, Components, Connections, and Continuing Challenges”, in: Ben Kiernan, T.M. Lemos, Tristan S. Taylor (eds.), *The Cambridge World History of Genocide Vol. I* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2023), pp. 1-30.

MAYNARD, Jonathan Leader, “Ideology and Genocide”, in: Donald Bloxham, A. Dirk Moses (eds.), *Genocide: Key Themes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022), chapter 5.

MOYD, Michelle, “War and Genocide”, in: Donald Bloxham, A. Dirk Moses (eds.), *Genocide: Key Themes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022), chapter 8.

WEISS-WENDT, Anton, “The State and Genocide”, in: Donald Bloxham, A. Dirk Moses (eds.), *Genocide: Key Themes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022), chapter 6.

Part Two – Case Studies

January 28 Case Study I: The Ottoman Empire

Class Readings

JONES, Adam, *Genocide*, chapter 4.

Presenter Readings

BATROP, Paul R., Steven Leonard Jacobs (eds.), *Modern Genocide. The Definite Resource and Document Collection* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clio, 2014), Vol. 1, 3-18 (essays on overview, causes, consequences, perpetrators, victims, bystanders, international reaction) & essay on historical dilemmas, 131-142.

ÜMÜT, Kurt, “Legal and Official Plunder of Armenian and Jewish Properties in Comparative Perspective: the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust”, in: *Journal of Genocide Research* 17:3 (2015): 305-326.

SUNY, Ronald, “Explaining Genocide: The Fate of the Armenians in the Late Ottoman Empire”, in: Richard Bessel, Claudia B. Haake (eds.), *Removing Peoples. Forced Removal in the Modern World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 209-254.

February 4 Case Study II: The Shoah and World War Two Mass Violence

Class Readings

ARENDT, Hannah, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006).

JONES, Adam, *Genocide*, chapter 6.

Presenter Readings

THE CAMBRIDGE WORLD HISTORY OF GENOCIDE VOLUME III, Part II, chapters 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15. .

February 11 Case Studies III: From Cambodia to Rwanda

Class Readings

JONES, Adam, *Genocide*, chapters 7 + 9.

Presenter Readings Rwanda

KIERNAN, Ben, "The Genocides of Cambodia, 1975-1979", in: Ben Kiernan, Wendy Lower, Norman Naimark, Scott Straus (eds.), *The Cambridge World History of Genocide Vol. III*, chapter 22.

FUJII, Lee Ann, *Killing Neighbors: Webs of Violence in Rwanda* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011).

STRAUS, Scott, "The Rwandan Genocide in Context", in: Ben Kiernan, Wendy Lower, Norman Naimark, Scott Straus (eds.), *The Cambridge World History of Genocide Vol. III*, chapter 27.

February 25 Research Project Discussion

During this class you will have the opportunity to discuss your research project. Prepare for this by writing an outline which encompasses: central question, explanation of relevance and context of research question, state of research on the topic, available primary sources, structure of the paper, method and theoretical framework, and ideally an annotated bibliography of at least 10 books and articles relevant to your topic. **Have your outline ready for class on February 25**

Part Three – Contours

March 4 Contours I: Perpetrators

Class Readings

ARENDT, Hannah, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Penguin Books), especially 135-150.

AUSCHWITZ through the Lens of the SS: Photos of Nazi Leadership at the Camp, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. Please explore this album at: <https://www.ushmm.org/collections/the-museums-collections/collections-highlights/auschwitz-ssalbum>

BROWNING, Christopher R., *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992), preface, 55-71, and 159-189.

CLARK, Janine Natalya, "Genocide, War Crimes and the Conflict in Bosnia: Understanding the Perpetrators", in: *Journal of Genocide Research* 11:4 (2009), 421-445.

Presenter Readings

HATZFELD, Jean, *Machete Season: the Killers in Rwanda Speak* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005).

WILLIAMS, Timothy, *The Complexity of Evil. Perpetration and Genocide* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2021), open access ebook: <https://www.rutgersuniversitypress.org/the-complexity-of-evil/9781978814295/>

March 11**Contours II: Victims**Class Readings

DADRIAN, Vahakn N., “Children as Victims of Genocide: the Armenian Case”, in: *Journal of Genocide Research* 5:3 (September 2003), 421-437.

HATZFELD, Jean, *Life Laid Bare: The Survivors in Rwanda Speak* (New York: Other Press, 2006), 3-29 and 59-73.

JOEDEN-FORGEY, Elisa von, „Sexual and Gender-Based Violence against Children during Genocide”, in: Samuel Totten (ed.), *Plight and Fate of Children During and Following Genocide* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2018), 195-218.

THE Auschwitz Album, Yad Vashem. Please explore this album. Go to the multimedia section first, then read the introduction and view the album, online at:

https://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/album_auschwitz/index.asp

Presenter Readings

HATZFELD, Jean, *Life Laid Bare: The Survivors in Rwanda Speak* (New York: Other Press, 2006), 133-148 and 207-235.

MARLOWE, Jen, Aisha Bain, Adam Shapiro, *Dafur Diaries: Stories of Survival* (New York: Nation Books, 2006), 79-86 and 149-151.

RURANGWA, Reverien, *Genocide: My Stolen Rwanda* (London: Reportage Press, 2009), 27-78 and 102-131.

March 18**Contours III: Gender**Class Readings

JOEDEN-FORGEY, Elisa von, “Gender and Genocide”, in: Donald Bloxham. A. Dirk Moses (eds.), *Genocide: Key Themes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022), chapter 4.

JONES, Adam, *Genocide*, chapter 13.

MAILÄNDER, Elissa, “The Violence of Female Guards in Nazi Concentration Camps (1939-1945): Reflections on the Dynamics and Logics of Power” (2015), in: *Online Encyclopedia of Mass Violence* (Sciences Po Paris), at: <https://www.sciencespo.fr/mass-violence-war-massacre-resistance/en/document/violence-female-guards-nazi-concentration-camps-1939-1945-reflections-dynamics-and-logics-p.html#title5>

SMEULERS, Alette, “Female Perpetrators: Ordinary or Extraordinary Women?” in: *International Criminal Law Review* 15:2 (2015): 207-253.

Presenter Readings

BJORNLUND, Matthias, “‘A Fate Worse than Dying’: Sexual Violence during the Armenian Genocide”, in: Dagmar Herzog (ed.), *Brutality and Desire: War and Sexuality in Europe’s Twentieth Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 16-58.

LOWER, Wendy, *Hitler’s Furies: German Women in the Nazi Killing Fields* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Hartcourt, 2013).

Part Four – Consequences

March 25 Consequences: Rescue, Memory, and Prevention

Class Readings

JONES, Adam, *Genocide*, chapters 14 + 15 + 16.

MOSES, Dirk A., “The Canadian Museum for Human Rights: The ‘Uniqueness of the Holocaust’ and the Question of Genocide”, in: *Journal of Genocide Research* 14:2 (May 2012), 215-238.

SEMELIN, Jacques, “Introduction: From Help to Rescue”, in: Jacques Semelin, Claire Andrieu, Sarah Gensburger (eds.), *Resisting Genocide. The Multiple Forms of Rescue* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 1-14.

STONE, Dan, Rebecca Jinks, “Memory and Genocide”, in Donald Bloxham. A. Dirk Moses (eds.), *Genocide: Key Themes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022), chapter 9. .

Presenter Readings

BELLAMY, Alex, Stephen McLoughlin, “Armed Intervention in Genocide”, in: Donald Bloxham. A. Dirk Moses (eds.), *Genocide: Key Themes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022), chapter 10.

BLOXHAM, Donald, Devin O. Pendas, “Genocide and the Politics of Punishment”, in: Donald Bloxham. A. Dirk Moses (eds.), *Genocide: Key Themes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022), chapter 11.

MOSES, Dirk A., “Genocide and the Terror of History”, in: *parallax* 17:4 (2011), 90-108.

TEC, Nechama, “Who Dared to Rescue Jews and Why?” in: Jacques Semelin, Claire Andrieu, Sarah Gensburger (eds.), *Resisting Genocide. The Multiple Forms of Rescue* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 101-112.

TEVOSYAN, Hasmik, “Rescue Practices during the Armenian Genocide”, in: Jacques Semelin, Claire Andrieu, Sarah Gensburger (eds.), *Resisting Genocide. The Multiple Forms of Rescue* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 163-182.

April 1 Looking Back and Looking Forward

In this class we’ll review the semester and discuss what we have learned, identify gaps and areas of further study, and chart a course forward for a world without genocide.

April 8

Looking Back and Looking Forward Reflection

Additional Statements

All work submitted in this course must be your own.

You may not make any use of generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT, in this course. Any use of such tools for assignments in this course may be considered a form of academic misconduct.

Please review the Department of History's shared policies and statements for all undergraduate courses at: https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html for important information regarding accessibility options, make-up exams, medical accommodations, health and wellness, academic integrity, plagiarism, and more.