The Journalism of War, Genocide, Terrorism and Human Rights
First Year Seminar: UA 384 - 001, Fall 2019
Weds. 3:30-6:00
20 Cooper Square, Room 659
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Office hours: Tuesdays, 4-5; Wednesdays, 3-3:30, and by appointment
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“When we fight over the meaning of the past, we are fighting over what, today, we choose to care about.”
--Todd Gitlin, journalist and cultural critic

In this course we will read some of the key journalistic works on war, revolution, genocide, and human rights that have been written in the past 100 years. We will attempt to answer certain questions: How, and why, has the nature of war changed in the past century? Why do some revolutions, such as those in Eastern Europe after the fall of Communism, largely succeed, while others, such as those of the Arab Spring, fail so miserably? How do we understand senseless, sadistic violence--what Primo Levi called “useless cruelty”? Why do sufferers of violence and oppression so often become perpetrators of it? What is the difference between war and genocide, and why did the latter emerge in the 20th century? Why has terrorism re-emerged with such vengeance in the past two decades? What are “human rights”--another invention of the 20th century--and how, if at all, have they become a reality?
All these books will be available (with exceptions noted) at the NYU Bookstore, in paperback; we will read all or parts of each. If you buy used books from the internet, please make sure you get the correct edition (where specified).

Please note: This course requires an extensive amount of reading: often a book a week. Readings will often be supplemented with additional articles.

**George Orwell,** *Homage to Catalonia* [Harcourt Brace/Harvest]


**Primo Levi, Survival in Auschwitz* (Touchstone/Simon & Schuster)

**Ryszard Kapuscinski, Shah of Shahs*

**Tina Rosenberg, Children of Cain [order from internet: abebooks.com]*

**Peter Maass, Love Thy Neighbor*

**Philip Gourevitch, We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families*

**Matti Friedman, Pumpkinflowers*

**Lawrence Wright, The Looming Tower* [2006 edition, if possible]

**Robert F. Worth, A Rage for Order*

Our Schedule:

[Articles will be xeroxed and distributed in advance.]

**Week 1, Sept. 4:** Introduction: World War I, the Russian Revolution, and the Spanish Civil War
**Week 2, Sept. 11: Homage to Catalonia (Spanish Civil War)**

**Week 3, Sept. 18: The Face of War (World War II, and others)**


**Week 5, Oct. 2: Shah of Shahs (revolution in Iran)**

**Week 6, Oct. 9: Children of Cain (Latin American dictatorships)**

**Week 7 & 8, Oct. 16 & 23: We Wish to Inform You (Rwandan genocide) & final paper proposals due**

**Week 9, Oct. 30: Love Thy Neighbor (Bosnian War)**

**Week 10, Nov. 6: Pumpkinflowers (Israel/Palestine)**

**Week 11 & 12: Nov. 13 and Nov. 20: The Looming Tower (9/11 terror attacks)**

[NOTE: NO CLASS ON NOV. 27: THANKSGIVING]

**Week 13, Dec. 4: A Rage for Order (Arab Spring); Articles on ISIS**

**Week 14, Dec. 11: Concluding Thoughts// & FINAL PAPERS DUE**
Assignments:

Each week, three to four students will write a three to four page (750-1000 word) response paper to that week’s readings, some of which will be read in class and become part of our discussion. (In your response, try to distinguish between thoughts and feelings--both are important, but they are not the same.) Each student will write a total of three response papers during the term. Late papers will not be accepted.

Each week, each student will bring in a sentence selection, two questions, and a “surprise” (I’ll explain this in class).

Final paper: Your final paper of 2,500-3,000 words will be a critical analysis comparing at least two of the works we have read this semester. (A critical analysis differs from a comparison; we will discuss the difference in class.) You should bring at least one other work into your discussion. An annotated bibliography and fact-checking copy must accompany your paper. We’ll discuss all this in class.

All assignments must be double-spaced and in a ‘doc’ format. Your final paper will count for 45% of your grade; class participation will count for 20%; response papers for 35%.

Readings: Thoughtful, critical reading is the basis of this class. All students must do all the readings for each week; some additional readings will be added as the semester proceeds.
**Class participation:** A seminar is a collective endeavor that works best when everyone (that means you!) participates. Class participation—a thoughtful discussion of the readings and the issues they present—is expected each week.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Plagiarism is bad. Do not do it. It will result in a failing grade for the entire course.

**Disability Disclosure Statement:** Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. The Moses Center website is [www.nyu.edu/csd](http://www.nyu.edu/csd). Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.