In this course, we will examine the psychological, cultural, and societal roots of human cruelty, mass violence, and genocide. We will examine in-depth the genocides and democide from that of Europe under the Nazi regime, the 20th century genocides and democide from that of Europe under the Nazi regime, Darfur or the extreme violations of human rights and genocidal policies by the governments of China (including Tibet), Myanmar (Burma), Laos, and Darfur . . . the disappearances in Argentina, the death squad killings in El Salvador, . . . violence, torture, the mistreatment of human beings, torture, the mistreatment of human beings by survivors and witnesses of well known and lesser-known cases. Indeed, post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction is imperative.


Authoritarian Leaders:
One key characteristic of genocidal states is the presence of a totalitarian ruler and an authoritarian form of government. Authoritarian leaders:
Solidify and maintain power by eliminating opposition
Promotion of economic self interest
Create destructive infrastructures and reify destructive ideologies.

So what cultures are at greatest risk for genocide?
• Use of aggression as a normative problem solving skill
• Conflict orientation grounded in an assumption of animality with a perceived threat orientation (e.g., anarchic/realism perspectives and the security dilemma)
• History of strong ingroup/outgroup identification and institutionalization of bias. Lack of cultural diversity.
• Nationalism


Introduction to the topic of genocide:

Combines historical facts, scholarly analysis, and accounts written by victims, survivors and witnesses of well known and lesser-known genocides including the genocide of indigenous populations.


How do you get neighbors to kill neighbors
Sample Assessment Project: Students analyze an instance of genocide from a psychosocial perspective. In creating the paper, students should:
• Discuss and apply concepts to a genocide not previously discussed in class to demonstrate an understanding of the concepts while learning about another instance of genocide.
• Research the genocide through journals such as Holocaust and Genocide Studies and the Journal of Genocide Research as well as scholarly books on the topic.
• Examine psychosocial topics such as group cultural history, the role of crime (e.g., economic, post-colonization), social cognitive factors (e.g., ingroup/outgroup, heuristics), social influence factors (e.g., obedience, propaganda, deindividuation), social relative factors (e.g., relative deprivation), bystander behavior, and stages of mass violence.

Additional Information