

University of Houston, "Liberal Studies Senior Seminar" (ILAS 4350-9607) and "Selected Topics in Religious Studies" (3396-19097), Spring 2019. W 230-530pm (CAM 103). For any question email loliva@uh.edu. Office hours after class or by appointment (McElhinney Hall 232A).

Evil and Injustice

Dr. Luca Oliva

Course Description

We will consider the question of evil and injustice throughout this course. We will start by considering classic (Aquinas) and contemporary sources (Calder, Inwagen). Next, we will explore *The Book of Job* and the Leibnizian defense of God (*Theodicy*) centered on the ideas of possible worlds and free will. Then we will address the question of free will in the writings of Plantinga and Dennett. After that, our discussion will turn to the genealogies of good and evil: from the subjectivist approaches of Pyrrho, Hume, Locke, and Mackie to Nietzsche's account of morality (Leiter). We will also introduce the Kantian rationalism (Rawls, Korsgaard) and the political analysis of Arendt. Finally, the course will consider case studies of injustice. In this last part, invited speakers will examine gender and race inequality, poverty and inequality, immigration, and civil rights.

Schedule and Topics

Jan 16	The Question of Evil (Aquinas, Calder, Inwagen)
Jan 23	Evil in the Bible (Genesis, Book of Job)
Jan 30	A Defense of God and Free Will (Leibniz, Jolley, Murray)
Feb 6	Choice and Free Will (Plantinga)
Feb 13	Subjectivist Approaches to Evil (Pyrrho, Hume, Locke, Mackie)
Feb 20	Good and Evil (Nietzsche)
Feb 27	Nietzsche and the Origin of Morality (Dennett, Leiter)
Mar 6	Rational Approaches to Evil (Hobbes, Kant)
Mar 20	On Kantian Morality (Korsgaard, Rawls, Muchnik)
Mar 27	Evil and Authority (Arendt, the Stanford Experiment)
Apr 3	Dr. Alessandro Carrera's Lecture: <i>Cinematic Portraits of Evil</i> (H 135, 3-5pm)
Apr 10	Dr. Melanie Johnson's Lecture: <i>Broken Babies, Broken Futures</i> (H 135, 4-6pm)
Apr 17	Poverty, Gender and Race Inequality (Case Study)
Apr 24	Immigration and Civil Rights (Case Study)

Assessments and Assignments

Here is the list of assignments and their corresponding value. (1) Attendance and participation (20%), (2) a summary of one class subjects (20%), (3) a team-worked PowerPoint presentation on any case study of injustice (20%), (4) an argumentative and comprehensive final paper (3000 words) on the theoretical parts of the class (40%). Please, submit your final paper on Blackboard Learn via Turn-It-In. Late submissions are strongly discouraged and penalized but accepted. The attendance is mandatory but can be waived by the teacher for justified cases; otherwise, exceptions require a medical note.

Plagiarism or other forms of cheating will be reported and penalized. Look at the College (CLASS) bylaws for any details on academic honesty, disabilities, and other matters about students and life on campus.

Bibliography

All the readings are available on blackboard learn. According to the subjects discussed by our invited speakers' new readings could be introduced during the semester. Below you can find the sources of the readings that are posted on blackboard learn and other relevant (but optional) references.

- Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* (TBD).
- Todd Calder, "The Concept of Evil". *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2016.
- Daniel C. Dennett, *Darwin Dangerous Idea* (Penguin 1995: 452-511).
- Peter Van Inwagen, *The Problem of Evil* (Oxford 2006).
- Nicholas Jolley, *Leibniz* (Routledge 2005: 156-73).
- I. Kant, *The Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785) (Cambridge, 1997: TBD).
- Immanuel Kant, *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone* (1793) (Open Court, 1960: TBD).
- Wilhelm Leibniz, *Theodicy* (BiblioBazaar 2007: 138-53).
- Brian Leiter, *Nietzsche on Morality* (Routledge 2002: 91-132).
- John Leslie Mackie, *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong* (1977) (Penguin 1990: TBD).
- M.J. Murray, "Leibniz on the Problem of Evil". *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2016.
- Pablo Muchnik, *Kant's Theory of Evil* (Lexington Books 2009: TBD).
- Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals - Ecce Homo* (Random House, 1967: 24-56).
- Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* (Random House, Inc., 1974: aphorisms 125, 341, 343).
- Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (3-7, 123-7).
- Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power* (Random House, Inc., 1968: 2-14).
- David Phillips, *Sidgwickian Ethics* (Oxford 2011: 52-89).
- Alvin Plantinga, *God, Freedom and Evil* (Eerdmans 2002: 7-64).
- John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Harvard 1971: 102-70).
- William David Ross, *The Right and the Good* (1930) (Oxford 2002: TBD).
- Henry Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics* (Macmillan 1907: 314-39).
- The Book of Job* (any edition, including online sources).
- George Kateb, *Hannah Arendt: Politics, Conscience, Evil* (Rawman & Allanheld, 1983: TBD).