SA 203: Violence in War and Peace, SA  
Spring 2018  
Burnaby Campus

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Course Description: Much has been written on the erosion of communities and disruption of everyday life as a result of war, structural violence and systemic practices of state terror. Relatively less attention has been given to how we remember and witness acts of violence. How people continue to live and remake their worlds in the midst of worst horrors has not been substantively documented. In this course, we will focus on the dynamic relationship between violence, act of witnessing and reconstruction of lives in the context of militant globalization. Central questions include: What is at stake for local communities following traumatic violence and social suffering? How are various social actors, ranging from global institutions to modern states, implicated in the production and actualization of structural violence? What is the political significance of the lived experience of suffering? How do we resolve the tension between “official version” on violence, and personal narratives? Can the human experience of suffering be fully documented? What makes genocide possible? What are “peaceful” crimes?

To answer these questions, we will look at the relationship between violence and structural inequalities using a comparative lens. Following an overview of the anthropological perspectives on violence, we will examine ethnographic and other case studies to show the different forms that violence assumes in war and in peace. Particular group-based and class exercises will include topics such as: First Nations: Reconciliation; the Syrian conflict; Crisis in Yemen; Rohingya Refugee Crisis; the Palestinian Question; the Holocaust; Afghanistan; Africa; the Apartheid, as well as everyday suffering, racism and violation of human rights. Through comparative case studies, we will explore how diverse configurations – the spectacular and the quotidian, the local and the global, the public and the private – come together to define the realm of social power, knowledge and creation of subjectivities.

While this course does not endeavour to offer solutions to the pressing problems of violence and social suffering, it will provide insights on “bearing witness,” a position that calls for a reflexive, a political, and a moral commitment.

This course has a seminar/lecture format. It includes some “field work,” outside class time and group presentations. Students are required to participate actively in class discussions.
Grading

1. Mid-term Exam: 20%
2. Group Presentations/individual papers: 20%
3. Semester Paper: 40%
4. Class Participation: 20%

Unless otherwise specified on the course outline, all other graded assignments in this course must be completed for a final grade other than N to be assigned.

Academic Dishonesty and Misconduct Policy
The Department of Sociology and Anthropology follows SFU policy in relation to grading practices, grade appeals (Policy T 20.01) and academic dishonesty and misconduct procedures (S10.01-S10.04). Unless otherwise informed by your instructor in writing, in graded written assignments you must cite the sources you rely on and include a bibliography/list of references, following an instructor-approved citation style. It is the responsibility of students to inform themselves of the content of SFU policies available on the SFU website: [http://www.sfu.ca/policies/gazette/student.html](http://www.sfu.ca/policies/gazette/student.html).

Required Texts:


Additional Articles:
Additional Readings will be available through SFU on-line journals and websites to be accessed by students independently.

Recommended Text:

Joao Biehl: *VITA Life in a Zone of Social Abandonment*, 2005

Prerequisites: 101 or 150 or 201

Learning Outcomes
By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Acquire structural understanding of violence and identify approaches for a peaceful world
- Critically explore themes and key questions from the literature
- Carry out independent library and on-line research
- Design and undertake “collaborative” projects
- Acquire a broad and in-depth understanding of historical and current trajectories of violence globally