

Syllabus: 407/507 Atrocities

Fall 2018, Thursdays 2-3:50, Straub 257, 2 Credits CRNs 16933/16934 22 Sept 2018

Professor: Dr. Holly Arrow. Office: 420 Straub Office Hours: Wed 3:30-4:30, Thurs 4-5
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Overview: We will cover war, genocide and other mass killings and mayhem, torture, and slavery, looking at behavior, attitudes, norms, social dynamics, and cultural-historical contexts.

Framework: Archaeological, anthropological, and historical evidence suggests that behaviors we now (fortunately) consider a departure from normal, sane behavior (at least in peacetime) used to be commonplace and were not considered (or, apparently, require) psychopathology. Together, we will think about the implications of historical and cultural setting and context on the prevalence of atrocious behavior and the psychological experience of coping with its effects.

Ground Rules for Class Discussion

"To love. To be loved. To never forget your own insignificance. To never get used to the unspeakable violence and the vulgar disparity of life around you. To seek joy in the saddest places. To pursue beauty to its lair. To never simplify what is complicated or complicate what is simple. To respect strength, never power. Above all, to watch. To try and understand. To never look away. And never, never, to forget."

– Arundhati Roy, [*The Cost of Living*](#)

We will spend our time together contemplating, discussing, and trying to understand the horrors that people have inflicted on other people. The desire to look away, to forget, to minimize, to deny, is powerful, and is the underpinning of collective amnesia. Pushing back against this desire by actively contemplating unspeakable violence is hard emotional work. Please attend to your mental health, be kind to one another, and take breaks if needed.

Workload:

Do the readings and come prepared to discuss

Write a short weekly paper (1 page max) responding to readings. Bring to class and submit on Canvas by 10 PM Wednesday. Graded on depth of insight and the effectiveness of presentation. Make explicit connections to readings with page numbers.

Main text:

White, M (2012). *Atrocities: The 100 Deadliest Episodes in Human History*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton. (Hardback edition is titled *The Great Big Book of Horrible Things*.)

Other readings: On Canvas or accessible via external links

WEEKLY THEMES:

Week 1: Rise of Compassion
 Week 2: Compassion Fade
 Week 3: Chaos
 Week 4: Genocide
 Week 5: Memory
 Week 6: Torture
 Week 7: Slavery
 Week 8: Commerce
 Week 9: Reconciliation
 Week 10: Healing/Prevention

WEEKLY Atrocity-Generating CATEGORY

World Conquest
 Failed States
 Genocide / Ethnic Cleansing
 Politicide

 Exploitation / Racism
 Colonial Exploitation
 Religion

Week 1: Atrocities & Compassion

Pinker, S. (2011). A foreign country. Ch. 1 (pp. 1-30). *The better angels of our nature: Why violence has declined*. New York: Viking.

Week 2: Compassion Fade / World Conquest

Text:

Introduction: p. xiii ff & Ancient Innumeracy: p. 41 ff

World Conquest: One nation tries to take over every country within reach

World Conquerors chapter: p. 271 ff

2T: Genghis/Chinggis Khan (1206-27) Est. Death toll: 40 Million p. 115 ff

9: Timur/Tamerlane (1370-1405) Est. Death toll: 17 Million p. 146 ff

#40: Shaka Zulu (1818-28) Est. Death toll: 1.5 Million p. 277 ff

Zerjal, T. et al. (2003). The Genetic Legacy of the Mongols, *American Journal of Human Genetics* 72, 717-721.

Slovic, P., & Västfjäll, D. (2013). The more who die, the less we care: Psychic numbing and genocide (pp. 55-68). *Essays in behavioral public policy*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Week 3: Failed States / Chaos

Text:

Failed States/Chaos: Collapse of central government, anarchy & warlords

#40T Age of Warring States (ca. 475-221 BCE) Est. Death toll: 1.5 Million p. 8 ff

#46T Mayan Collapse (790-909) Est. Death toll: 1 Million p. 94 ff

#22 The Time of Troubles (1598-1613) Est. Death toll: 5 Million p. 207 ff

#5 Ming Dynasty Collapse (1635-62) Est. Death toll: 25 Million p. 223 ff

#70T Somalian Chaos (since 1991) Est. Death toll: 500,000 p. 517 ff

Pinker, S. (2011). Dominance (pp. 515-529). *The better angels of our nature: Why violence has declined*. New York: Viking.

Horowitz, D. L. (2001), Ch. 3, The riot episode (pp. 71-123). *The deadly ethnic riot*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Week 4: Genocide

Text:

Ethnic Cleansing: Perpetrators try to wipe out a despised group

Genocide chapter: p. 188 ff

#11T Conquest of the Americas (after 1492) Est. Death toll: 15 Million p. 172 ff

#81T Cromwell's Invasion of Ireland (1649-52) Est. Death toll: 400,000 p. 231 ff

#11T WWI (Armenian Genocide) (1914-1918) Est. Death toll: 15 Million p. 344 ff

#53 Rwandan Genocide (1994) Est. Death toll: 937,000 p. 519 ff

Browning, C. R. (1993). Chs 7 & 8 (pp. 55-77). *Ordinary men: Reserve police battalion 101 and the final solution in Poland*. New York: Harper Collins.

Hatzfeld, J. (2005). *Machete season: The killers in Rwanda speak*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Pp. 29-70.

Meier, B. P. & Hinsz, V. B. (2004), A comparison of human aggression committed by groups and individuals: An interindividual-intergroup discontinuity. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 40, 551-559.

Week 5: Memory / Politicide

Text:

Politicide: Dictators/despots oppress their own people to death

Crazed Tyrants: p. 393 ff

The Black Chapter of Communism p. 453 ff

#2T Mao Zedong (1949-76) Est. Death toll: 40 Million p. 429 ff

#30T North Korea (after 1948) Est. Death toll: 3 Million p. 446 ff

#39 Democratic Kampuchea (1975-79) Est. Death toll: 1.67 Million p. 492 ff

#96T Saddam Hussein (1979-2003) Est. Death toll: 300,000 p. 509 ff

Chandler, D. (2008). Cambodia deals with its past: collective memory, demonisation and induced amnesia. *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, 9(2-3), 355-369.

Leone, G., & Sarrica, M. (2012). When ownership hurts: Remembering the in-group wrongdoings after a long-lasting collective amnesia. *Human Affairs*, 22, 603-612. DOI: 10.2478/s13374-012-0048-6

Van der Hart, O., Brown, P., & Graafland, M. (1999). Trauma-induced dissociative amnesia in World War I combat soldiers. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 33, 37-46.

Week 6: Torture

Text:

Appendix 1: Disputing the Top One Hundred: p. 555 ff

Lagouranis, T. (2007). *Fear up harsh : An Army interrogator's dark journey through Iraq*. Chs. 9-11, pp. 81-111. New York, NY : NAL Caliber.

Phillips, J. E. S. (2010) Ch. 7, Silent suffering (pp. 130-160), in *None of us were like this before: American soldiers and torture*. New York: Verso.

Stepakoff, S., Hubbard, J., Katoh, M., Falk, E., Mikulu, J.-B., Nkhoma, P., & Omagwa, Y. (2006). Trauma healing in refugee camps in guinea: A psychosocial program for Liberian and Sierra Leonean survivors of torture and war. *American Psychologist*, 61(8), 921-932. <http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.uoregon.edu/10.1037/0003-066X.61.8.921>

Week 7: Slavery

Text:

- #46 Roman Slave Wars (134-71 BCE) Est Death toll: 1 million p. 27 ff
- #8 Mideast Slave Trade (7th-19th) Est. Death toll: 18.5 Million p. 80 ff
- #10 Atlantic Slave Trade (1452-1807) Est. Death toll: 16 Million p. 161 ff
- #81 Haitian Slave Revolt (1791-1803) Est. Death toll: 400,000 p. 273 ff

Bales, K. (2002). The social psychology of modern slavery. *Scientific American*, 286(4), 80-88.
 Equal Justice Initiative. (2015). *Lynching in America: Confronting the legacy of racial terror*.
 Saylor, S. (1992). Selection from *Arms of Nemesis* (p. 23-31). New York: St. Martin's Press.
 Wilkins, E. J., Whiting, J. B., Watson, M. F., Russon, J. M., & Moncrief, A. M. (2013). Residual effects of slavery: What clinicians need to know. *Contemporary Family Therapy*, 35(1), 14-28.

Week 8: Colonial & Post-Colonial Exploitation

Text:

Exploitation: People die as perpetrators drain a region for profit

Post-Colonial Africa: p. 503 ff

- #28 Gladiatorial Games (264 BCE to ca. 435 CE) Est. Death toll: 3.5 Million p. 22 ff
- #4 Famines in British India (18th-20th) Est. Death toll: 27 Million p. 309 ff
- #14 Congo Free State (1885-1908) Est. Death toll: 10 Million p. 325 ff
- #96 Idi Amin (1971-1979) Est. Death toll: 300,000 p. 484 ff
- #27 Second Congo War (1998-2002) Est. Death toll: 3.8 million p. 523 ff

Hochschild, A. (1998). Chs 7, 8, 10, 19 (101-139; 150-166; 292-306). Selections from *King Leopold's ghost: A story of greed, terror, and heroism in colonial Africa*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Week 9: Thanksgiving, no class

SUGGESTION: Get a start on the Week 10 reading (heavier load than usual) during Week 9

Week 10: Reconciliation/Forgiveness/Healing/Prevention

Text:

Religion: Conflict between religious groups & religious sacrifice

Religious Killing chapter: 107 ff

- #46T Albigenian Crusade (1208-29) Est. Death toll: 1 Million p. 127 ff
- #45 Aztec Human Sacrifice (1440-1521) Est. Death toll: 1.2 Million p. 156 ff
- #6 Taiping Rebellion (1850-64) Est. Death toll: 20 Million p. 285 ff

Wrap up: What I Found: Analysis 532 ff

- Hatzfeld, J. (2006). Into the quick of life. *Index on Censorship*, 35(1), 189-195.
- Larson, C. C. (2009). Chs. 13-15, 18 (pp. 163-180; 213-224). *As we forgive: Stories of reconciliation from Rwanda*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Rimé, B., Kanyangara, P., Yzerbyt, V., & Paez, D. (2011). The impact of Gacaca tribunals in Rwanda: Psychosocial effects of participation in a truth and reconciliation process after a genocide. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 41(6), 695-706
- Shay, J. (1994). Ch. 11, Healing and tragedy (pp. 183-194). *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat trauma and the undoing of character*. New York: Scribner.
- Weiss, T. G. (n. d.). Halting atrocities in Kenya. www.greatdecisions.org Retrieved 7 January 2018 from <http://www.globalr2p.org/media/files/kenya-fpa-weiss.pdf>

GRADES:

Based on class participation in discussion (50%) and reaction papers (50%)
This course will follow the Psychology Department grading standards below.

A signifies an exceptional level of achievement. The student demonstrates an excellent grasp of the material and very strong performance across the board, or exceptional performance on most aspects of the course and good performance in others.

B signifies a good level of achievement. The student demonstrates consistently good grasp of material and good performance, or very strong performance on some aspects of the course and satisfactory performance on others.

C signifies an adequate level of achievement. The student demonstrates a satisfactory grasp of course material and adequate performance, or good performance on many aspects of the course paired with some notable deficiencies.

D signifies a minimal level of achievement. The student demonstrates the bare minimum level of understanding and/or performance to pass the course and does not fully meet the course requirements.

F signifies achievement below the minimum needed to pass the course. Evidence of student understanding of course material and/or performance is insufficient to merit credit for the course.