

INTNLREL 145  
Summer Session 2026  
Mon/Wed 12:00–2:00  
Classroom: TBD

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## Genocide and Humanitarian Intervention

### Course Description:

This seminar traces the history of genocide in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries and the question of humanitarian intervention to stop it. The discussion begins with the Armenian genocide during the First World War and includes the Holocaust and Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge in the 1970s. Coverage of genocide and humanitarian intervention since the 1990s includes the wars in Bosnia, Rwanda, Kosovo, and Darfur, the ongoing genocides against the Yazidis, the Rohingya, the Uighurs, and the recent examples in Ukraine, Gaza, and (once again) Darfur.

### Course Readings:

Samantha Power, *"A Problem from Hell": America and the Age of Genocide* (2002).

For each class session, supplemental readings—mostly newspaper and magazine articles—will be distributed in class or made available online. Each of these readings offers a present-day "hook" to the historical events covered in Samantha Power's book and since its publication, from Armenia to Gaza.

### Course Requirements:

The course is a colloquium, which means that **class attendance and participation** are especially important, counting for as much as 30% of the final grade. A central component of the course is a close reading and discussion of the assigned texts. There will be **two response papers (25% each)**, two to three pages long, and a **final paper (40%)**, about five pages long. The topics, format, and due dates will be announced during the first weeks of the course.

Participation: Students are expected to participate in the course by doing assigned readings in advance; by coming to class informed and ready for discussion; by showing appropriate respect to the instructor and fellow students, even in disagreement; and by demonstrating a mature engagement with the themes of the course, regardless of their prior interest. Students demonstrate participation in class by asking questions, responding to prompts by the instructor, and engaging with their classmates' ideas.

Absences: Attendance is mandatory. Absences may be excused for family emergencies or illness, with advance notice if possible. To make up an excused absence, students will submit a 1–2-page double-spaced reflection, responding to the readings discussed in the missed class. Unexcused absences will be counted against your final grade.

### **Course Schedule & Readings**

#### **Week One**

Mon: Course Introduction and Overview

Wed: Ukraine 2023/Armenia 1915

Power, *"A Problem from Hell"*, pp. 1-16

Articles from *The New York Times* since 2006 about Turkey, Armenia, and the question of whether the massacres of 1915 in fact constitute genocide; if so, whether the Turkish government ought to be pressured into acknowledging that fact. Ukraine items TBD.

#### **Week Two**

Mon: The Holocaust

Power, *"A Problem from Hell"*, pp. 17-45

Christopher Browning, "The Nazi Decision to Commit Mass Murder," *German Studies Review*, Vol. 17, no. 3 (October 1994): 473-481.

Wed: Making Genocide a Crime

Power, *"A Problem from Hell"*, pp. 47-85

**Week Three**

Mon: Genocide in Cambodia

Power, *"A Problem from Hell"*, pp. 86-154

Articles from *The Economist* and *The Guardian* about the ongoing war-crimes trial in Cambodia of Khmer Rouge officials, against the backdrop of a general discussion regarding the costs and benefits of such tribunals.

Wed: U.S. Ratification of the Genocide Convention; The Kurds of Iraq

Power, *"A Problem from Hell"*, pp. 155-169, 170-245

**Week Four**

Mon: Genocide in Bosnia

Power, *"A Problem from Hell"*, pp. 247-327

Wed: Genocide in Rwanda

Power, *"A Problem from Hell"*, pp. 329-389

**Week Five**

Mon: Srebrenica Massacre

Power *"A Problem from Hell"*, pp. 391-441

Articles from *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, and *The Guardian* about the 2012 prosecution of the perpetrators of the Srebrenica massacre of 1995, especially the recent arrest and ongoing trials at the Hague of former Bosnian Serb leaders Radovan Karadzic and General Ratko Mladic.

Wed: Kosovo

Power, *"A Problem from Hell"*, 443-473

### **Week Six**

Mon: Punishing Genocide

Power, "*A Problem from Hell*", pp. 475-516

Articles about recent court cases involving the crime of genocide, including the trial of Slobodan Milosevic. The purpose is to bring Samantha Power's chapter about courtroom justice up to date.

Wed: Darfur in 2004–06 . . . and Today

Nicholas D. Kristof, "Genocide in Slow Motion," *The New York Review of Books*, February 9, 2006; available at: [www.nybooks.com/articles/18674](http://www.nybooks.com/articles/18674)

Lydia Polgreen, "Death and Displacement Return to Darfur," *The New York Times*, June 25, 2023

### **Week Seven**

Mon: Recent Genocide Cases & Controversies (Part I)

"The Uses and Abuses of the G-Word," *The Economist*, June 4, 2011.

Bertrand M. Patenaude, "The Genocide Trap" *Hoover Institution Weekly Essay*, September 7, 2005. Available at: <http://www.hoover.org/news/daily-report/25852>

[other readings to be distributed]

Wed: Recent Genocide Cases and Controversies (Part II)

Readings on the genocides against the Yazidis, the Rohingya, the Uighurs and Ukraine.

**Week Eight**

Mon: Gaza and the Question of Genocide

Omer Bartov, "I'm a Genocide Scholar: I Know It When I See It," *New York Times*, July 15, 2025

Bret Stephens, "No, Israel Is Not Committing Genocide in Gaza," *New York Times*, July 22, 2025

Alex de Waal, "Netanyahu Is Choosing To Starve Gaza," *New York Times*, August 1, 2025

Other readings TBA

Wed: Capstone Readings and Review

Linda Kinstler, "The Bitter Fight Over the Meaning of 'Genocide,'" *The New York Times Magazine*, August 20, 2024

Other readings TBA