**St. Jerome’s University in the University of Waterloo**

**Department of Psychology**

**PSYCH 232**

**Psychology of Evil**

**Fall 2016**

**11:30-12:50 TTh, SJ2 1004**

## Instructor and T.A. Information

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## Course Description

## 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.

**CAUTION:** 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 course, as you may find the material disturbing or offensive at times. Although I will make every effort to address the issues in a responsible, respectful manner, you may not always feel comfortable in here, and 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.

## Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

I hope you’ll walk away from this course with a psychologically informed understanding of:

1) what “evil” means to people, and why;

2) when, why, and how various forms of human-on-human nastiness occur;

3) the impact that this nastiness has on perpetrators, victims, and observers.

## Required Readings

Baumeister, R. F. (1997). *Evil: Inside human cruelty and violence*. New York: W. H. Freeman.

Rempel, J. K., & Sutherland, S. (2016). Hate: Theory and implications for intimate relationships. In K.

Aumer (Ed.), *The psychology of love and hate in intimate relationships* (pp. 105-129). Cham, Switzerland: Springer International. (access through e-reserves via LEARN)

**Course Schedule**

(chapter readings in boldface CAPS are from Baumeister): 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.

08 Sep (Th) – Introductions (us, you, and “It”); **PREFACE**

13 Sep (T) – What is “Evil”? 1 – (a psychological perspective); **CHAPTER 1**

15 Sep (Th) – What is “Evil”? 2; **CHAPTER 2**

20 Sep (T) – The Origins of “Evil”

22 Sep (Th) – Possession and Exorcism 1 (film: *Exorcists*)

27 Sep (T) – Possession and Exorcism 2

29 Sep (Th) – Hate; **REMPEL & SUTHERLAND (2016)**

04 Oct (T) – Sadism; **CHAPTER 7**

06 Oct (Th) – Propaganda 1 (film: *Faces of the Enemy*); **CHAPTER 3**

11 Oct (T) – **FALL BREAK: NO CLASS**

13 Oct (Th) – Propaganda 2

18 Oct (T) – **TEST ONE**

20 Oct (Th) – Serial Killers; **CHAPTER 4**

25 Oct (T) – The Functions of “Evil”

27 Oct (Th) – Self-Justification; **CHAPTER 10**

01 Nov (T) – The “Evil” Personality 1; **CHAPTER 5**

03 Nov (Th) – The “Evil” Personality 2

08 Nov (T) – The “Evil” Personality 3

10 Nov (Th) – Power; **CHAPTER 8**

15 Nov (T) – **TEST TWO**

17 Nov (Th) – Corporate “Evil”; **CHAPTER 9**

22 Nov (T) – Genocide 1 (film: *Biography - Gen. Romeo Dallaire*)

24 Nov (Th) – Genocide 2; **CHAPTER 6**

29 Nov (T) – Responses to “Evil”; **CHAPTER 11**

01 Dec (Th) – **TEST THREE**

## Course Requirements and Assessment

TEST 1 = 40%; TEST 2 = 35%; TEST 3 = 25%. There is no final exam. 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. The mark received for a test stands – it will not be dropped, re-weighted, etc. because you weren’t feeling well, had a lot on your mind, etc., nor will “extra” assignments given to students who are dissatisfied with their grades. My goal is to be fair to everyone – please don’t ask for special treatment. Marks will be posted on LEARN as soon as they are available.

## Extra Credit: Up to 4% extra credit is available via research participation in the SONA system. Detailed instructions appear in the SONA instructions available for download via the course website. On a personal note, as an active researcher myself, I would ask that you PLEASE TAKE ANY RESEARCH PARTICIPATION SERIOUSLY – careless completion of a study’s materials is a waste of everyone’s time and seriously undercuts the research process.

An ***additional*** 2% extra credit is available based on completion of a series of feedback questions concerning the Baumeister text. Details appear in a separate document available on LEARN.

**UW Policy regarding Illness and Missed Tests:** UW Examination Regulations ([www.registrar.uwaterloo.ca/exams/ExamRegs.pdf](http://www.registrar.uwaterloo.ca/exams/ExamRegs.pdf)) state that: 1) A medical certificate presented in support of an official petition for relief from normal academic requirements must provide all of the information requested on the “University of Waterloo Verification of Illness” form or it will not be accepted. This form can be obtained from Health Services or at [www.healthservices.uwaterloo.ca/Health\_Services/verification.html](http://www.healthservices.uwaterloo.ca/Health_Services/verification.html).2) If a student has a test/examination deferred due to acceptable medical evidence, he/she normally will write the test/examination at a mutually convenient time, to be determined by the course instructor.3) The University acknowledges that, due to the pluralistic nature of the University community, some students may on religious grounds require alternative times to write tests and examinations. 4) Elective arrangements (such as travel plans) are not considered acceptable grounds for granting an alternative examination time.

Thus, you are entitled to test rescheduling for *legitimate* medical, compassionate, or religious grounds. Alternate test dates/times will not be granted because you forgot, overslept, were in a bad mood, had a plane to catch, didn’t come to class or read the course outline, had a bird poop on your head, etc. Whenever possible, please inform me PRIOR to the scheduled test to arrange an alternate writing time. A make-up test 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). When arriving to write a make-up test, please have the appropriate documentation in hand to support a medical, compassionate, or religious claim. Make-up exams may differ in format from the original.

## Attendance Policy

***This is not a web-based or distance education course***. Thus, although whether or not you choose to attend class is entirely up to you, 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 will be 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.

## Electronic Device Policy

In-class use of any electronic devices for non-class-related purposes is discouraged, as it distracts other students and interferes with your own ability to absorb the material.

## Other Important Information

**Academic Integrity:** To maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo and its Affiliated and Federated Institutions of Waterloo (AFIW) are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility.

[**Academic Integrity Office (UW)**](https://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/)**:** A resource for students and instructors.

***I think cheating is lazy, disrespectful, and immoral, and I find it very sad that some people may try to get a course mark without having earned it honestly. I hope you’re not one of them****.*

**Discipline:** A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under the [St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Discipline](https://www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/PLCY_AOM_Student-Discipline_20131122-SJUSCapproved.pdf). For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [University of Waterloo Policy 71 - Student Discipline](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm).

**Grievance:** A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read the [St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances](http://www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/PLCY_AOM_Student-Petitions-and-Grievances_20151211-SJUSCapproved.pdf).

**Appeals:** A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under the St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or the St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read the [St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Appeals](https://www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/PLCY_AOM_Student-Appeals_20131122-SJUSCapproved.pdf).

**Note for Students with Disabilities:** The [AccessAbility Services](http://uwaterloo.ca/disability-services/) office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (1401), collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS office at the beginning of each academic term.

**How to Do Your Best:**

0) Make the decision to do your best and commit to it! There is no substitute.

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 deal with a lot of specific phenomena, but there some big themes 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 assume that certain concepts are “easy” or “common sense” – often, they are not. Can you explain an idea to someone, 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 how members of a set are similar or different?

These 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 if you put the above suggestions into practice. ***I have also prepared the “MC Survival Guide” (downloadable through LEARN) that offers you specific tips for preparing for my tests***. Remember: I am happy to see you succeed, but YOU have to do the work!

**Final Words**: Good luck! I hope that this course is a worthwhile experience.