

HISTORY 200: Mass Violence in Europe, 1900-1950

Professor Kathryn Ciancia
Office Hours: Wednesdays, Mosse 4124, 1:30-3:30pm
Email: ciancia@wisc.edu
Seminar, Wednesday, 9-11am
Mosse Humanities Building 5257



Course Description

The first half of the twentieth century was a period of unprecedented mass violence across Europe. By focusing on violent episodes, perpetrated by—and usually against—Europeans, we will work together to try and solve the puzzle of why violence became so prevalent—indeed so *ordinary*—during this period. What were the “ingredients” for modern mass violence? What role did ordinary people play in ethnic cleansing, rape, mass shootings, and the functioning of camps? How have victims, perpetrators, bystanders, and eyewitnesses recorded these experiences, and what kinds of clues have they left for us? In this seminar class, our job as historians will be to dig deep into a wide range of secondary and primary sources—including photographs, memoirs, eyewitness accounts, movies, sound recordings, and propaganda posters—in order to answer such questions. Our case studies will include colonial genocide in German South-West Africa, mass violence during World War One, the Holocaust of European Jewry, and the rape of German and French women at the end of World War Two. Toward the end of the class, we will also consider the role that memory—both individual and collective—has played in the study of mass violence. Throughout the semester, we’ll focus on the role of the historian, as she or he analyzes sources and attempts to make sense of violence by engaging with multiple voices from the past.

The class is divided into several parts:

Weeks 1-2 deal with broad discussions of violence and source analysis, allowing us to build up a set of theoretical frameworks to which we can refer throughout the semester.

Weeks 3-7 introduce primary and some secondary sources, allowing students to debate the differences between historical interpretations, as well as engage in their own analysis of primary sources.

Weeks 8-10 allow us to delve into three texts written by historians, all of which present a particular argument about violence, genocide, and mass killing.

Weeks 11-14 shift our focus towards the issue of memory on both an individual and a collective scale.

Week 15 will consist of a student debate in which we explore how our opinions have changed since week 1.

Class Questions

The questions that we'll focus on in each class depend on the specific source material, but there are some common questions that will reoccur throughout the semester. As you read the sources, here are some questions you might have in mind.

Basic historical questions:

- ❖ What kind of violence occurred? What is the most appropriate label for the violence that we are studying (genocide, ethnic cleansing, massacre, etc.)?
- ❖ Why and how did the violence occur? What were the short and long-term causes?
- ❖ Who carried out the violence (you might think in terms of individuals and groups of people)?
- ❖ Were people other than the victims and direct perpetrators involved (e.g. bystanders, international bodies, other states) and in what ways?

Questions of memory and interpretation:

- ❖ What do the primary sources tell us? What kinds of questions can they help us to answer? What kinds of questions do they not help us to answer? What do they reveal and what do they obscure?
- ❖ How have various historians analyzed and interpreted this incidence of mass violence? To what extent can we question aspects of their interpretation?
- ❖ Which—if any—of the theoretical readings that we discussed in week 2 help us to understand this violence?
- ❖ How has this incidence of mass violence been remembered, both individually and collectively?

Class Objectives

By the end of the class, students should be able to:

- ❖ Discuss how their views about the reasons for mass violence have changed or become more nuanced through engagement with class materials;

- ❖ Create historical questions that lead to effective and engaging class discussions;
- ❖ Understand and communicate the basic arguments put forward by historians in their texts, as well as discuss and critique those arguments;
- ❖ Identify how primary sources (in a range of different forms) can help us to answer particular historical questions and the ways in which their usefulness is limited;
- ❖ Present their ideas clearly in both written and oral form.

Methods of Assessment

1. **Seminar participation (30% of total grade):** In addition to participating each week (which means listening to your classmates carefully, as well as voicing your own opinion), each student will work in a pairs to lead the first 30 minutes of one seminar.
2. **Source Analysis paper (20% of total grade):** The questions and guidelines will be distributed separately. Due in week 7.
3. **Reflection paper (10% of total grade):** Due in week 9.
4. **Final paper (40% of the total grade):** I will circulate a choice of questions, each of which will allow you to analyze various sources from the class and bring them together into an argument about mass violence. Due on Wednesday, December 18, at 3pm.

Assigned Readings

All readings are marked with a symbol to help you to locate them:

UB/R: For purchase and on reserve in College Library

CR: Course Reader

L@UW: Uploaded document or link provided at our Learn@UW site

The course readers for this class can be purchased from the Copy Center in Mosse Building. The following books are available for purchase/on reserve:

1. Helmut Walser Smith, *The Butcher's Tale: Murder and Anti-Semitism in a German Town* (New York: Norton, 2003) ISBN-13: 978-0393325058
2. Ernst Junger, *Storm of Steel* (New York: Penguin Classics, 2004) ISBN-13: 978-0142437902
3. Norman M. Naimark, *Stalin's Genocides* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011) Reprint edition. ISBN-13: 978-0691152387
4. Jan Gross, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland* (New York: Penguin Books, 2002) ISBN-13: 978-0142002407
5. Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the final solution in Poland* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1998) Reprint edition. ISBN-13: 978-0060995065
6. Sarah Farmer, *Martyred Village: Commemorating the 1944 Massacre at Oradour-sur-Glane* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000) ISBN-13: 978-0520224834

Streaming digital films

The two films for the class can be accessed at the Digital Language Lab. Streaming works at the following campus facilities: Van Hise Info Lab (rm. 464), Van Hise Learning Lab (rm. 259), Memorial Library InfoLab, Student Activity Center, and College Library 3rd floor. In the campus infolabs, use Safari or Chrome as the browser.

Here's how you can watch them:

1. Go to Learning Support Services digital language lab webpage:
<http://lss.wisc.edu/node/916>
2. You will be prompted for a login: **hs200** password: **e7P87E**

Weekly class schedule

Week 1 (09/04): Introduction to the Class

No assigned readings

Week 2 (09/11): Theories of Modern Mass Violence

Readings:

1. Stanley Milgram, "Behavioral Study of Obedience," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 67, no. 4 (1963): 371-378. **L@UW**
2. Jonathan Glover, "Close Combat," in his *Humanity: A Moral History of the Twentieth Century*, pp. 47-57. **CR**
3. Ervin Staub, "Internal and External Bystanders," in his *Overcoming Evil: Genocide, Violent Conflict, and Terrorism*, pp. 195-206. **L@UW**
4. Eric. D. Weitz, "The Modernity of Genocides" in Kiernan and Gellately, eds., *The Specter of Genocide*, pp. 53-73. **CR**
5. Mark Mazower, "Violence and the State in the Twentieth Century," *American Historical Review* 107, no. 4 (October 2002): 1158-1178. **L@UW**
6. Definitions of ethnic cleansing and genocide in the Encyclopedia Britannica:

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/229236/genocide>

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/194242/ethnic-cleansing>

Week 3 (09/18): A Case Study of Local Violence: Konitz, 1900

Reading:

1. Helmut Walser Smith, *The Butcher's Tale: Murder and Anti-Semitism in a German Town*. **UB/R**

Week 4 (09/25): Colonial Violence: German South-West Africa

Readings:

1. Ben Kiernan, *Blood and Soil*, pp. 374-390. **CR**
2. "Footsteps and Tears: An Introduction to the Construction and Context of the 1918 Blue Book," and "Report on the Natives of South-West Africa and their Treatment by Germany" (1918) in Silvester and Gewalt, *Words Cannot be Found: German Colonial Rule in Namibia*, pp. xiii-xxxvii, pp. 63-122. **CR**

Week 5 (10/02): World War I (Part I): The Armenians

Readings:

1. Documentary: The Armenian Genocide (Andrew Goldberg, 2006). **L@UW**
2. "Posthumous Memoirs of Talaat Pasha," *Current History* (New York Times) 15, no. 2 (Nov 1921): 287-95. **L@UW**
3. James Bryce and Arnold Toynbee, eds., *The Treatment of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915-1916*, pp. xv-xlii; p. 79; 88-93; 221-227; 246-254; 511-520. **CR**
4. Official statement from Turkey's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. **L@UW**

Week 6 (10/09): World War I (Part II): The Western Front

Reading:

1. Ernst Junger, *Storm of Steel*. **UB/R**

Week 7 (10/16): Class Session at Special Collections in Memorial Library

No assigned readings

Junger assignment due in class and dropbox

Week 8 (10/23): Genocide in the Soviet Union

Reading:

1. Norman Naimark, *Stalin's Genocides*. **UB/R**

Week 9 (10/30): The Holocaust (Part I): Local Collaboration

Readings:

1. Jan Gross, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland*. **UB/R**
2. Antoni Macierewicz, "The Revolution of Nihilism," from Antony Polonsky and Joanna Michlic, eds., *The Neighbors Respond*, pp. 93-102. **CR**

Reflections essay due in class and dropbox

Week 10 (11/06): The Holocaust (Part II): The Role of Ordinary Germans

Reading:

1. Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the final solution in Poland*. **UB/R**

Week 11 (11/13): Individual and Collective Memories (Part I): The Holocaust

Readings:

1. This American Life, "197: Before It Had a Name." Act I: Mr Boder Vanishes, **L@UW**
2. Robert N. Kraft, "Representations of the Holocaust in Oral Testimony," *Poetics Today* 27, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 311-330. **L@UW**
3. Lawrence L. Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies*, pp. ix-xv. **CR**
4. "Voices of the Holocaust" (Illinois Institute of Technology). Please read the transcript for Nelly Bondy and then listen to the interview, following along with the transcript. **L@UW**
5. Edith P, edited testimony at the Yale Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies. **L@UW**

Week 12 (11/20): Special Guest: Professor Mary Lou Roberts

Readings:

1. Mary Lou Roberts, *What Soldiers Do: Sex and the American GI in World War II France*, pp. 1-11, 195-254. **CR**
2. Trial Transcripts. **L@UW**

Week 13 (11/27): Individual and Collective Memories (Part II): German Victimhood?

Readings:

1. Norman M. Naimark, *The Russians in Germany*, pp. 69-140. **CR**
2. NPR News: "Silence Broken on Red Army Rapes in Germany." **L@UW**
3. Movie: *A Woman in Berlin* (Max Farberbock, 2008) **L@UW**

Week 14 (12/04): Individual and Collective Memories (Part III: Oradour-sur-Glane)

Reading:

- I. Sarah Farmer, *Martyred Village: Commemorating the 1944 Massacre at Oradour-sur-Glane*. **UB/R**

Week 15 (12/11): Concluding Debate

No assigned readings

Papers due on Wednesday, December 18, at 3pm

Class Policies and Further Resources

My office hours are posted at the top of the syllabus. Please come by! These hours are set aside specifically for students, and I would be happy to discuss any aspect of the class with you.

There is no laptop use in our seminar, cell phones should be silenced, and anything with a screen (included Ipads and other electronic devices) should be turned off. Come and speak with me if you are concerned about this policy.

You must ensure that you bring all the relevant readings to our class discussion.

We will begin discussion on time, so please make sure that you arrive a few minutes early. Persistent tardiness (as well as unexcused absences) leads to a lower participation grade.

If you are going to be absent from any of the seminars, it is your responsibility to let me know ahead of time and to obtain class notes and materials from another student.

Papers should be turned in on time to avoid a grade penalty. If there is a problem, it is important that you speak to me in plenty of time prior to the deadline. Papers are considered late if they come in after the beginning of class on the due date. Late papers will be penalized by a half-grade per day. A hard copy of the paper should be submitted in class AND an electronic copy should be uploaded into the dropbox at Learn@UW. Email submissions will not be accepted.

Academic honesty is important to me. There is information about what constitutes

plagiarism here (http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html), but please come and speak with me during office hours if you have questions or concerns. Pleading ignorance about what constitutes plagiarism is not an acceptable excuse. You can read more about student codes of conduct here (<http://students.wisc.edu/saja/misconduct/UWSI4.html#points>)

Please note that access to movie streaming is restricted to students in this course. Students may not copy, share, distribute or otherwise allow or facilitate any unauthorized access to the content or the passwords issued. Individuals who violate this provision will be subject to disciplinary action under the UW-Madison Academic and/or Non-Academic Misconduct Codes.

Disability guidelines for course accommodations can be found at the UW McBurney Disability Resource Center site: <http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/>

The University's Writing Center is a wonderful resource that allows you to work with a consultant to improve your written work. Since writing is a process, everyone—even the most experienced writers—can benefit from one of the individualized appointments. Take a look at their website (<http://www.writing.wisc.edu/index.html>) for more information.

All papers should conform to the specified page limit. They should be double-spaced, with good margins and consistent, accurate footnotes. The Chicago Manual of Style can be found online at www.chicagomanualofstyle.org

Email protocol

If you have questions for Professor Ciancia, first read the information on this syllabus carefully to see if the answer you're looking for is included. If your question is not answered by the syllabus, please refer to the "Frequently Asked Questions" forum on our Learn@UW website. If you still cannot find an answer, you may ask the question in an email. Please be courteous and professional. If I think that the answer to your question would be helpful to other students, I will post both the question and the answer under the "FAQ" forum. Please allow 24 hours for an email response.