

WL 3341/ HTRS 3341

MAY TERM 2017

THE FAILURE OF HUMANITY IN RWANDA

9AM-1PM

CLASS: TBD

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Office: Clements 426

Office hours: By Appointment

Short Bio: Hervé Tchumkam is an Associate Professor of French and Francophone Studies. He has authored several articles and book chapters, co-edited one volume, and edited two special issues of scholarly journals. He is also the author of a monograph entitled *State Power, Stigmatization and Youth Resistance Cultures in the French Banlieues: Uncanny Citizenship* (2015). His areas of interests include Literary Theory, Political Philosophy, African Studies, Postcolonial Studies and Human Rights.

Overview of the course

Twenty years ago, the Central African country of Rwanda was shaken by gruesome killings. Those events led to a profound transformation of Rwanda, but also sparked the urge to reflect on the weaknesses and potential identity crisis in any given postcolonial nation in Africa. This class will be an introduction to the 1994 Rwandan genocide that seeks to understand not only its origins, but also its sociological, ethical and Human Rights implications. In order to successfully scrutinize the “failure of Humanity in Rwanda”, our introductory approach of the genocide will be threefold: 1) pay special attention first of all to the political construction of Hutu and Tutsi as racial/ethnic identities, tracing the tale from the pre-colonial era, through Belgium's administration of the country, to the 1959 Revolution and subsequent attempts to develop an overarching sense of Rwandan nationhood; 2) Listen to the story of the genocide in Rwanda in all its power and horror expressed by the people who experienced it - Rwandans themselves; and 3) bring to light the arrogance and cynicism of the international community and especially France that deliberately and directly helped a murderous regime succeed in carrying out a genocide and war. The ultimate goal of this class will be to provide a direct and powerful challenge to the notions of

Human Rights, democracy and peace in the world, through the understanding of key issues surrounding the 1994 Tutsi genocide in Rwanda.

How students will benefit from taking this course:

- By taking this class, students will be able to think critically with respect to the colonial treatment of Hutus and Tutsis as a cause of the genocide.
- Students will also be able to form their own ideas about the cynicism and arrogance of the international community with regards to the 1994 genocide of the Tutsis in Rwanda.
- The examination of the “failure of humanity in Rwanda” will prompt students to understand the ways in which history, anthropology and cultural studies are all necessary tools in order to reflect on the potential identity crisis in Rwanda and beyond, in any postcolonial nation in Africa.
- With respect to issues related to race, ethnicity, gender, or societies in the developing world, students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the historical, cultural, social, or political conditions of identity formation and function in human society, including the ways in which these conditions influence individual or group status, treatment, or accomplishments.
- By taking this class, students will learn about the historical and political construction of the genocide in Rwanda and thus learn to distance themselves from theories like “ethnic cleansing” and ultimately, reflect on the value of African lives and Human Rights in general.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Foundation/Ways of Knowing

Students will be able to demonstrate a knowledge of more than one disciplinary practice.

Students will be able to explain how bringing more than one practice to an examination of the course topic contributes to knowing about that topic.

- Depth/History, Social & Behavioral Sciences

Students will be able to analyze both secondary and primary historical evidence

Students will be able to develop and support extended historical discussions in their own prose, based both on critical understanding of specific historical problems and on evaluation of secondary and primary evidence

In this class, students will be expected to identify the main actors and events pertaining to the 1994 Rwanda genocide, as well as identify the impact of colonization on the unfolding of tragic events in Rwanda.

It will also be my expectation that students can develop and support historical discussion in their own prose, with regards to critical understanding of the events preceding, during and after the 1994 Rwanda genocide. In doing so, they will be expected to engage personally with primary and secondary evidence, based on the reading material and the movies studied in class.

- **Proficiencies & Experiences/Human Diversity**

In this class, students will be able to think critically with respect to the colonial treatment of Hutus and Tutsis. They will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the historical, social and political conditions that surround debates about race and ethnicity which ultimately led to the massacre in Rwanda.

Course Policies

- **Disability Accommodations:** Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first register with Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS). Students can call 214-768-1470 or visit <http://www.smu.edu/Provost/ALEC/DASS> to begin the process. Once registered, students should then schedule an appointment with the professor as early in the semester as possible, present a DASS Accommodation Letter, and make appropriate arrangements. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and require advance notice to implement.
- **Religious Observance:** Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester, and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence. (See University Policy No. 1.9.)
- **Excused Absences for University Extracurricular Activities:** Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular activity should be given the opportunity to make up class assignments or other graded assignments missed as a result of their participation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor prior to any missed scheduled examination or other missed assignment for making up the work. (University Undergraduate Catalogue)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This is a lecture-seminar class. The lectures will familiarize you with the materials. It is important that you start reading before the first class of May term. The 3 required books are available at the SMU bookstore or on amazon.com

- 1- Students are expected to attend classes regularly. Class participation is very important in this course. Students should be prepared to discuss works assigned. Active participation entails asking questions; providing insights into a work; making comments; building on other student's comments.
- 2- All assignments are due on date indicated at the beginning of class. Late papers will not be accepted, except for medical and other pertinent reasons.
- 3- The evaluation in this class will consist of one response paper (3-4 pages), one oral presentation in class and an out of class written assignment (final paper) (7-10 pages) wherein the student can, if they wish, further elaborate an argument already discussed either in the response paper.

Grade Distribution

Class Participation 10%

Oral presentation 15%

Response Paper 25%

Research Paper 50%

Readings

John Berry and Carol Berry (eds) *Genocide in Rwanda: A Collective Memory*. Washington: Howard University Press, 1999.

Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002.

Andrew Wallis, *Silent Accomplice: The Untold Story of France's Role in the Rwandan Genocide*. London: IB Tauris, 2007.

Films and Documentaries

Ghosts of Rwanda (2005)

Shake Hands with the Devil: The Journey of Romeo Dallaire (2005)

Sometimes in April (2005)

Beyond the Gates (2007)

Rwanda - Do Scars Ever Fade? (2008)

Schedule of sessions

Please note that the following schedule is subject to change, but should be followed unless otherwise indicated by the professor

MAY 18: General Introduction to the 1994 genocide in Rwanda + Film: "Ghosts of Rwanda" (2005)

History of Colonialism and ethnic divide in Rwanda

MAY 19: Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, Chapter 1

MAY 22: Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, Chapter 2 + Film "Sometimes in April" (2005)

MAY 23: Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, Chapter 3

Unfolding the Rwanda Genocide

MAY 24: John Berry & Carol Berry, *Genocide in Rwanda: A Collective Memory*, Chapter 2 and Chapter 4 + Film “Shake Hands with the Devil” (2005). **Response paper due.**

MAY 25: Andrew Wallis, *Silent Accomplice: The Untold Story of France's Role in the Rwandan Genocide*, Chapters 6 and 8.

MAY 26: Discussion theme: The crisis of postcolonial citizenship + of Film “Beyond the Gates” (2007)

MAY 30: Andrew Wallis, *Silent Accomplice: The Untold Story of France's Role in the Rwandan Genocide*, Chapters 9 and 10

The Remnants of Rwanda and Human Rights in African contexts

MAY 31: ORAL PRESENTATIONS

JUNE 1: Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers* (conclusion) + FILM “Rwanda: Do scars ever Fade?” (2005)

JUNE 2: General conclusion + RESEARCH PAPER DUE