

Course Description**PSY2800 | Psychology of Genocide | 3.00 credits**

This course examines the psychological and social factors contributing to genocide, human cruelty, and mass violence, and includes works from the Western canon. Students will analyze the complex interplay of individual and societal influences that lead to extreme acts, applying behavioral science concepts to understand the motivations behind these events. Through critical examination of historical cases and research, learners will explore the emotional and psychological impact of these phenomena on victims, perpetrators, rescuers, and society, developing insights into how these issues relate to past and present social, political, and economic challenges.

Course Competencies:

Competency 1: The student will explore psychological theories related to genocide and other forms of mass violence and its impact on victims, perpetrators, and society by:

1. Articulating the issues surrounding the definition of “evil” for victims, perpetrators, and society.
2. Identifying the various definitions of genocide and other forms of mass violence.
3. Demonstrating an awareness of the various forms of genocide, human cruelty, and mass violence.

Competency 2: The student will examine the multiple factors that influence genocide and other forms of mass violence by:

1. Discussing how behavioral, cognitive, social, and neuropsychological perspectives explain attitudes, motivations, prejudices, and stereotypes.
2. Examining the neurobiological, psychological, and sociocultural factors influencing aggression and violence.
3. Investigating the sources and tactics of social pressure from an interactionist approach.
4. Discussing the role of authority, conformity, deindividuation, groupthink phenomena, obedience, and social domination.
5. Discussing the factors that influence some to carry out/perpetrate acts of cruelty on an individual and society.

Competency 3: The student will examine the psychological impact of genocide and mass violence on the individual and society by:

1. Exploring survivor and rescuer testimonies, as well as case studies.
2. Examining survivor research and the psychology of recovery.
3. Identifying “positive” and “negative” survival strategies that may be used by survivors, their children, and victimized communities.
4. Discuss how these strategies affect individual behavior and interpersonal relationships.
5. Analyzing the issues facing the children of survivors and perpetrators.
6. Examining “bystander and bigot behavior” about the perpetration of genocide.

Competency 4: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the significant theories and strategies regarding the prediction and prevention of human cruelty, mass violence, and genocide by:

1. Analyzing the factors that influence the development of morality in childhood, adolescence, and adulthood.
2. Discussing the socialization of tolerance (e.g., ethnic, racial, religious).
3. Synthesizing research to promote a civil and moral society and creating strategies to prevent future incidences of genocide, human cruelty, and mass violence.

Learning Outcomes:

- Create strategies that can be used to fulfill personal, civic, and social responsibilities.
- Formulate strategies to locate, evaluate, and apply information.