

"If We Could Read The Secret History Of Our Enemies, We Should Find In Each Life Sorrow And Suffering Enough To Disarm All Hostility." (Longfellow)

"Poverty Is The Parent Of Revolution And Crime." (Aristotle)

"Injustice Anywhere Is An Affront To Justice Everywhere." (Martin Luther King, Jr.)

### *Culture and Crime*

*This course is designed to examine various dimensions of culture and crime from an anthropological perspective. Throughout the semester, we will examine and analyze the notion of "culture and crime" itself, exploring questions about why we see grave infractions of laws and moral codes in particular manifestations, in certain geo-political places and at certain historical times. We will explore the causes, factors, intricacies and consequences of these violations. Throughout, we will also search for an understanding of human morality and immorality.*

*Anthropology is a field that moves between the past and the present, and therefore offers important insight on urgent issues related to culture and crime: social inequality and social suffering, racism and ethnic conflict, global power, politics and the distribution of resources.*

*The topics covered in this course are emotionally powerful and intense. The readings have been carefully chosen to stimulate critical thinking, reflection, and discussion. The class will be highly interactive and will encourage students to develop their own critical understanding of culture and crime both on intellectual and personal levels. The ultimate goal will be an attempt to learn more about ourselves and what we can do to create a more humane and just world.*

**ENCOUNTERING ANTHROPOLOGY AND CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY**

During our first month together, you will be introduced to the field of anthropology – what it is, how it's done, why it's important for the world we live in today. We will read the book Mountains Beyond Mountains by Tracy Kidder and learn about one anthropologist's effort to bring peace and justice to a world marked by political and economic violence. From this book, we will get a taste of anthropological methods, theories, practices and limitations. We will use this book as a vehicle for exploring concepts of "culture" and "crime," the meanings of which we often just assume to know. Among the questions we will ask are: what *are* our assumptions about culture, cultures, and crime, and what affects do these assumptions have on human lives?

**CONQUEST, POWER, GENOCIDE**

During the second month of the course, we read from the anthology, Violence in War and Peace (VWP; Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois, eds.) as well as articles from other sources. We will examine crimes of the past for what they can teach us about the present state of the world. Since it is far easier to judge others than to face up to our own faults, lapses, weaknesses, transgressions and offenses, we will start to explore crimes of conquest and imperialism by looking at our own shameful past. From there we will jump to the 20<sup>th</sup> century to examine the Holocaust as industrial strength crime and the paradigm of genocide. We will also look at cases of low tech genocide which are, of course, no less brutal or devastating. We will examine debates around the definition of genocide, the efforts to prevent it, and the politics that allow it to continue.

**STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE AND SOCIAL SUFFERING**

Throughout the third month, we will explore questions about good and evil, about what constitutes ethical behavior, and about why and under what circumstances people kill other people. We will also look at structural violence and social suffering, examining the small wars and invisible genocides that surround us even as we often remain blind to or avert our gaze from these crimes. We will study the banality of evil, moral grey zones, and the normalization of violence. Becoming more aware of these social, political-economic, and cultural processes is a first step towards creating a more humane and just world.

**BEYOND WOUNDS AND WITNESSING**

As we come to the close of the semester, we will look at the aftermath of violence on human lives. What are the wounds that result from such crimes, and how do they affect the future of society and humankind? We will examine the benefits and limitations of witnessing for healing and for preventing crimes against humanity, and ask what we might do to make change for a better world.

**Sample Readings**

- Kidder, Tracy. 2003. Mountains Beyond Mountains. The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, A Man Who Would Cure the World. New York: Random House
- Zinn, Howard. 1995 (1980). *Columbus, the Indians, and Human Progress* Chapter 1 in A People's History of the United States 1492-Present. New York: Harper Perennial, pp. 1-22.
- Ferguson, R. Brian. *Tribal Warfare in* Violence in War & Peace (VWP), pp. 69-73.
- Borowski, Tadeusz. *This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentleman* in VWP, pp. 109-117.
- Spielgelman, Art. *A Survivor's Tale, II: And Here My Troubles Began* in VWP, pp. 118-120.
- Lemkin, Rafael. 1947. *Genocide as a Crime under International Law.* The American Journal of International Law, Vol. 41, No. 1 (Jan): 145-151.
- Stanton, Gregory. 1996. *Eight Stages of Genocide.* Genocide Watch.
- Gourevitch, Philip. 1998. *We Wish To Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families: Stories from Rwanda* in VWP, pp. 136-142.
- Litwack, Leon F. *Hellhounds* in VWP, pp.123-128.
- Gross, Jan T. 2001. *Introduction and Outline of the Story* in Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 3-32.
- Milgram, Stanley. *Behavioral Study of Obedience* in VWP, pp. 145-149.
- Hinton, Alexander Laban. *Why Did You Kill?* in VWP, pp. 157-168.
- Arendt, Hannah. *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* in VWP, pp. 91-100.
- Levi, Primo. *The Gray Zone* in VWP, pp. 83-90.
- Farmer, Paul. *On Suffering and Structural Violence: A View from Below* in VWP, pp. 281-289.
- Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. 1996. *Small Wars and Invisible Genocides.* Social Science and Medicine. Vol. 43, No. 5, pp. 889-900.
- Klinenberg, Eric. *Denaturalizing Disaster: A Social Autopsy of the 1995 Chicago Heat Wave* in VWP, pp. 308-317.
- Wacquant, Loic. *The New 'Peculiar Institution': On the Prison as Surrogate Ghetto* in VWP, pp. 318-323.
- Herman, Judith. *From Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence – from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* in VWP, pp. 368-371.
- Fanon, Frantz. *Colonial War and Mental Disorders* in VWP, pp. 443-452.
- Agamben, Giorgio. *The Witness* in VWP, pp. 437-442.
- Spielgelman, Art. *A Survivor's Tale, II: And Here My Troubles Began* in VWP, pp. 391-394.