



**Anatomy of Genocide and Intra-State Conflict**  
AFRS 3000 (3 credits / 45 class hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:  
**Rwanda: Post-Genocide Restoration and Peacebuilding**

**PLEASE NOTE:** This syllabus represents a recent semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.

## Course Description

Genocide and intra-state conflicts may, in some ways, be construed as phenomena of political institutions of the modern era, and studying contemporary genocide and intra-state conflict casts, in part, a lens on modernity's institutions and practices. And yet popular discourse associates conflict in African settings with the incompetence of African institutions and inability of various ethnicities to foster peaceful co-existence or, put rather quickly, as primordial ethnic conflict. This course employs the genocide in Rwanda and the conflict that ravaged northern Uganda over a twenty year period to explore the histories that precipitated genocide in Rwanda and conflict in northern Uganda. Through this, the course casts a critical lens upon the political institutions of the modern world, and critiques popular reductionist explanations that regard conflicts in Africa as driven simply by primordial ethnic tensions.

The course draws on SIT's experiential learning model. Students will visit sites of historical and political significance in both Rwanda and Uganda, through which they will begin to explore the complex relations between histories of colonization and decolonization, indigenous traditions, and genocide in Rwanda on one hand and conflict in northern Uganda on the other. Lectures on selected topics are delivered by local Rwandan and Ugandan scholars and students draw on experiences at, and structured assignments in, homestays, conversations with victims, survivors, perpetrators, bystanders, and rescuers to obtain extra-ordinary insights into the histories and processes that precipitated genocide in Rwanda and intra-state conflict in Uganda.

The course aims to enable students to transcend the simplistic and reductionist explanations of conflict, as a way to enable them to appreciate some of the ways through which contemporary conflicts may be prevented or mitigated.

**Learning outcomes:**

By the end of the course students will be able to:

- Analyze how colonization projects and decolonization struggles shaped genocidal tendencies in Rwanda and intra-state conflict in Uganda;
- Analyze the ways in which processes of genocide and intrastate conflicts are influenced by a complex interaction of local and international dynamics;
- Outline social and political process that influence the pursuit of sustainable peace; and
- Suggest measures for preventing the occurrence and recurrence of conflict.

**Language of instruction:**

The course is taught in English by Rwandan and Ugandan historians and constitutional law experts in Uganda. Discussions sessions are held in English and are facilitated by the academic director. Assigned readings drawn from selected journals and book chapters are also in English.

**Course Schedule:**

PLEASE BE AWARE THAT TOPICS AND EXCURSIONS MAY VARY TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ANY EMERGING EVENTS, TO ACCOMMODATE CHANGES IN OUR LECTURERS' AVAILABILITY, AND TO RESPECT ANY CHANGES THAT WOULD AFFECT STUDENT SAFETY. STUDENTS WILL BE NOTIFIED IF THIS OCCURS.

**Module I: The construction of ethnic polarization and the historical roots of genocide**

What explains the historical construction of Tutsi and Hutu identities in Rwanda, and how does the history of this polarization illuminate the processes that precipitate contemporary global conflict? How were the roots of genocide sowed and how were they nurtured, leading up to genocide in 1994? This module draws on a multiplicity of sources to begin the process of reconstructing Rwanda's extremely complex history. Students will explore carefully a selection of Rwanda's extremely powerful instructional genocide memorials, listen to explanations from Rwandan experts, and study the causes of mass violence from sociological and psychological perspectives. Students will begin to interrogate popular accounts of conflict in Africa and ultimately to critique how conflict in Africa has been explained.

*Assigned reading:*

Mahmood Mamdani. *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide In Rwanda*. Princeton University Press, 2001. Preface, Introduction and Chapter One.

Lemarchand, Rene (1995). "Rwanda, the Rationality of Genocide" in *Journal of Opinion*, XXIII (2).

Hintjens, Helen (1999). "Explaining the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda." *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 37, 2, 241-286.

Prunier, Gerard (1995), "The Rwandan Crisis. History of a Genocide". Fountain Publisher, Kampala, Uganda

Videos:

Pennsylvania State University. Media Sales. (1993). *Obedience*. University Park, Pa.: PennState Media Sales.

Yale University. Films. (2003). *A class divided*. [United States]: PBS DVD Video.

## **Module II: Post-independence politics and the transformation of ethnic identities**

Module I primarily focuses on the construction of Hutu and Tutsi identities in the colonial period and how it precipitated genocide. This module picks up from here and examines how the politics of post-independence Rwanda further intensified social polarization. The module compares and contrasts the politics of the first and second republics up until the moment of the Arusha peace accords. The module interrogates the intersectionality of national politics, ethnic identities, social polarization and the rise of extremism. The module draws on various disciplinary perspectives in social psychology. Additional insights into the relationships between post-independence politics and ethnic polarization are obtained during the excursion to northern Uganda.

*Required Readings:*

Mahmood Mamdani. *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide In Rwanda*. Princeton University Press, 2001. Chapter Four.

Fisiy, Cyprian (1998). "Of Journeys and Border Crossings: Return of Refugees, Identity, and Reconstruction in Rwanda." *African Studies Review*, 41, 1, 17-28.

Zimbardo G. Philip A. "A situational Perspective on the Psychology of Evil: Understanding how people are transformed into perpetrators. In A.G. Miller (Eds). In the Social Psychology of Good and Evil, pp 21-50, New York, Guilford Press.

Videos:

Lawton, A., Miller, J. J., McCormack, P., Spacey, K., In Miller, J. J., Mindset Media, Act for Stolen Children, Canadian Independent Film & Video Fund. (2006). *Uganda rising*.

## **Module III: International political economy and genocide in Rwanda**

Popular understandings of genocide often start and end with the political boundaries in which genocide occurs. This module breaks out of this framing and traces how international actors and policies generated by international financial institutions shaped the socio-economic and political context of Rwanda, out of which the condition that lead up to the genocide were created. The module also takes a regional dimension, and examines the relations, in comparative ways, between Congo, Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania, and the genocide in Rwanda.

*Assigned Reading:*

Klinghoffer, Arthur (1998). *The International Dimensions of Genocide in Rwanda*. New York: New York University Press. ISBN: 0333732030

Samantha Powers (2002). *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*. Basic Book, New York. Ch 10. ISBN: 0061120146.

Hintjens, Helen (1999). "Explaining the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda." *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 37, 2, 241-286.

Mahmood Mamdani. *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide In Rwanda*. Princeton University Press, 2001. Chapter Six.

#### **Module IV: Colonialism, the nation state, and intra-state conflict**

How does the political and social order emerging out of colonization and decolonization instigate or mitigate conflict? The module draws upon the Uganda excursion and commences with visits to the Buganda parliament, The Uganda Parliament, and other sites of historical and cultural significance, during which students explore these complex relationships between colonialism, decolonization, ethnic diversity, and cultural heritage and the institutions of the modern state.

##### *Assigned Reading:*

Mutibwa, Phares. *Uganda since Independence: A Story of Unfulfilled Hopes*. Kampala: Fountain Publishers Ltd., 1992

Eifert, Benn, Edward Miguel, and Daniel Posner (2007) "Political Sources of Ethnic Identification in Africa." Conference at Michigan State University, May 2007

Barongo, Yoramu (1989) "Ethnic Pluralism and Political Centralization: The Basis of Political Conflict" in *Conflict Resolution in Uganda*. Kumar Rupesinghe, Ed International Peace Institute, Oslo. Pp 65-90

#### **Module V: Ethnicity and conflict**

This module draws upon module IV above and on Uganda's recent experience with conflict to further investigate the relationship between national states, ethnic nationalism, and conflict. Students critically examine the thesis in mainstream discourse that conflict is driven primarily by primordial ethnic tensions. Assigned reading and interviews with homestay family members, ordinary people such as shop attendants, and lectures with Ugandan experts provide the empirical data for this module.

##### *Assigned Reading:*

Atkinson, Ronald R. *The Roots of Ethnicity: The Origins of the Acholi of Uganda*. Kampala: Fountain Publishers Ltd., 2001.

Kasozi, A.B.K. 1999. *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda*. Kampala. Fountain Publishers Ltd.

Acker, F.V. (2004) "Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army: The New Order No One Order." *Journal of the Royal African society* 103: 335-357.

#### **Assignment:**

In addition to weekly processing sessions, class attendance and participation, and discussion leadership, students will have to complete written assignments covering different aspects of the themes the course has addressed. Timely completion of all assignments is expected. Late hand-

ins will be penalized. All assignments are evaluated according to organization, analytical quality, depth of understanding, argumentation and presentation of evidence.

Critical analysis of the educational role of genocide memorials:	20%
Weekly processing sessions:	15%
Reflection sessions & readings discussion leadership:	15%
Participation:	10%
Critical reflection essay:	40%

### **Description of Assignments (please refer to the program detailed calendar for due dates)**

**Critical analysis of the educational role of genocide memorials:** During the first three weeks of the program, you will visit different genocide memorials and will have to write a 2 page double spaced reflection paper discussing the educational role of those memorials. You should consider including views from local people regarding what they think is the main role of a genocide memorial and how such memorials can help prevent ethnic conflict or genocide in the future. (20%)

**Weekly processing sessions:** These are student lead discussion sessions, about 1 ½ hours long. You should gauge the key issues in the group since the previous processing session and facilitate a discussion around these issues. Examples include group dynamics, cultural adjustment, homestay issues, health and safety, site visits, readings, lectures, etc. It may even be a single issue, if it should be one of much importance within the group. You could use games, activities of the like that you have used before in summer camp or in school. You could break up into smaller groups to facilitate discussion. The choice of what and how you do it is entirely yours. The processing session is a safe, open space for students to do what they think is important to the group. (15%)

**Reflection sessions and readings discussion leadership:** Summarize the assigned reading(s); Identify key arguments or issues that are raised and, possibly, the most critical assumptions that the author(s) makes, as well as their broad implications for our understanding of causes, prevention, and mitigation of conflict. Compare and contrast those arguments with what was discussed during lecture sessions and/or field visits. Identify key questions that you note, in ways that will provoke discussion. (15%)

**Participation:** Contribution to class discussion, active listening, attentiveness, conduct within the classroom, conduct within the homestay, respect for staff and program resources, time keeping, timely completion of assigned readings, and adherence to program rules. (10%)

**Comprehensive essay:** Drawing on course materials, excursions, sites visits, and readings, students will compose a 4 page typed double spaced essay on a question to be assigned by the academic director in the second week of the program. The essay is due prior to the start of ISP. (40%)

### **Grading**

Papers and discussions will be graded on style and form, content, depth of analysis, and understanding of readings and lectures as demonstrated by their appropriate incorporation into

written and oral assignments. Participation will be graded by observing attendance, attitude, preparation, active involvement in class discussions, and culturally appropriate behavior on excursions.

**Grading Scale:** The grading scale is as follows:

94-100%	A
90-93%	A-
87-89%	B+
84-86%	B
80-83%	B-
77-79%	C+
74-76%	C
70-73%	C-
67-69%	D+
64-66%	D
Below 64	F

### **Grading Criteria**

An “A” grade for an assignment entails superior (not just “very good”) performance in terms of structure and organization of assignments, analysis, logical argumentation and consistency, and the provision of factual, numerical and/or historical evidence. In terms of Class Participation, an “A” grade refers to full attendance, punctuality, attentive listening and active engagement in all Academic Seminar lectures, discussions, field trips and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior. The level, frequency, and quality of students’ participation will be monitored and taken into account.

### **Course Expectations**

Participation in class refers to attendance, punctuality, attentive listening and active engagement in all lectures, discussions, educational excursions and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior.

**Disability Services:** Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Disability Services at [disabilityservices@sit.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@sit.edu) for information and support in facilitating an accessible educational experience. Additional information regarding SIT Disability Services, including a link to the online request form, can be found on the Disability Services website at <http://studyabroad.sit.edu/disabilityservices>.

**Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad handbook** for policies on academic integrity, ethics, warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and the academic appeals process. Also, refer to the specific information available in the Student Handbook and the program handbook given to you at orientation.