COURSE DETAIL

ATROCITY TRIANGLE: A COURSE ON THE CRIMINOLOGY OF GROSS HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

Country
Netherlands

Host Institution
Maastricht University – University College Maastricht

Program(s)
University College Maastricht

UCEAP Course Level
Upper Division

UCEAP Subject Area(s)
Sociology Political Science International Studies

UCEAP Course Number
121

UCEAP Course Suffix

UCEAP Official Title
ATROCITY TRIANGLE: A COURSE ON THE CRIMINOLOGY OF GROSS HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

UCEAP Transcript Title
ATROCITY TRIANGLE

UCEAP Quarter Units
6.00

UCEAP Semester Units
4.00

Course Description

The course first addresses the concept of the “atrocity triangle” and it looks into the relationship between the three actors (the perpetrator, the victim, and the bystander) involved in the triangle. An integrated criminological model is introduced which sets out the relevant etiological elements that are addressed in greater detail in the second part of the course. The second part of the course, which focuses on the perpetrators, starts with the forms, functions, and effects of (political) violence and the concept of torture in particular. The analysis continues on the macro level and addresses the role of policy and ideology. Subsequent analysis focuses on the meso level and the role of military organizations and other institutions. In this context, attention is paid to the influence of military training and students discuss how, with the help of a bureaucratic system, genocide can be planned, organized, and carried out. The course furthermore discusses several experiments (Milgram, Ash, Stanford, etc.) on obedience, institutional roles, and conformity, but also addresses other social-psychological mechanisms that help understand how and why people can participate in the perpetration of gross human rights violations. Lastly, the important role that language and discourse play in conflict and international crime is highlighted. The third part of the course focuses on the role of the bystander by looking into the phenomenon of the “bystander effect” to address the question of why bystanders fail to act. Secondly, the role of bystanders in international politics at the macro-level of both states and international organizations in the field of human rights is discussed. Special attention was given to the role of the UN Security Council when it was confronted with gross human rights violations. The course then looks more closely into the phenomenon of rescuing to find out what turns actors into rescuers. The fourth and last part of the course takes a more victimological perspective, which focuses on the position of the victim. Specific attention is paid to gender-selective violence. More particularly, the phenomena of rape as a “weapon of war” and gendercide (gender-selective mass killings) are discussed. Also, the complex case of child soldiers is addressed as they are

victims and perpetrators at the same time. These lectures in this course are used to illustrate the discussed materials and to provide the participants with a deeper understanding of the subject matter by presenting the linkage between theory and (research) practice. During the lectures, various guest speakers address the subject matter from the practitioner's perspective. In addition, several documentaries are screened and then analyzed during the post-discussion. Case studies play an important role throughout the course wide variety of cases are covered including The Holocaust and other cases of genocide (Armenia, Australia, Cambodia, Rwanda, Srebrenica, Darfur, etc.). Prerequisites for this course include two intermediate-level courses in the Social Sciences or Humanities.

Language(s) of Instruction
English

Host Institution Course Number
SSC3032

Host Institution Course Title
ATROCITY TRIANGLE: A COURSE ON THE CRIMINOLOGY OF GROSS HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

Host Institution Course Details
https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/file/ucm-course-catalogue-2023-2024pdf

Host Institution Campus
University College Maastricht

Host Institution Faculty
Social Sciences

Host Institution Degree

Host Institution Department

Course Last Reviewed
2023-2024

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