



COURSE UNIT (MODULE) DESCRIPTION

Course unit (module) title	Code
The Problem of Evil in Contemporary Philosophy	

Lecturer(s)	Department(s) where the course unit (module) is delivered
Coordinator: Assoc. prof. dr. Jolanta Saldukaitytė Other(s):	Faculty of Philosophy, Institute of Philosophy

Study cycle	Type of the course unit (module)

Mode of delivery	Period when the course unit (module) is delivered	Language(s) of instruction
Face to face Blended	Autumn semester or Spring semester	English

Requirements for students	
Prerequisites: none	Additional requirements (if any):

Course (module) volume in credits	Total student's workload	Contact hours	Self-study hours
5	120	48	82

Purpose of the course unit (module): programme competences to be developed		
<p>Aim of the course is to introduce students to the secular concept of evil in contemporary philosophical thought. First, course presents and critically evaluates philosophical questions regarding the nature and meaning of the evil in the history of philosophy (supernatural, epistemological, ontological, aesthetic approaches). Second, introduces the key philosophical ideas that have influenced the problem of evil in contemporary philosophy (Nietzsche, Kant, Levinas, Arendt, Adorno). Third, aims to engage students into critical evaluation what is the difference between evil and bad or wrong; can natural (eg. Lisbon earthquake) and moral (e.g. Holocaust) evil can be compared; what is the possible response to evil. Fourth, the problem of evil in philosophy is presented both through primary and secondary sources, thus aiming to acquaint students with the philosophical approach in general.</p>		
Learning outcomes of the course unit (module)	Teaching and learning methods	Assessment methods
Students will get familiar with the main approaches of problem of evil in contemporary philosophy.	Lectures	Written examination (including short answer questions, true/false questions)
<p>Students will understand how secular concept of evil in contemporary philosophy differs from religious or supernatural concept of evil.</p> <p>Students will be able to understand that evil is rather a moral but not a natural phenomenon.</p> <p>Students will know and will be able to evaluate different concepts of evil in contemporary philosophy.</p> <p>Students will be able to describe and evaluate events and processes of XX-XXI century by using different</p>	Seminar work, lectures	<p>Oral presentation; Answering questions (oral or written from); Discussion; Comment and critique of a theoretical perspective.</p> <p>Written examination (including short answer questions, true/false questions)</p>

philosophical theories of evil.		
Students will be able to reflect independently on questions of evil in contemporary society and understand the ethical and political implications of evil. They will be able to evaluate possible responses to the evil and human responsibility (personal and global) in light of the challenges of contemporary society.	Seminar work	Oral presentation; Answering questions (oral or written from); Discussion; Comment and critique of a theoretical perspective. Written examination (including short answer questions, true/false questions)

Content: breakdown of the topics	Contact hours							Self-study work: time and assignments	
	Lectures	Tutorials	Seminars	Exercises	Laboratory work	Internship/work placement	Contact hours	Self-study hours	Assignments
1. Introduction. Religious and supernatural concept of evil versus secular concept of evil. Book of Job. Natural evil and moral evil (broad concepts of evil). Lisbon (1755 earthquake) versus Auschwitz.	4		2				6	8	Kearny, "Evil, monstrosity and the sublime", p. 83-88. Russell, "The Secular Moral Concept of Evil", p. 9-30. Neiman, S., "Earthquakes: Why Lisbon?" p. 240-250.
2. Radical evil. Kant and human propensity to evil.	4		2				6	8	Kant, "On the Radical Evil in Human Nature" p.17-50.
3. Bad and evil. Nietzsche. Good and bad versus good and evil	4		2				6	8	Nietzsche, "First essay: 'Good and Evil', 'Good and Bad'", p. 10-24.
4. The problem of evil in the Holocaust. Historical and ethical meaningfulness and non-comprehensibility of the Holocaust. How good people turn evil.	3		2				2	4	Neiman, S., "Mass Murders: Why Auschwitz?", p. 250-258. Cole, "Facing the Holocaust", p. 174-209. Bauman, Donskis, "From the Devil to Frighteningly Normal and Sane People", p. 17-49.
5. Banality of evil. Arendt on Eichmann in Jerusalem. Doing evil and being evil.	3		2				6	8	Arendt, "Postscript", p. 281-298.
6. Moral evil. Levinas and the end of theodicy.	4		2				6	8	Levinas, "Useless Suffering", "Transcendence and Evil"
7. Non-representability of evil. Adorno on poetry after Auschwitz.	4		2				6	8	Adorno, "Cultural Criticism and Society", p. 17-34.

										Patterson, <i>The Holocaust and the Nonrepresentable</i> (excerpts)
8. Evil in the modern world and the borderlands of humanity (terrorism, torture, wars, genocide etc.)	2						2	4		Cole, "Terrorism, Torture and the Problems of Evil", p. 1-23. Cole, "Twenty-First Century Mythologies", p. 210-241. Kearney, "On Terror", p. 109-137.
9. Responses to evil: punishment, remembrance, reconciliation, forgiveness, mourning, responsibility and justice.	4		2				6	8		Levinas, "Responsibility for the Other", p. 93-102. Wiesenthal, <i>The Sunflower: On the Possibilities and Limits of Forgiveness</i> (excerpts).
Exam preparation.							2	18		
Total	32		16				48	82		

Assessment strategy	Weight, %	Deadline	Assessment criteria
Exam	50		<p>The following is submitted for the exam:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1. Ten closed-type questions asking to evaluate the correctness of the statement (each is valued at 0.5 points.) - 2. Two problematic questions (each assessment up to 2.5 points): - understands the problem of evil in philosophy; well acquainted with the sources, clearly understands the main concepts, theses and argumentation; explains fluently, consistently, interprets well, is able to compare, justify the opinion, does not make mistakes - 2.5 points. - understands the problem of evil in philosophy; knows the sources, understands the main concepts, theses and argumentation; explains consistently, tries to interpret and compare, mistakes are insignificant - 2 points. - has an average understanding on the problem of evil in philosophy; uncertainly knows the sources, understands some basic concepts and theses; explains but does not interpret or compare, makes mistakes - 1 point. - Weakly orientates in the problem of evil in philosophy; understands only a few concepts and theses, often makes mistakes - 0.5 points.
Active participation in seminars	20	During the semester	Accumulative score. The way the grade is accumulated will depend on the number of students taking the course. The following will be assessed: demonstration of knowledge and competence, creativity in examining, explaining and solving problems.
Seminar presentation	30	During the semester	<p>Presentation of the selected part of the text.</p> <p>Recognises key concepts and thesis - 1 point.</p> <p>Recognises the main concepts and theses and presents the development of the argument of the text – 2 points.</p> <p>Presents the main issues, the main thesis and the argumentation in a coherent and articulated manner, formulating the main questions - 3 points.</p>

Author	Year	Title	Issue of a	Publishing place and house
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	of public ation		periodical or volume of a publication	or web link
Compulsory reading				
Adorno, T. W.	1983	Cultural Criticism and Society		In Prisms, 17–34. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
Arendt, H.	2006	Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil		New York, N.Y.: Penguin Books
Bernstein, Richard J.	2002	“Evil and the temptation of theodicy”, In <i>The Cambridge Companion to Emmanuel Levinas</i> . Edited by Simon Critchley and Robert Bernasconi. Pp. 252–67		Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Levinas, E.	1987	Transcendence and Evil, trans. A. Lingis. In <i>Collected Philosophical Papers</i> , 175-86.		Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff.
Levinas, E.	1988	Useless Suffering, trans. R. A. Cohen. In <i>The Provocation of Levinas</i> eds. R. Bernasconi & D. Wood, 156-67.		London: Routledge.
Cole, P.	2006	The Myth of Evil: Demonizing the Enemy		Westport, Conn.: Praeger.
Kearney, R.	2003	Strangers, Gods, and monsters: interpreting otherness		London; New York: Routledge.
Nietzsche, F. W., Ansell-Pearson, K. & Diethe, C.	2017	‘On the Genealogy of Morality’ and other Writings		Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press
Kant, I.	2009	Religion Within the Bounds of Bare Reason		Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co.
Wiesenthal, S.	1998	The Sunflower: On the Possibilities and Limits of Forgiveness. Trans. H. A. Pichler.		New York : Schocken Books.
Levinas, E.	1985	Ethics and Infinity. Trans. Richard A. Cohen.		Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press.
Bauman, Z. & Donskis, L.	2013	Moral blindness: the loss of sensitivity in liquid modernity		Chichester: Polity Press.
Optional reading				
Zimbardo, P. G.	2008	The Lucifer effect: understanding how good people turn evil.		New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks.
Arendt, H.	1973	The Origins of Totalitarianism		New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
Dostoyevsky, F.	2011	The Brothers Karamazov		New York: W. W. Norton & Co.
Nys, T.	2019	The Routledge Handbook of the Philosophy of Evil		New York: Routledge
Neiman, S.	2015	Evil in Modern Thought: An Alternative History of Philosophy		Princeton: Princeton University Press
Russell, L.	2014	Evil: A Philosophical Investigation		Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
Russell, L.	2022	Evil: A Very Short Introduction		New York: Oxford University Press.
Nemo, P. & Lévinas, E.	1998	Job and the Excess of Evil		Pittsburgh, Pa.: Duquesne University Press.
Warren, N. d. 2020.		Original Forgiveness		Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press.

Bernstein, R. J.	2002	Radical Evil: A Philosophical Interrogation		Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA: Polity Press.
Ricœur, P.	1967	The symbolism of evil		New York,: Harper & Row.