

# **Death by Government**

Monday, Wednesday – 4:30 to 5:45

**Christian Davenport**

All I ask is that, in the middle of a murderous world, we agree to reflect on murder and to make a choice.

Albert Camus

## Introduction

This class charges that governments have been the largest and most efficient at killing human beings throughout history. Unfortunately, this fact is not well known. To rectify this problem, the course is directed toward understanding the different ways that governments kill those that they are responsible for. We will focus on the major methods: genocide/human rights violation, interstate war, counter-insurgency and capital punishment. We will discuss others as well: torture, police brutality, forced famine, slavery and colonialization. Additionally, we will focus on what can be done to eliminate/reduce this problem.

## Grading:

Participation: 15%

- contributing to classroom discussion through informed commentary/reflection about reading and/or prior discussion

Individual Assignment: 40%

- one take home examination (25%)
- an undisclosed number of informal quizzes, administered randomly throughout the semester (15%)
  - o if a quiz is missed and there is no University sanctioned excuse, then the student will be issued a “0” for the assignment.
  - o if missed is missed and there is a University sanctioned excuse, then the student will be given a make-up examination.

Group Assignment: 20%

- all team members must participate, overall product must be divided across team members and all components of the assignment must be submitted in class on the due date

Individual Final Submission: 25%

- Answer one question in a format to be determined.

Required Books:

*The Killing State: Capital Punishment in Law, Politics and Culture*  
*Agents of Atrocity: Leaders, Followers, and the Violation of Human Rights in Civil War*  
*On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society*  
*The Protection Racket State*

Suggested books:

*Death by Government*  
Rudy Rummel

What to do with readings/class

Identify type of Violence and address the following:

Who?  
What?  
When?  
Where?  
Why?  
So what?  
Now what?

August

24 – Orientation and Introduction

29 – Background

Does the state have the right to kill? When? Why/Why not?

Has the state done this within proscribed parameters?

31 – *On Killing* 1-83

September

5 – *On Killing* 84-167

7 – *On Killing* 168-251

12 – *On Killing* 252-332

14 – *The Killing State*

19 – *The Killing State*

21 – *The Killing State*

26 – *The Killing State*

28 – *The Protection Racket State*

October

3 – *The Protection Racket State*

5 – *The Protection Racket State*

10 – *The Protection Racket State*; Assignment Given for **Individual Assignment**

- 12 – Discussion & **Individual Assignment Due**
- 24 – Special Guest: Professor Will Moore - Torture
- 26 – *Agents of Atrocity*
- 31 – *Agents of Atrocity*

November

- 2 – Building Awareness
- 7 – Building Awareness
- 9 – Building Awareness
- 14 – Building Awareness; Assignment Given for **Final Project**
- 16 – Fixing Problems
- 21 – Fixing Problems
- 28 – Fixing Problems
- 30 – Fixing Problems

December

- 5 – Project Presentations
- 7 – Project Presentations
- 12 – **Projects Due**