

**CAUTION: PLEASE READ BEFORE CONTINUING!!!**

**It should not surprise you that we will be exploring some very serious and, at times, graphic material throughout this class. Although I hope that doing so will help create and sustain a high level of interest and engagement, my intent is to educate, not sensationalize. *Serious* and *graphic* is sometimes “the nature of the beast.”**

**I want you to make an informed, rational decision about your involvement in this class. You may find course material disturbing or offensive at times. I do not take this lightly, and I will make every effort to address the issues raised in a responsible, respectful manner. Still, you may not always feel comfortable in here, and both your good mood and your worldview may sometimes be challenged. Again, my intent is to educate, not to give simple answers or to tell you what you think you want to hear.**

**If you have content-related concerns, then it is your responsibility to notify me. In any case, PLEASE have some idea of what you’re getting into, and be respectful of the viewpoints of others that will inevitably conflict with your own.**

**PSYCH 232 -- Psychology of Evil -- F '09 MW 2:30-3:50 P.M.**

**Instructor:** Christopher T. Burris, Ph.D. **Office:** STJ 2016

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**Office Hours:** M W 1:30-2:20; W 6:00-6:45; by appointment

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**Official Course Description** (from the *Undergraduate Calendar*): Psychological perspectives concerning definitions, causes, and consequences of institutional and personal evil, as well as symbols and interpretations of evil in both religious and secular contexts, will be considered.

Please note that this course is recognized as a PACS Content Course that fulfills requirements in the interdisciplinary Peace and Conflict Studies plan. For information about doing a PACS concentration (Major, Minor or Option) visit:  
<http://grebel.uwaterloo.ca/academic/undergrad/pacs/plans.shtml>

**Course Purpose and Structure:** Attempting to understand evil is a human preoccupation. Although it has received some psychological attention, the resulting theories and data remain scattered. In this course -- through text, lecture, film, and discussion -- I hope to bring together the literature for a fuller psychological understanding of evil from the perspective of perpetrators as well as from the perspective of victims and observers.

**Required Readings:**

Baumeister, R.F. (1997). *Evil: Inside human cruelty and violence*. New York: W.H. Freeman.  
(This should be available used or new, hardbound or paperback.)

Rempel, J. K., & Burris, C. T. (2005). Let me count the ways: An integrative theory of love and hate. *Personal Relationships*, 12, 297-313.  
(A free .pdf version of this article is downloadable from the UW Library website. If off-campus, first “connect from home.” Then, under “Books & more,” type in “personal relationships” and select “title.” On the next screen, click the listing that is labeled “journal,” and then “Guelph/Laurier/Waterloo users-access on the screen after that. You can then access the article directly from the journal site with the author/volume/page information in the citation above.)

**A Word about Films:**

All of the films scheduled in the class are deliberate choices intended to enrich your understanding of the course material. None of them is a gratuitous “time killer.” Consequently, you are responsible for viewing the films and participating in any discussions about how these films fit into class. Moreover, to put it bluntly, all films can be a source of testable material. Thus, it is not in your best interest to skip class on the days when films are shown.

## Course Schedule (chapter readings from Baumeister are in CAPS):

I have attempted to make the assigned readings “fit” with what will be covered in class, and I will try to make this fit explicit when possible – but be aware that there are not always nice, neat chapter headings that point out the overlap, so you will therefore need to compare text and class carefully to see “the big picture” emerge.

- 14 Sep (M) – Introductions (us, you, and “It”)
- 16 Sep (W) – The Problem of Evil 1 -- (film: *Paradise Lost*) PREFACE; CHAPTER 1
- 21 Sep (M) – The Problem of Evil 2 -- (film concluded)
- 23 Sep (W) – Dimensions of Evil 1 – (thinking about thinking about evil)
- 28 Sep (M) – Dimensions of Evil 2 – (second thoughts about thinking about thinking about evil) CHAPTER 2
- 30 Sep (W) – “Natural” Manifestations of Evil 1 (the birth of “evil”?)
- 05 Oct (M) – “Natural” Manifestations of Evil 2 (film: *Exorcism*)
- 07 Oct (W) – “Natural” Manifestations of Evil 3 (models of possession/exorcism)
- 12 Oct (M) – Thanksgiving Holiday – NO CLASS
- 14 Oct (W) – Evil’s Engine – (hate) READING: Rempel & Burris (2005)
- 19 Oct (M) – “Manufactured” Manifestations of Evil 1 (film: *Faces of the Enemy*) CHAPTER 3
- 21 Oct (W) – “Manufactured” Manifestations of Evil 2 (creating the perception of evil)
- 26 Oct (M) – **TEST ONE**
- 28 Oct (W) – Necessary Evil? (functions of evil)
- 02 Nov (M) – Blatant “Evil” – (serial killers) CHAPTERS 4 AND 7
- 04 Nov (W) – Subtle Evil 1 – (the evil personality) CHAPTER 5
- 09 Nov (M) – Subtle Evil 2 – (the evil personality concluded) CHAPTER 10
- 11 Nov (W) – Subtle Evil 3 – (the transformative effects of power) CHAPTER 8
- 16 Nov (M) – **TEST TWO**
- 18 Nov (W) – Evil for the Masses 1 (corporate decision-making)
- 23 Nov (M) – Evil for the Masses 2 (film: *Biography - Gen. Romeo Dallaire*)
- 25 Nov (W) – Evil for the Masses 3 (genocide) CHAPTER 6
- 30 Nov (M) – Hug, Hide, Hiss, or Huh? (responses to evil) CHAPTER 11
- 02 Dec (W) – **TEST THREE**
- 05 Dec (S) – **NO CLASS**

**Tests and Marking:** TEST 1 = 40%; TEST 2 = 35%; TEST 3 = 25%

All tests are multiple choice and use computer cards, so be sure to bring a couple of pencils and an eraser on test days. Also, ***be prepared to present identification (your WAT card) during tests.*** Tests are weighted proportionally to the material that they cover; they are not cumulative. They are designed to make you think analytically (comparing this to that) and synthetically (what might this say about that?) rather than reflexively (I memorized this, not that). “Knowing the material” means knowing how to use it -- how to put it together and take it apart, and how to recognize it in novel contexts. Discussing the material with a classmate (not quizzing each other over memorized notes) and trying to apply the concepts as you learn them (looking for examples from the films, for example) are two valuable ways to prepare for the tests. Marks will be posted on the large bulletin board outside of my office (STJ 2016) as soon as they are available (I will announce this in class). The mark received for a test stands -- it will not be dropped, reweighted, etc.

Make-up tests will be permitted ONLY in the event of *documented illness, emergency, or religious observance*, in accordance with UW regulations. They will NOT be granted because you forgot, overslept, were in a bad mood, have a holiday planned, didn’t come to class or read the course outline, etc. Unless it is *absolutely impossible*, I should be notified of the situation BEFORE the scheduled time of the test, not after. A make-up exam should be written as quickly as possible upon your return to classes, with the obvious provision of access to missed material (see Class Attendance below).

My goal in setting these policies is to be fair to all students. If you request an exception in extreme or unusual circumstances, ***you need to be prepared to explain why making an exception for you would be fair to the other students in the class.***

**Class Attendance:** Whether or not you choose to attend class is entirely up to you, but you are responsible for all material covered. Should you miss class, for whatever reason, it is your responsibility to find a classmate who would be willing to provide you with the notes you missed. If your absence is *legitimate*, then I am happy to answer questions about the missed material once you have consulted with a fellow student. To make the most of consultation time outside of class, come prepared with specific questions regarding whatever material you may be having trouble with, and be prepared to discuss what you know (or think you know) about a topic -- that can speed up and simplify the clarification process tremendously.

**Special Needs:** Students with documented or suspected disabilities (i.e., physical, learning, or sensory disabilities or chronic medical conditions) are encouraged to contact the Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD) to determine eligibility for their services. OPD is located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, and can be contacted at 519-888-4567 ext. 35082, TDD/TTY 888-4044. In the event that you require an adapted learning or testing environment, please provide me with OPD documentation, ideally *at the beginning of the term*.

**Cheating:** *I think cheating is lazy, disrespectful, and immoral, and I find it very sad that some people may try to get a course mark, or even a university degree, without having earned it honestly. I really hope that you're not one of those people.* "All students registered in courses at the University of Waterloo and its Federated University and Affiliated Colleges are expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for their actions. Students who are unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who need help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating), or about rules for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, TA, academic advisor, the appropriate St. Jerome's departmental Chair, or ultimately the Appeals Officer (currently the Associate Dean) for St. Jerome's University. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy #71, *Student Academic Discipline*, [www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm). Students who believe that they have been wrongfully or unjustly penalized have the right to grieve in accord with Policy #70, *Student Grievance*, [www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm)."

**On Doing Your Best:** As an alternative to cheating ;), there are some things you can do to put in the best performance possible in this class: 1) Come to class! Be alert, ask questions – either in class or later. Do more than mindlessly write down whatever appears on an overhead: *Think* about the material – try to come up with your own examples and illustrations by applying the material to people you know, media happenings, etc. 2) Do the readings! Ideally, read them at least once before the relevant week's lecture, and at least once after that lecture. Don't mindlessly run a highlighter over the words: *Think* about the material – write down questions, observations, possible examples, etc. as you read. 3) Look for connections! We will be dealing with a lot of specific phenomena in this class, but there will be some big themes that will keep recurring throughout the term. Look for them. Look also for connections between lecture and assigned readings. Think about what *this* theorist might say about *that* topic, etc. – even if we've never addressed this in class. 4) Test yourself! Don't simply assume that certain concepts are "easy" or "common sense" – often, they are not. Can you explain an idea to someone else, without reciting your notes, in a way that that person will understand? If given a blank page, could you reproduce the structure of ideas I use to organize my lectures? Can you create a structure of ideas that accurately summarizes a reading's main points? Can you recognize sets of information in lectures or readings that might make good multiple choice options, and can you explain in what ways the members of a set are similar or different?

I realize that these exercises may sound difficult, especially if you have gotten by with plain old memorization in the past. Having said that, I strongly suspect that you WILL do better in this class (and others, too, most likely) if you put the above suggestions into practice.

**Classroom Etiquette and Contacting Me:** Please TURN OFF cell phones, etc. when in class. When addressing me in person, by phone, or by e-mail, please call me "Dr. Burris." I welcome your questions and comments in class, but keep on topic, and don't insist that you be heard on every possible occasion or interrupt others who are speaking. For questions outside of class, use scheduled office hours whenever possible. When office hours (or before/after class) are not convenient, use e-mail for small questions (be sure to include your name, your UWID#, and the class, and allow at least 24 hours for a response), or make an appointment for bigger questions. When my door is open, you may also drop in, but be sure to knock and ask if it is a good time to talk.

*Good luck in this class -- I hope it is a good experience.*