THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY Undergraduate Course Outline 2015 16

Undergraduate Course Outline 2015-16

Philosophy 2065F: Philosophy of Evil

Fall term Office Location: StH (Stevenson Hall)

Tue 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM 2157

Office Hours: upon appointment - send

Classroom: TC (Talbot College) 342 me an email

Telephone: 519-661-2111 x80590

Instructor: Dr. Tommaso Bruni E-mail: tbruni2@uwo.ca

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Traditionally, evil has been a problem for those wishing to assert the existence of a benevolent, omnipotent, and omniscient God. However, evil is a problem even beyond religion.

US President Obama

2012 mass shooting in Aurora, CO was:

beyond reason

But what is evil? Is it a force against which to wage war? Or is it an inevitable tendency of human beings, a part of human nature that cannot be uprooted?

Further questions include the following:

Can the prospect of evil justify torture, which can be considered evil in itself? Can national interest justify evil? Can we desire evil for its own sake or can we desire it only because we do not recognize it as evil? To whom or what can evils be done? Can evil result from thoughtlessness? Should evil be forgiven? If so, under which circumstances?

We will explore these questions (and others) by critically engaging answers put forth by ancient, medieval, and contemporary philosophers. We will particularly focus on contemporary theorists such as Hannah Arendt, Primo Levi, Michael Walzer, Michael Stocker, Paul Formosa, Todd Calder, and Claudia Card.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, students will have obtained a solid grasp of the material discussed in the course description and will have learned to think critically about this topic.

In addition, students will develop good argumentative skills and learn to write with clarity and concision.

Finally, students will learn to examine important philosophical questions, such as the highest good of human beings, the nature of justice, the role of the state, the meaning and value of our relationships with one another, and the existence of God, in relation to the nature of evil and in relation to themselves and the society in which they live.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance and Class Participation	10%
In-class Quiz no. 1	15%
In-class Quiz no. 2	15%
Paraphrase of a Passage (1 page)	5%
Essay no. 1 (about 900 words)	25%
Essay no. 2 (about 1,100 words)	30%

There will be no Final Exam.