Can understanding the behaviors of the actors involved in human rights violations improve how we respond to them? This course explores motivations and experiences of perpetrators, victims, bystanders and rescuers to draw lessons for defining justice and rebuilding human relationships. First, we consider understandings of moral reasoning, justice, guilt, and societal reconstruction. Then we explore why people behave the way they do during periods of widespread political violence, and what it does to victims. Finally, we examine and assess examples of different responses to such violence in light of these understandings, seeking to connect human experience to justice.

Required Text:


Other readings are on Moodle.

Grade components:

1. **Participation**: Worth 20% of the grade. This is not a lecture course; careful, well-prepared participation in discussion is very important. As you do the readings, make sure to write up one or two discussion questions for each period, which we will draw on from time to time.

2. **3 1-page response papers**: These informal, ungraded 1-page (single-spaced) papers can be on any three readings across the course of the semester that particularly interest you. They are intended to help you to clarify your thoughts and to articulate questions before the discussion. They are due the day we discuss the reading. They are low-stakes because they are ungraded, but do contribute toward the participation grade.

3. **2 short writing assignments**: There will be two 5-page papers through which you will engage with the material in Parts I and II of the course, respectively (Paper 1 due February 15th, and Paper 2 due March 19th; prompts will be given separately). Worth 15% each (total 30% of the grade).

4. **Final paper**: You will write a 15-to-20-page paper on a topic that engages with the course’s central themes through a case study. Further instructions will be offered later in the semester, and a paper proposal is due March 1. Due May 3rd. Worth 30% of the grade.

5. **Presentation**: In the final weeks of the course, you will each share your final paper’s research and analysis with the class. Worth 20% of the grade.
Grading scale:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>A work 1) is on time; 2) accomplishes the assigned tasks fully; 3) is clearly and engagingly written using proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation; 4) well-organized; 5) correctly cites all sources used; 6) is carefully and thoroughly researched, if research is required; 6) and shows a superior level of creativity, thoughtfulness and insight into the topic at hand.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>85-89</td>
<td>“B” work competently accomplishes requirements 1-5 listed above, and is generally well done, but shows lower levels of creativity, originality, and/or insight.</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>80-84</td>
<td>“C” work offers a minimum level of competence on some or all of requirements 1-5, but contains serious flaws in argument, writing, research, and/or organization.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>75-79</td>
<td>“D” work does not competently realize most or all of requirements 1-5 and contains many serious flaws.</td>
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<td>B-</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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Note: Plagiarized work will not be accepted and will incur significant penalties. If you are using someone else’s ideas, words, or research, you MUST cite them properly.

You may have 1 unexcused absence over the course of the semester; further absence will result in grade deduction.

Unless you have arranged an extension on a paper before the due date, each day late will incur a deduction of one letter grade.

Barring medical or family emergency, incompletes must be negotiated before the end of classes, and the paperwork filled out by the last day of class. Final papers must be delivered in hard copy, not email.

SCHEDULE (subject to change as necessary)

PART I: FRAMEWORK: GUILT, JUSTICE AND SOCIETAL REORIENTATION

Tues, Jan 25: Welcome to the course, and brief video clips of survivor and perpetrator testimony

***Question to consider for January 27th***

1. Think of a time when you made a decision that to you clearly had a moral element to it, a choice between right and wrong; through what process did you make that decision? How much thinking did you do?
2. Through what process (if any) do you come to the conclusion that something you did was wrong?

**Tues, Feb 1:** What is guilt? How might we distinguish between degrees and types? And how does it relate to criminal justice?

“*Justice* can be interpreted as ‘to each party his/her due’; the problem is determining what this means.” – Johan Galtung


**Thurs, Feb 3:** What is the difference between retributive and restorative justice? And how might restorative justice be pursued?


**Tues, Feb 8:** What models are available for societal restructuring in the aftermath of serious human rights abuses? How do they relate to justice?


**PART II: ACTORS: PERPETRATORS, BYSTANDERS, RESCUERS AND VICTIMS**

Key questions to consider with these readings, when concrete examples are offered:

- What is the nature of the harm/wrong/violation discussed?
- Who is responsible?
- Why did the perpetrators do it?
- What kinds of guilt do the people involved bear?
- According to the models we’ve discussed in Part I, what are possible responses?
- What *should* justice look like, and why?
- What factors should be taken into account in reorienting the relevant societal relationships? What needs to be addressed? By whom, and how?

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Perpetrators

Thurs, Feb 10: James Waller, *Becoming Evil*, Part I

Tues, Feb 15: Waller, *Becoming Evil*, Part II; **Paper 1 due**

Thurs, Feb 17: Waller, *Becoming Evil*, Part III

Tues, Feb 22:


Bystanders

Thurs, Feb 24:

Steven K. Baum, “Bystanders,” in *The Psychology of Genocide* (brief excerpt) and

Stanley Cohen, “Bystander States,” in *States of Denial: Knowing About Atrocities and Suffering*

Rescuers and Altruism

Tues, Mar 1 (**Final Paper proposal due**)


Stanley Cohen, “Acknowledgement Now,” in *States of Denial*


Victims


Tues, Mar 8: Herman continued, and


Thurs, Mar 10: **Group discussion of final papers projects, and Paper 2 due**
March 15 and 17: SPRING BREAK!

PART III: RESPONSES IN PRACTICE

Key questions to consider:

- What is the nature of the violation being responded to?
- Who were the victims?
- Who is responsible? Why did they do it? What types of guilt are involved?
- Who is doing the responding, and who does the response target?
- What concerns (regarding justice and societal reorientation) does it address? Which are left unaddressed?
- How successful is the response? What are its strong points? Failures and shortcomings?
- To what extent do the responses adequately address factors related to perpetrator/bystander motivation and/or victim impact discussed in Part II?
- Can you think of ways that an understanding of human behavior/motivation/tendencies (of both perpetrators and victims) could strengthen the response, or avoid certain problems?

Tues, Mar 22: Confessions

**Guest Speaker:** Leigh A. Payne.


Thurs, Mar 24: International criminal justice


Tues, Mar 29: Local justice


Thurs, Mar 31: Community and trust


Tues, April 5: Revising historical accounts
Timothy Longman and Théonèste Rutagengwa, “Memory, identity, and community in Rwanda” in My Neighbor, My Enemy.

**Thurs, April 7: Coexistence projects**


**Tues, April 12: Education**

Martha Minow, “Education for Coexistence,” in Imagine Coexistence.

**Case studies:** Each date will include background reading provided by presenters

**Thurs, April 14:** research presentations

**Tues, April 19:** research presentations

**Thurs, April 21:** research presentations

**Tues, April 26:** research presentations

**Thurs, May 28:** research presentations

**Tues, May 3:** course wrap-up, and final paper due.