

St. Jerome's University in the University of Waterloo
Department of Psychology
PSYCH 232
Psychology of Evil
Fall 2020

Instructor Information

Instructor: Christopher T. Burris, Ph.D.

Online Office Hours: TBD – weekly drop-in via Bongo on the course's LEARN page
[Connect → virtual classroom]

Email: cburris@uwaterloo.ca

Updates: check “announcements” on LEARN frequently for course-related info and news

Connectivity: IMPORTANT!

Please let me know via email *as soon as possible*:

- a) how many time zones away you are, if you are not in the Eastern (North American) time zone;
- b) if you have had bandwidth or internet connection problems more than once a month;
- c) if there is restricted access to certain websites (e.g., news, YouTube) in your region.

This information will help me to ensure that your experience of this course will be as smooth as possible.

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.

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) why people feel the need to minimize or justify their own nastiness, and how they do it;
- 4) the impact that all of the above has on perpetrators, victims, and observers.

Note: You shouldn't be surprised to encounter disturbing descriptions and images in a course about evil. I think it would be irresponsible not to deal with the subject matter head-on in this way. That being said, I intend to present no more of such things than is educationally useful.

Course Schedule (topics and readings)

All readings are *available throughout the term as UW Library e-reserves that can be accessed via the PSYCH 232 LEARN page*. The schedule is:

Week of	Topics	Reading by Author(s)	Task
Sep 07	What is “evil”?	Govrin (2018)	
Sep 14	What makes an “evildoer”? 1	Bastian et al. (2015)	
Sep 21	What makes an “evildoer”? 2	Rowan & Dwyer (2015)	End Test #1 material
Sep 28	The “Mark of Cain” 1	Merritt et al. (2010)	Test #1 (25%) [Wed, Sep 30, 7pm]
Oct 05	The “Mark of Cain” 2	Moore & Gino (2013)	
Oct 12	Fall Reading Week (no class)		
Oct 19	Becoming “evil” 1	Furnham et al. (2013)	
Oct 26	Becoming “evil” 2		End Test #2 material
Nov 02	Hate	Rempel & Sutherland (2016)	Test #2 (33%) [Wed, Nov 04, 7pm]
Nov 09	Sadism	Bulut (2017)	
Nov 16	Serial Killers	Hodgkinson et al. (2017)	End Test #3 material
Nov 23	Group-based Evil 1	Campbell & Göritz (2014)	Test #3 (25%) [Wed, Nov 25, 7pm]
Nov 30	Group-based Evil 2	Pedrini & Villeneuve (2017)	Test #4 (17%) [Wed, Dec 02, 7pm]

Course Requirements and Assessment

Tests. There are four online tests, scheduled as shown above. Each is weighted based on the approximate amount of lecture and reading material that it covers and may contain a mix of multiple choice, short answer, and medium-length essay questions. **THEY ARE NOT DESIGNED TO BE OPEN-NOTES/ OPEN-READINGS:** Similar to in-class assessments, each test will be timed so you will need to make sure that you “know your stuff” before writing it. The time allotted and the number of questions on each test will vary depending on the amount of material covered in the section being tested. Tests are not cumulative. There is no final exam.

For students with a documented disability: Please ensure that AccessAbility Services notifies me early in the term to verify any time accommodations that need to be made for the online test sessions.

For students outside the Eastern Time Zone: Please notify me early in the term if you are doing coursework outside the (North American) Eastern Time Zone for possible time accommodations related to online test sessions.

As noted above, all assigned readings will be available to you from the beginning of the term. I will do my best to post online lectures no later than Thursday of each week. I also plan to hold weekly online drop-in question-and-answer sessions (time TBD). If it’s a short question, email is probably best.

Marks will be posted on LEARN as soon as possible. In order to be fair to everyone, *each test mark received stands “as is”* – that is, it will not be dropped or re-weighted.

Extra Credit: Up to 4% extra credit is available via SONA research participation. I will post any information that the Research Experiences Group sends me to assist you. 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 undercuts the research process.

UW Policy regarding Illness and Missed Tests: UW Examination Regulations (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. 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. ***Whenever possible, please inform us PRIOR to the scheduled test to arrange an alternate writing time.*** A make-up test should normally be scheduled on the first school day after your documentation expires, with the obvious provision of access to missed material (see Attendance Policy 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.

Other Important Information

Intellectual Property: I very much want this class to be a good experience for you, and I am putting a lot of time, thought, and effort into that. You (or someone who cares about you a lot) paid so you could benefit from the firsthand experience that this class provides. To be clear, I'm sharing my work with YOU -- so it's not fair to me to sell or give away my lectures, slides, etc. to other people. That's "unauthorized distribution of intellectual property," and *it's not okay*. I hope that makes sense.

Academic Integrity: Please have some respect for yourself, your fellow students, and your instructor. Don't be evil. Don't cheat.

"In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. [Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information.]"

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, www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/upload_file/PLCY_AOM_Student-Petitions-and-Grievances_20151211-SJUSCapproved.pdf. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the St. Jerome's Advising Specialist, Student Affairs Office, who will provide further assistance.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for their actions. [Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information.] 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 instructor, 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, www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/PLCY_AOM_Student-Discipline_20131122-SJUSCapproved.pdf. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to University of Waterloo Policy 71, Student Discipline, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm. For typical penalties, check the Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm.

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes they have a ground for an appeal should refer to the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Appeals, www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/PLCY_AOM_Student-Appeals_20131122-SJUSCapproved.pdf.

Note for students with disabilities: AccessAbility Services, located in Needles Hall (Room 1401) at the University of Waterloo, 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 AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term, www.uwaterloo.ca/accessability-services/.