

## Geography and Genocide: An Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Track

A partnership between the Graduate School of Geography and the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies will pilot a doctoral track in Geography and Genocide. Combining the research tools and methods of geography and history to investigate past and contemporary cases of mass violence and genocide, the program will be interdisciplinary. Students working at the intersection of geography and genocide will consider the landscapes and spatial dynamics of genocide and mass violence. Potential topics include, though are not limited to, the visualization of space and place, population displacements and threats to collective identity, natural resource conflicts and loss of territory, and the geographies of mass and organized violence.

Scholars interested in how geography deepens our understanding of genocide have already begun to make their mark through international conferences, mapping projects, and humanitarian initiatives. Historians of the Holocaust and other genocides are using the methods of geography, often without proper grounding in how to utilize the theories, concepts and tools of the discipline correctly and fully. Recognizing that Clark University is uniquely suited to train students whose research will combine these fields, the Strassler Center is pleased to have identified fellowship funds for this purpose. Prospective students will apply to either program depending on whether they seek to earn a Ph.D. in geography or history. With seed money to support two doctoral students, this track is a pilot initiative at present. Our plan is to launch the program and periodically to assess the student and faculty experience as well as the quality of the resulting research. We propose conducting this first assessment following the first two years of the initiative.

Training for this interdisciplinary degree will include studying the questions, concepts, skills, and methods of history and geography, while focusing on Holocaust studies or comparative genocide. Using the lenses of space and place, students might choose to map the spatial dimensions of mass violence, theorize the uses and constructions of space in mass violence, apply geo-technologies to recover new evidence about historic events, draw on primary sources to recreate landscapes virtually, or study how scarce resources propel violence. Students so trained will focus on diverse cases including the Holocaust, the Armenian, Cambodian, Rwandan, or Native American genocides, as well as historic and present day cases of mass violence and killing in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. They will be prepared to push the boundaries of knowledge as scholars, to educate the public about threats of impending violence, and to intervene in such cases on the basis of well-researched evidence.