Honors Humanities
Course Syllabus 2018-2019

Instructor: Dr. Mark R Gudgel
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Office Hours: By appointment.

Course Description:
This Honors Humanities course is focused on the topic of genocide in the 20th century, including but not limited to the Holocaust, as well as instances that took place in Namibia (1904), Armenia (1915), Cambodia (1975-1979), Bosnia (1992-1995), and Rwanda (1994). The material itself is, of course, rather challenging in nature, but the class is designed to offer a place in which both safe and edifying inquiry can occur. The study of genocide is often difficult, uncomfortable, thought-provoking and disconcerting, but it is my experience that it is also edifying, compelling, and can be inspiring to the right people. No genocide was preordained, and no genocide is inevitable. Ultimately, our study of this subject is a study of what might have been had people acted differently, and what still could be if we, ourselves, steer our world in a better direction.

Instructional Philosophy:
It is my desire as your instructor that you know these things. It is my job as your teacher to see to it that you have the opportunity to learn this material. But it is my understanding of myself simply as your fellow human being that motivates me to teach this as opposed to, say, a class on the literature of sports, which, incidentally, could also be quite interesting. As human beings, I believe we have an obligation to one another, an obligation to know and to seek to understand one another. This class is thus largely inquiry based, and participation in class discussions is not only mandatory but vital to your understanding of the material. I will do everything I can to inspire you to dig deeper into this subject, and for your part, you must do the digging. For the most part, we can do it together. Never forget that we are studying our fellow human beings, and that they, and by extension our class materials, thereby deserve our full attention and respect.

Course Objectives:
By the end of this course, students will be able to:
- Articulate an understanding of what genocide is and how it happens
- Identify human rights violations and propose possible solutions
- Recognize the warning signs of genocide in contemporary contexts
- Articulate a concise understanding of genocides that occurred in the 20th Century
- Analyze sources of information related to genocide, violence, and contemporary issues of intolerance
- Think critically about the world in which they live and how they, as informed global citizens, can work to improve it

Content Standards:

Reading: Students will read a variety of grade level texts fluently with accuracy, appropriate pace, phrasing, and expression.
Writing: Students will apply the writing process to plan, draft, revise, edit and publish writing using correct spelling, grammar, punctuation, and other standard conventions appropriate for grade level.
Speaking and Listening: Students will develop, apply, and refine speaking skills to communicate key ideas in a
variety of situations.

Multiple Literacies: Students will research, synthesize, and communicate information in a variety of media and formats (textual, visual, and digital).

Class Rules and Expectations:
In my experience with this course, it works better simply to suggest that the golden rule of “do unto others” must apply in a setting such as this one. We will try to be understanding and empathetic towards one another, and we will be polite to one another. Our phones, of course, have no place in a polite learning environment, save on special occasions, and our attention must always be shared. That should be pretty easy. If this is unclear, please say so. If you’re unwilling to comply, take some other class (not from me).

Texts & Assessment
Our core text for this class is Samantha Power’s A Problem From Hell. In addition, we will draw from a variety of texts that can be found in the classroom to supplement our understanding during each unit of study. Further, you are welcome to introduce outside reading materials, and we will also read numerous articles and essays along the way. Please see me for a complete list of texts, or with further questions. Other texts we are likely to read include:

- The Kaiser’s Holocaust by David Olusoga and Casper Erichsen
- Forgotten Fire by Adam Bagdasarian
- All Rivers Run to the Sea by Elie Wiesel
- Night by Elie Wiesel
- The Sunflower by Simon Wiesenthal
- The Reawakening by Primo Levi
- First They Killed My Father by Loung Ung
- Good People in an Evil Time by Svetlana Broz
- A Thousand Hills by Steven Kinzer
- Machete Season by Jean Hatzfeld
- I’m Not Leaving by Carl Wilkens

Of course, this is an incomplete list. We will surely introduce other texts as the term goes by, and we will certainly not read all of these. You will have a certain level of autonomy when it comes to selecting books as well.

As far as assessment goes, you will be graded on a series of formative portfolios, which are a compilation of small homework and journaling assignments, as well as on papers, Socratic seminars and projects, which will make up your summative grades. In the past, the students who have been the most successful from a grade standpoint have been those who have made a concerted effort not to fall behind, and who have communicated with me about absences and late work. I highly encourage you to communicate with me as often as you believe is necessary. Never hesitate to reach out with questions or concerns.

OPS Secondary Grading Practices*
All coursework and assessments are judged based on the level of student learning from “below basic” to “advanced.” This course will provide multiple opportunities to achieve at the “proficient” to “advanced” levels. Students are evaluated based on a proficiency scale or project rubric. Proficiency scales for this course are available upon request (teacher will identify location such as portal, teacher website, attached, etc.)

There are three types of coursework*

- **Practice** – assignments are brief and done at the beginning of learning to gain initial content (e.g., student responses on white boards, a valid sampling of math problems, keyboarding exercises, and diagramming sentences, checking and recording resting heart rate). Practice assignments are not generally graded for accuracy (descriptive feedback will be provided in class) and are not a part of the grade. Teachers may keep track of practice work to check for completion and students could also track their practice work. Practice work is at the student’s instructional level and may only include Basic (2) level questions.
• **Formative (35% of the final grade)** – assessments/assignments occur during learning to inform and improve instruction. They are minor assignments (e.g., a three paragraph essay, written responses to guiding questions over an assigned reading, completion of a comparison contrast matrix). Formative assessments are graded for accuracy and descriptive feedback is provided. Formative work may be at the student’s instructional level or at the level of the content standard. Formative assessments/assignments will have all levels of learning – Basic (2), Proficient (3), and Advanced (4), which means that for every formative assessment/assignment, students will be able to earn an Advanced (4). Teachers will require students to redo work that is not of high quality to ensure rigor and high expectations. The students score on a formative assessment that was redone will be their final score.

• **Summative (65% of the final grade)** – assessments/assignments are major end of learning unit tests or projects used to determine mastery of content or skill (e.g., a research paper, an oral report with a power point, major unit test, and science fair project). Summative assignments are graded for accuracy. Summative assessments/assignments assess the student’s progress on grade level standards and may not be written at the student’s instructional level. Summative assessments/assignments will have all levels of learning – Basic (2), Proficient (3), and Advanced (4), which means that for every formative assessment/assignment students, will be able to earn an advanced (4).

To maintain alignment of coursework to content standards, which is a key best practice for standards-based grading, teachers will utilize a standardized naming convention for each of the standards within a course. The content standard will be marked on each assignment entered into Infinite Campus (District Grading Program) using all capital letters followed by a colon. After the colon will be the title of the coursework.

At the end of the grading period, scores are converted to a letter grade using this grading scale:

- A = 3.26-4.00
- B = 2.51-3.25
- C = 1.76-2.50
- D = 1.01-1.75
- F = 0.00-1.00

**OPS Secondary Proficiency Scale:**

### Secondary Proficiency Scale

| Advanced | 4 | The student consistently demonstrates a thorough understanding of course content/grade level standard by making in-depth inferences and showing extended applications of the course content/grade level standard(s). The student performs consistently at a high level of difficulty, complexity, or fluency that is above the expected course content/grade level standard. |
| Proficient + (Approaching Advanced) | 3.5 | The student demonstrates partial success at showing a thorough understanding of course content/grade level standard by making in-depth inferences and applications of the course content/grade level standard(s). The student performs with partial success at a high level of difficulty, complexity, or fluency that is above the expected course content/grade level standard. |
| Proficient | 3 | The student demonstrates a proficient understanding of the expected course content/grade level standard(s). The student performs at the level of difficulty, complexity, or fluency that is at the expected course content/grade level standard. |

- Exceeds expected course content/grade level standard
- Applies skills and strategies in new and unfamiliar situations
- Demonstrates success toward exceeding course content/grade level standard
- Applies skills and strategies consistently in familiar situations, and at times, in unfamiliar situations
- Meets expected course content/grade level standard
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<th>Score</th>
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| **Basic + (Approaching Proficient)** | 2.5 The student demonstrates an adequate understanding of the information for the course content/grade level standard(s). The student performs with partial success at the level of difficulty, complexity, or fluency that is at the expected course content/grade level standard.  
- Partially meets expected course content/grade level standard  
- Retains information and at times applies skills and strategies in familiar situations |
| **Basic** | 2 The student demonstrates a basic understanding of the information expected for the course content/grade level standard(s). The student performs the skills required for the course content/grade level standard at a basic level of difficulty, complexity, or fluency.  
- Partially meets expected course content/grade level standard  
- Retains information and simple processes in familiar situations |
| **Approaching Basic** | 1.5 The student demonstrates some basic understanding of the information expected for the course content/grade level standard(s). The student struggles to perform the skills required for the course content/grade level standard at a basic level of difficulty, complexity, or fluency.  
- Partially meets some of expected course content/grade level standard  
- Retains some information and simple processes in familiar situations |
| **Below Basic** | 1 The student demonstrates difficulty in understanding the information and performing the skills expected for the course/grade level standard(s).  
- Performs below expected course content/grade level on the standard  
- Has difficulty retaining information and applying skills and strategies |
| **Failing** | 0 The student demonstrates little or no evidence of understanding the information or skills required for the course content/grade level standard(s). |

**Make-up work**
Make-up work and revisions will only be accepted until the end of the unit in which it was assigned. Late work will only be accepted if it is accompanied by a completed and signed late work application form. It is your responsibility to make up any work you miss. As always, see me for help.

**Text Updates**
Please text the code @k86kch to recipient 81010 to get updates on our class. I’ll use this to postpone assessments, send out extra credit opportunities, and share important reminders. In addition, you’ll receive one point of extra credit to use as you wish if you get your parent or guardian to sign up. Thanks!

**Final Note**
It is a privilege for me to teach this class, and it is equally a privilege for you to take it. It would be wonderful if we did not have such things as genocide even to discuss in school, but given the world we live in, we do have them to discuss, and in them we find an opportunity to better understand ourselves, as well as our fellow human beings and the world that we all share. Most of all, we find in this study a hope, a very real hope for a better tomorrow and the world as we might imagine it to be. It’s in understanding our world and those we share it with that such imagining can be made into reality. By you. I’m glad you’re here.

Sincerely,

Dr. Mark R Gudgel
mark.gudgel@ops.org

*Indicates standardized language