

End of Term Plan for PSYCH 232 (Psychology of Evil)

Key Issues:

- One week of class has been lost (i.e., March 17th & 19th).
- There remains course content that has yet to be delivered.
- 25% of the course mark has yet to be accounted for.
- In-class assessments have been suspended until further notice.

How These Issues Will Be Addressed:

On pages 2-4 of this document, I offer an overview of the remaining course content. Specifically, I supply you with key references that I would normally describe and discuss in lecture, along with a few comments intended to draw your attention to the key points that those references make (but without the precision and detail that I try to offer in lecture). *That material is not “testable,”* but for those of you who are interested in the “rest of the story” that this course has tried to tell, the basics can be found there.

The suspension of in-class testing makes the multiple-choice format impractical, and so the remaining 25% of the mark will be accounted for by what is essentially a take-home essay test focused on the two remaining assigned readings. The instructions are as follows:

- 1) Pick ONE of the readings – that is, either Campbell and Göritz (2014) or Pedrini and Villeneuve (2017: Note that their chapter begins on p. 84 of the book!).
- 2) Identify and justify FOUR non-trivial connections between material in your chosen reading and any material addressed in the course PRIOR to Test #2.
- 3) Identify and justify ONE non-trivial connection between material in your chosen reading and a current event (defined as having occurred, at least in part, within the past 12 months).

Explanatory Comments:

- A) “Non-trivial” means focusing on PRINCIPLES rather than factoids (like “You both talked about Nazis,” for example).
- B) The FOUR + ONE structure means that each section will be worth 5 points ($4 + 1 = 5$; $5 \times 5 = 25\%$).
- C) There is no length requirement, but I suspect that at least one GOOD paragraph per section (that is, a minimum of five GOOD paragraphs) will be required to do a competent, thorough job.

Due Date:

Please email your completed document directly to me (cburris@uwaterloo.ca) and make sure that your email is timestamped **NO LATER than 5:20 P.M., Thursday, April 2nd**. I will gladly accept earlier submissions, because the marking burden will be considerable.

Questions:

If you have questions, please email me directly.

Key Readings and Key Points that We Would Have Covered in Class:

Group-based Evil Case #2: Genocide

Social psychologist Ervin Staub is one of the go-to authorities for examining how leaders and citizens come together at particular points in their shared history to initiate genocide. For a good overview, see:

Staub, E. (2014). Obeying, joining, following, resisting, and other processes in the Milgram studies, and in the Holocaust and other genocides: Situations, personality, and bystanders. *Journal of Social Issues, 70*, 501-514. doi: 10.1111/josi.12074

Division of labor makes the task of genocide easier. For a perspective on how non-killers are prepared over time to kill, see:

Fujii, L. A. (2004). Transforming the moral landscape: The diffusion of a genocidal norm in Rwanda. *Journal of Genocide Research, 6*, 99-114. doi: 10.1080/1462352042000194737

Division implies certain roles. For an examination of how this played out in Bosnia, see Hollows and Fritzon (2012). Does the background of those most directly involved in massacres remind you of anything that we recently examined in class?

Hollows, K., & Fritzon, K. (2012). "Ordinary men" or "evil monsters"?: An action systems model of genocidal actions and characteristics of perpetrators. *Law and Human Behavior, 36*, 458-467. doi: 10.1037/h0093987

Rauxloh (2016) offers an unsettling analysis of how people whip themselves up into an emotional space that allows for massacres to be initiated and sustained. See:

Rauxloh, R. E. (2016). Group offending in mass atrocities: Proposing a group violence strategies model for international crimes. *Oñati Socio-legal Series, 6*, 1016-1031.

Not surprisingly, those who participate in genocide want to justify themselves. For an overview of motivations and methods, see:

Bryant, E., Schimke, E. B., Brehm, H. N., & Uggen, C. (2017). Techniques of neutralization and identity work among accused genocide perpetrators. *Social Problems, 0*, 1-19. doi: 10.1093/socpro/spx026

Group-based Evil Case #3: Abusive Family Systems

Although humans are hardwired to expect caregivers and families to be safe, it sadly isn't always the case. Consider child sexual abuse (CSA): Not only must one consider the impact of the

violation itself – rather, one must also consider how pressures within a family system can push toward keeping such violations secret.

For example, in the 400+ U.S. cases examined by Malloy et al. (2007), wherein the perpetrator was a parent or relative over 90% of the time, *nearly 1/4 of the children eventually recanted their initial allegations, often when there were medical findings and/or a confession that supported the allegations*. This was most likely when the accused was a parent figure and the non-offending caregiver did not support the child victim.

Tener (2018) documented some of the coercive CSA secret-keeping strategies that can appear in family systems.

Family can even extend the circle of abuse perpetrators outside the family. For example, in nearly 1/3rd of the sex trafficking cases examined by Reid et al. (2015), the trafficker was a relative (most often a maternal figure). The motive was usually financial, and often linked to chemical dependency.

Malloy, L. C., Lyon, T. D., & Quas, J. A. (2007). Filial dependency and recantation of child sexual abuse allegations. *Journal of the American Academy of Adolescent Psychiatry*, 46, 162-170. doi: 10.1097/01.chi.0000246067.77953.f7

Reid, J. A., Huard, J., & Haskell, R. A. (2015). Family-facilitated juvenile sex trafficking. *Journal of Crime and Justice*, 38, 361-376. doi: 10.1080/0735648X.2014.967965

Tener, D. (2018). The secret of intrafamilial child sexual abuse: Who keeps it and how? *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 27, 1-21. doi: 10.1080/10538712.2017.1397015

Abuse is also an issue at the other end of the age spectrum as well, and elder financial abuse (EFA) has been labeled “the Crime of the 21st Century” by some due to its increasing frequency. Family members appear to be perpetrators over 1/2 of the time, and one Australian investigation (Bagshaw et al., 2013) suggested that *a strong sense of entitlement* (to the elder victim’s resources) was the best predictor of it. For a sampling of some cases, see Dalley et al. (2017).

Bagshaw, D., Wendt, S., Zannettino, L., & Adams, V. (2013). Financial abuse of older people by family members: Views and experiences of older Australians and their family members. *Australian Social Work*, 66, 86-103. doi: 10.1080/0312407x.2012.708762

Dalley, G., Gilhooly, M., Gilhooly, K., & Levi, M. (2017). Exploring financial abuse as a feature of family life: An analysis of Court of Protection cases. *Elder Law Journal*, 7, 28-37.

Responses to Evil

Much of this discussion is framed around the 2-dimensional model of responses to evil presented in Burris and Rempel (2011, especially Studies 2 and 3). The associated Responses to Evil Inventory appears in Appendix A of that article. You may find it worthwhile to complete the scale yourself to see which are your “go-to” responses, and which are not.

Burris, C. T., & Rempel, J. K. (2011). "Just look at him": Punitive responses cued by "evil" symbols. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 33, 69-80. doi: 10.1080/01973533.2010.539961

Conclusion

Under normal circumstances I would end this course by reflecting back on many of the principles we've considered throughout the term, with a particular focus on showing you how the core principles can address nagging questions you might still have about "the nature of evil." And I'd encourage you to think (or keep thinking) about how what you've learned can possibly help us all become "a little less evil." Because your "take-home essay test #3" asks you to make connections between the last two readings, principles, and recent events, I'll leave those things for you to think through at some other time.

I hope that Psychology of Evil has offered you something valuable this term.

Dr. Burris