



# GENOCIDE STUDIES AND MASSIVE VIOLENCE

## *Course Description*

SIS code of the course: RET8059  
Lecture + Seminar, 2 hours/week, 6 credits

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### **Why study genocide?**

Genocide, the extermination of one group of people by another group or nation, has long been part of human history. To study genocide, its commission and consequences, is to explore an essential and tragic element of human society and behavior. Fundamental to the commission of genocide is the element of choice. As we understand genocide, we understand that the individual chooses to become a *genocidaire*.

There are many elements which motivate genocidal behavior. The motivation for committing genocide is related to central elements of society such as history, politics, economics, sociology, ethics, religion and even theologies and ideologies. Genocide is always a collective act, but it is also closely related to issues of individual identity.

### **What is the course about?**

The course *Genocide Studies and Massive Violence*, is a progressive course – the first of its kind at Charles University, the Czech Republic and in Central and Eastern Europe. It is a unique and flexible course available to both undergraduate students and MA candidates from a variety of disciplines, including but not limited to history, political science, religious studies, theology, cultural anthropology, sociology, philosophy or law. Course requirements will differ for both levels. Details of these differences will be provided on request.

Crucially, it is impossible to understand the significance of the European Union without understanding the Holocaust and other genocides of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Prevention of genocide and respect for the human and civil rights of all individuals are one of the fundamental aims of democratic institutions in today's world. This is why we study genocide.

Through the study and exploration of the different genocides of the 20<sup>th</sup> century a big step is taken towards understanding the state of world politics, religion and society in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century – our world today.

When you successfully complete this course you will be equipped with much essential knowledge and study skills. One can only study genocide by looking critically at society. Through the study of the tragic phenomenon of genocide, one compares – internationally, comparatively and theoretically, you will also see how these crimes against humanity are represented in a variety of media and art, including cinema, memorials both permanent and temporary, and more. The course will also examine how this subject can be taught at

different educational levels, from secondary school through university, including how teachers should approach the subject with their students.

After completing the course, you will have extensive knowledge about some of the most important cases of history, genocide and massive violence which have impacted the world today. Prominently, these include the continent-wide Nazi genocide of European

Jewry, the massive murder of the Roma and Sinti people, the genocide of Armenians and other minorities by the Ottoman Empire during the First World War, the more recent genocides in Cambodia and Rwanda, and other episodes of massive violence such as Bosnia in the 1990's, Darfur in Sudan, East Timor and occasions of massive violence in the post-Soviet empire. To explore the *Holodomor*, the mass starvation of Ukrainians, provides much understanding of the current crisis there today.

## Teaching and Assessment

Course participants will obtain knowledge about the causes and motivations for genocide. Discussions will focus on how both nations and individuals remember and commemorate the unforgettable violence conducted by participants upon the victims.

The course is highly inter-disciplinary. International scholars will give lectures and engage in close discussion with course participants. Genocide Studies is a cutting-edge discipline which provides deep insight into many perspectives. Originating in North America out of Holocaust Studies, today Genocide Studies is new to the Czech Republic and Europe. The course will be taught in English.

## Instructors

**Dr. Pavel Hosek**, the guarantor of the course, Associate Professor of the Protestant Theological Faculty of the Charles University and the director of the Religious Studies Department.

**Dr. Paul A. Levine**, key instructor of the course, Holocaust and Genocide scholar. For over 20 years, Dr. Levine has lectured on Raoul Wallenberg, Sweden and the Holocaust, and Holocaust memory and pedagogy in North America, Israel, and most widely throughout Europe to both academic and public audiences. Levine has published extensively on various aspects of Holocaust history, memory, and pedagogy related to teaching Holocaust history and genocide. His most recent publication is a major study of Raoul Wallenberg, entitled "Raoul Wallenberg in Budapest; Myth, History and Holocaust", Published originally in 2010 (London). He is co-author of „Tell ye your Children, a book about the Holocaust in Europe, 1933- 1945”, which has now been distributed or purchased in almost two million copies in Sweden, Germany, Portugal, Finland, France, Russia, Latvia, Estonia, Norway, Denmark, and Japan.

**Dr. Gerhard Baumgartner**, instructor for Roma and Sinti Genocide, research director of the Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance, Vienna, historian and specialist in teaching about Roma and Sinti genocide.

**Dr. Miroslav Mares**, instructor for nationalism and extremism, professor of the Department of Political Science of the Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University, Brno, specialist in political extremism and radicalism.

**Dr. Hayk Demoyan**, instructor for the history and memory of the Armenian Genocide, director of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute in Yerevan, Armenia.

**Dr. Tomas Smid**, instructor for genocidal violence in post-Soviet republics, researcher and university lecturer in the field of ethnic conflicts, terrorism, and post-Soviet area.

## **Timing and Course Lessons**

Study course „Genocide and Massive Violence“ is scheduled for Autumn term 2015/2016. The course starts on 7/10/2015. Lessons will take place on Wednesdays from 15:10 till 16:45 at the Protestant Theological Faculty, Černá 9, Prague 1.

### **The course consists of following thematic lessons:**

**Week 1:** Introduction to Genocide Studies

**Week 2:** Case Study: The Holocaust

**Week 3:** Case Study: The History and Memory of the Armenian Genocide

**Week 4:** Causes, Motivations and Consequences of Genocide: Early Psychological Development and Perceptions of ‘the Other’ and the Psychology of Massive Violence

**Week 5:** Nationalism and Extremism as Causes and Motivation of Genocide and Massive Violence

**Week 6:** Case Study: The Nazi Genocide of the Roma and Sinti: Empirical Data and Interpretations

**Week 7:** Religion, Genocide, Ethics and Theology; Perspectives and Significance

**Week 8:** Case Study: Comparative Histories and Memories of Genocide; the cases of Cambodia, Rwanda, Darfur and East Timor

**Week 9:** Case Study: Histories and Memories of Genocidal Violence in post-Soviet Republics

**Week 10:** On Representation and Teaching About Genocide

**Week 11:** Seminar: Summing Up? Is Genocide in the Future Preventable?

***The syllabus of the course has been constructed in cooperation with Archaeology of Evil Research Centre.***