

**Department of Sociology  
University of Toronto  
SOC330H1S – LEC0101/LEC9101 - *Sociology of Atrocities*  
Winter 2021  
Class time: Monday, 12pm-3pm  
Synchronous, through Zoom  
Professor Ron Levi**

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### **SCOPE AND AIMS**

This course focuses on the sociology of atrocities. We focus on the range of social actors and processes involved when atrocities occur, how we identify, name, and respond to atrocities (such as genocide or crimes against humanity), the behavior of bystanders and intervenors, cultural trauma and the effects of atrocities, and processes of commemoration. We investigate the collective and social dynamics to try and explain the role of individuals, groups, and institutional actors in committing atrocities, including the role of group identities, bureaucracies, collective decision-making, shared repertoires, legacies of hate, and peer networks. We study the role of institutional actors – in particular legal institutions, but also humanitarian bodies, journalists, and others – in identifying, naming and sometimes responding to these atrocities, along with sociological evidence about how they do so and the efficacy of any such response. We include sociological research on bystanders and on those who intervene to save or protect those at risk. Finally, we attend to the lasting effects of atrocities, including health, collective memory, cultural trauma, and commemoration. Throughout the course, we rely on a range of materials and cases, including social science research, legal materials, testimonies, official documents and media accounts.

### **PREREQUISITES**

SOC201H1, SOC202H1, SOC204H1 plus two of SOC251H1, SOC252H1, SOC254H1. Students without these prerequisites will be removed at any time discovered and without notice. **This is a program-only course**, and the readings and writing assignments reflect this.

### **READINGS**

Readings are available through Quercus.

### **YOUR COMMENTS**

It always helps to get more feedback from students. So I have put together an online form for submitting feedback on the course during the term. It is at <https://forms.gle/3zd5YAzeQfr22aoi6> . Feel free to use it!

### **EVALUATION**

<u>Description</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Date(s) Due</u>	<u>Weight</u>
<b>Weekly Discussion Post</b>	75-100 words	Weekly, First post due January 18, 2021	10%

<b>Stretching and Connecting</b>	Drawing connections between readings across weeks, ~350 words	Twice during term, 7.5% each	15%
<b>Case Study</b>	Application to a current issue, with prompted questions	February 8, 2021	25%
<b>Case Study #2 (Film)</b>	Short essay	March 15, 2021	20%
<b>Public Facing Op-Ed</b>	Writing for a public audience, ~1500 words.	April 9, 2021	30%

### Handing in Assignments

Assignments must be submitted by 12:10pm on the due date specified above. Papers handed in on the due date after 12:10pm will be subject to a late penalty as outlined below.

All assignments must be handed in electronically via Quercus. The instructor and TA will not accept electronic copies of assignments via email.

### Discussion Posts (10%)

Traditional forms of communication are changing. While you are encouraged to ask questions in class, we will rely on an online discussion board to help stimulate discussion and keep students engaged. The first post will be **17 January 2021**.

By midnight on the night before each lecture, students must submit one post on the Quercus discussion board. Your post should raise something you learned from the reading, a question raised by the reading, or a connection between the reading and a current event. Think of this as an interesting idea, maybe in the style of something you could see on Twitter.

Each discussion post is worth 1%. To get full points you submit comments on 10 weeks of material. Each post should be no more than 100 words. Be concise!

### Stretching and Connecting (15%)

For “stretching and connecting,” each submission must compare and contrast two weeks of readings. The point is not to compare each article in those two weeks, but to reflect on the two weeks of readings and identify points of convergence and tension. Each submission is to be no more than 350 words, and is worth 7.5% each (two submissions, for a total of 15%).

### Procedures and Rules

#### 1. Missed tests

Students cannot make-up tests unless they missed the original date for reasons beyond their control (such as, illness, accidents, funerals). If a student miss tests or submit assignments later for medical reasons, the student must contact me (not the TA) within 2 days of the missed test and declare their absence on the system (ACORN). For other reasons, such as family emergencies or personal reasons, they must have the college registrar email me. Students who have then been approved to take make-up

tests will do so by making an appointment with the TA. A student who misses a test and the subsequent make-up test will not have a third chance to take the test.

## **2. Missed Assignments**

- In order not to be considered late, assignments must be submitted by the due date on the syllabus via Quercus.
- You are expected to keep a back-up copy of your assignment in case it is lost.
- If a personal or family crisis prevents you from meeting an assignment (not a test) deadline, you must contact your college registrar and have your registrar email the instructor (NOT the TA) directly. It is a good idea anyway to advise your college registrar if a crisis is interfering with your studies).
- Late assignments will otherwise be penalized **5%** on the assignment per day. The penalty will run from the day the assignment was due until the day it is submitted via Quercus. The penalty also accrues during weekends and holidays. Assignments that are more than 5 days late will not be accepted.

## **Grade appeals**

Instructors and teaching assistants take the marking of assignments very seriously, and will work diligently to be fair, consistent, and accurate. Nonetheless, mistakes and oversights occasionally happen. If you believe that to be the case, you must adhere to the following rules:

- If it is a mathematical error simply alert the TA of the error.
- In the case of more substantive appeals, you must:
  1. Wait at least 24 hours after receiving your mark.
  2. Carefully re-read your assignment, all assignment guidelines and marking schemes and the grader's comments.
  3. You have up to one month from the date of return of the item to inquire about the mark beyond the course instructor. In order to meet this deadline, you must inquire about the mark with your instructor no longer than 15 days after receiving your mark. If you are not satisfied with the instructor's re-evaluation, you may appeal to the Associate Chair, if the term work is worth at least 20% of the course mark. If your work is remarked, you must accept the resulting mark.

### **If you wish to appeal:**

- A. You must submit to the instructor a written explanation of why you think your mark should be altered. Please note statements such as "I need a higher grade to apply to X" are not compelling. Also, please note that upon re-grade your mark may go down, stay the same, or go up.
- B. Attach to your written explanation your original assignment, including all of the original comments.

## **Electronic communication and electronic learning technology**

Email communication is rapid, convenient, and efficient—and you are encouraged to use it to enhance your learning and experience in the course. With that said, it is essential that you follow a few rules:

- Assignments will not be accepted via email. See above for how to submit them.
- All course communication should be conducted through Quercus or your utoronto account.
- All emails must include the course code (e.g., SOC330) in the subject line.
- All emails should be signed with the student's full name and student number.

- Emails from students will generally be answered within 72 hours of receipt.
- Treat emails as you would any other professional communication.
- Emails that ask questions that are answered in the course syllabus or website (e.g., “how much is assignment X worth”) will not receive a response.

**Emails that do not follow these guidelines will not receive a response.**

### **Classroom etiquette**

- Students are expected to attend class on time.
- Recording lectures is strictly forbidden without written permission from the instructor.

### **Academic integrity**

Cheating and misrepresentation will not be tolerated. Students who commit an academic offence face serious penalties. Avoid plagiarism by citing properly: practices acceptable in high school may prove unacceptable in university. Know where you stand by reading the “Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters” in the Calendar of the Faculty of Arts and Science.

Academic integrity is fundamental to learning and scholarship at the University of Toronto. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community ensures that the U of T degree that you earn will be valued as a true indication of your individual academic achievement, and will continue to receive the respect and recognition it deserves.

Familiarize yourself with the University of Toronto’s Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters: (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>). It is the rule book for academic behaviour at the U of T, and you are expected to know the rules.

### **Student resources**

**Accessibility.** If you require accommodations or have any accessibility concerns, please visit <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility> as soon as possible.

The University of Toronto is committed to equity and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect. As a course instructor, I will neither condone nor tolerate behaviour that undermines the dignity or self-esteem of any individual in this course and wish to be alerted to any attempt to create an intimidating or hostile environment. It is our collective responsibility to create a space that is inclusive and welcomes discussion. Discrimination, harassment and hate speech will not be tolerated.

**Readings: This is a tentative reading list. Readings are subject to change during the semester.**

## **INTRODUCTION**

*Week 1, 11 January 2021*

1. The Economist. 2018. "Never again, and again: Can the world stop genocide?" *The Economist*. 8 December.
2. Goldhagen, Daniel Jonah. 2015. "How Auschwitz is Misunderstood." *The New York Times*. 24 January.
3. Luft, Aliza. 2016. "What Vichy France can teach us about the Normalization of State Violence." *Scatterplot*.

## **PART I: ATROCITY COMMISSION**

*Week 2, 18 January 2021*

### **KILLING AND PERPETRATORS: CLASSIC DEBATES**

1. Browning, Christopher. "Ordinary Men." Excerpt at Pp. 84-100 in D. Niewyk, ed., *The Holocaust*.
2. Goldhagen, Daniel Jonah. 1996. "Hitler's Willing Executioners." Excerpt at Pp. 91-103 in D. Niewyk, ed., *The Holocaust*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed (2003).
3. Hinton, Alexander Laban. 1998. "Why Did You Kill?: The Cambodian Genocide and the Dark Side of Face and Honor." *Journal of Asian Studies* 57: 93-122.
4. Fujii, Lee Ann. 2008. "The Power of Local Ties: Popular Participation in the Rwandan Genocide." *Security Studies* 17:568-597.

*Week 3, 25 January 2021*

### **INSTITUTIONS, AND OTHER MESO- AND MACRO-LEVEL EXPLANATIONS**

*Application week: Is the idea of the "desk killer" helpful for thinking about a broad array of contexts? Does the concept of the "desk killer" lose its meaning when we stretch it? Can we think of the role of a "desk mitigator"?*

1. Misser, François & Ives Jaumain. 1994. "Rwanda: Death by Radio." *Index on Censorship* 23:4-5, 72-74.
2. Bauman, Zygmunt. 1989. "The Uniqueness and Normality of the Holocaust." Excerpt at Pp. 82-88 in Neil Levi and Michael Rothberg, eds., *The Holocaust: Theoretical Readings*. Rutgers University Press, 2003.
3. Broch, Ludivine. 2014. "Professionalism in the final solution: French railway workers and the Jewish deportations, 1942-4." *Contemporary European History* 23:359-380.
4. Hagan, John and Wenona Rymond-Richmond. 2008. "The Collective Dynamics of Racial Dehumanization and Genocidal Victimization in Darfur." *American Sociological Review* 73: 875-902.
5. *For application discussion:* Linehan, Hugh. 2019. "The perfect office worker's capacity for evil." *The Irish Times*. 16 November.

### Optional:

- a. Hilberg, Raul. 1989. Excerpt from "The Bureaucracy of Annihilation." In *Unanswered Questions: Nazi Germany and the Genocide of the Jews*. 119-133.
- b. Straus, Scott. 2007. "What Is the Relationship between Hate Radio and Violence? Rethinking Rwanda's "Radio Machete." *Politics & Society* 35: 609-637.
- c. Luban, David. "Complicity and Lesser Evils: A Tale of Two Lawyers."

Week 4, 1 February 2021

**FORCE, DURESS, JUSTIFICATION, AND PERPETRATOR NARRATIVES**

*Application week: How might we think about perpetration, justification, and duress? Do perpetrators of atrocities seek to manage stigma, and how? What expectations of conduct do we have from people, and how do we defend these expectations of conduct?*

1. Bryant, Emily, Emily Brooke Schimke, Hollie Nyseth Brehm and Christopher Uggen. 2018. "Techniques of Neutralization and Identity Work Among Accused Genocide Perpetrators." *Social Problems* 65:584–602.
2. Kershner, Isabel. "Pardon plea by Adolf Eichmann, Nazi war criminal, is made public." *New York Times Online* (2016).
3. Arendt, Hannah. 1963. Excerpt from *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*.
4. Haslam, S. Alexander, Stephen D. Reicher, and Megan E. Birney. 2014. "Nothing by mere authority: Evidence that in an experimental analogue of the Milgram paradigm participants are motivated not by orders but by appeals to science." *Journal of Social Issues* 70: 473-488.
5. *For Application Discussion: Prosecutor v. Erdemovic*. 1997. Excerpt. International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

Week 5, 8 February 2021

**RESCUE AND RESISTANCE**

*Application week: How might we think about the act of saving people? Does it all come down to psychological attributes? What are the conditions under which we declare people as "saviors," and when do we resist doing so?*

1. Ignatieff, Michael. 2013. "One Country Saved Its Jews. Were They Just Better People?" *New Republic*.
2. Braun, Robert. 2018. "Minorities and the Clandestine Collective Action Dilemma: The Secret Protection of Jews during the Holocaust." *American Journal of Sociology* 124: 263-308.
3. Fox, Nicole, and Hollie Nyseth Brehm. 2018. "'I Decided to Save Them': Factors That Shaped Participation in Rescue Efforts during Genocide in Rwanda." *Social Forces* 96:1625-1648.
4. Luft, Aliza. 2015. "Toward a dynamic theory of action at the micro level of genocide: Killing, desistance, and saving in 1994 Rwanda." *Sociological Theory* 33: 148-172.
5. *For Application Discussion: Sinclair, H. Colleen*. 2020. "When Good People do Nothing: On Bystanders and Border Camps." *Psychology Today*.

15 February 2021

**READING WEEK, NO CLASS**

Week 6, 22 February 2021

**RESPONDING TO ATROCITIES: LAW, CIVILIZATION AND JUSTICE**

*Writing Skills week: How do we represent atrocities and our responses?*

1. Harris, Whitney 2006. "Tyranny on Trial: The Trial of the Major German War Criminals at Nuremberg, 1945-46, Address to the American Bar Association." *The International Lawyer*: 7-13.
2. Excerpts from opening statements for the prosecution at the Nuremberg Trials:

- 2.1 Excerpt from Justice Jackson's Opening Statement for the Prosecution, in *Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal*. Volume II. Proceedings: 11/14/1945-11/30/1945. Nuremberg: IMT, 1947. Pages 3-8, 44-46.
- 2.2 Michael Marrus. 1997. "Crimes against Humanity" (including the addresses of Hartley Shawcross and François de Menthon). Pp.185-193 in *The Nuremberg War Crimes Trial 1945-46: A Documentary History*. Boston: Bedford.
3. Douglas, Lawrence. 2001. "The Idiom of Judgment: Crimes against Humanity." Pp. 38-64 in *The Memory of Judgment: Making Law and History in the Trials of the Holocaust*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Week 7, 1 March 2021

**NAMING A CRIME: GENOCIDE**

*Application Week: What do we think of as genocide? What is the importance of the term? How might we think about the idea of cultural genocide, and is it the same as the "social death" that other approaches to genocide have used?*

1. Jones, Adam. 2006. *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction*. Pp.8-23. New York: Routledge.
2. "Genocide", and *Prosecutor v. Akayesu* (1998, International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda), as excerpted in Beth Van Schaack and Ronald C. Slye, eds. 2007. *International Criminal Law and Its Enforcement – Cases and Materials*. New York: Foundation. Pp. 410-420.
3. Card, Claudia. 2003. "Genocide and Social Death." *Hypatia* 18:63-79.
4. *For Application Discussion: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*. 2015. *Honouring the truth, reconciling for the future: summary of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* (Ottawa: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). Excerpt.

Week 8, 8 March 2021

**RESPONDING TO ATROCITIES: ATROCITIES, CODES AND TABOOS IN WAR**

*Application Week: Warfare is based on legal rules. How do we think about the role of lawyers in interpreting these rules? Does terrorism change these questions? Why or how?*

1. Jefferson, Catherine. 2014. "Origins of the norm against chemical weapons." *International Affairs* 90: 647-661.
2. Dromi, Shai M. 2016. "For good and country: Nationalism and the diffusion of humanitarianism in the late nineteenth century." *Sociological Review*: 79-97.
3. Carpenter, Charli. 2013. "How scared are people of "killer robots" and why does it matter?." *Open Democracy*. 4 July.
4. *For Application Discussion: Watch From 9/11 to Waterboarding – The Inside Story* and skim the "Torture Memos" (to be provided).

Week 9, 15 March 2021

**THE LEGAL RECOGNITION OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE ATROCITIES**

*Writing Skills week: Public Op-Eds on Difficult Questions*

1. Seifert, Ruth. 1994. "War and rape: A preliminary analysis." *The Criminology of War* (1994): 307-26.
2. Mackinnon, Catherine. 1994. "Rape, Genocide, and Women's Human Rights." *Harvard Women's Law Journal* 17:5-16.
3. *Prosecutor v. Akayesu* (1998, International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda), as excerpted in Beth Van Schaack and Ronald C. Slye, eds. 2007. *International Criminal Law and Its Enforcement – Cases and Materials*. New York: Foundation. Pp. 470-480.

4. Wood, Elisabeth Jean. 2018. "Rape as a practice of war: Toward a typology of political violence." *Politics & Society* 46: 513-537.

*Week 10, 22 March 2021*

**REAL TIME JUSTICE IN RESPONDING TO ATROCITIES**

*Writing Skills Week: Answering Difficult Questions*

*Application week: How might the International Criminal Court discuss its achievements? What sort of Prosecutor does it need? Is the International Criminal Court a "criminal court" or an international court? Does this matter?*

1. Rubin, Elizabeth. 2006. "If not Peace, then Justice." *New York Times Magazine*. 2 April.
2. Glasius, Marlies. 2009. "'We ourselves, we are part of the functioning': The ICC, victims, and civil society in the Central African Republic." *African Affairs* 108 (430): 49-67.
3. Savelsberg, Joachim. 2017. "International Criminal Law as One Response to World Suffering: General Observations and the Case of Darfur." Pp. 361-373 in R. Anderson, ed., *Alleviating World Suffering*. Springer.
4. Posner, Eric. 2013. "Assad and the Death of the International Criminal Court." *Slate*. 19 September.
5. *For Application Discussion*: Students will be assigned short blog posts from *The Next ICC Prosecutor, a Symposium*.

*Week 11, 29 March 2021*

**RESPONDING TO ATROCITIES THROUGH COLLECTIVE MEMORY**

*Application week: How do events enter collective memory? Does their memory change over time?*

1. Wojcik, Adrian et al. 2010. "Living on the ashes: Collective representations of Polish-Jewish history among people living in the former Warsaw Ghetto area." *Cities* 27:195-203.
2. King, Elisabeth. 2010. "Memory controversies in post-genocide Rwanda: Implications for peacebuilding." *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 5: 293-309.
3. Ignatieff, Michael. 1997. "Digging up the Dead." *New Yorker* 73(34), 84.
4. Eyerman, Ron. 2019. "Perpetrator Trauma and Collective Guilt: The My Lai Massacre." Pp.167-194 in *Memory, Trauma, and Identity*. Palgrave.

*Week 12, 5 April 2021*

**Discussion and Topic to be Determined Collectively**

**9 April 2021 Final Op Eds Due**