

**UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY**

Philosophical Problems of Evil
(PHILOSOP 2065F Evil, Section 001)

Autumn 2011
UC-202, MWF 1.30-2.30

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Description

Historically, the problem of evil has been bound up with the question whether evil forms part of the basis for an argument against the existence of God. Though we will certainly touch on the problem of evil in the philosophy of religion, we will focus on the problem of identifying the extension of the concept of evil. For example, must evil involve an act of will? Or is there such thing as natural evil? Is evil the result of violating some law or order, and, if so, whose? Or is it something more basic? Is it part of the fabric of reality?

A particular *method*—that of philosophical analysis—will be presented and applied, and will guide our study of a number of classic philosophical approaches to this problem. Authors to be studied include: Augustine, Aquinas, Abelard, Bayle, Descartes, Leibniz, Kant, Hobbes, Rousseau, Neiman, van Inwagen, and others.

Texts

Texts will be posted on WebCT. We will also read selections from Susan Neiman's *Evil in Modern Thought: An Alternative History of Philosophy* (Princeton UP, 2002), which is available at the university bookshop, and which will serve as both a guide and a candidate for evaluation.

Requirements

2 essays: 35% each
1 exam: 30%

The Department of Philosophy's policies, which govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in philosophy courses, can be found on the department's webpage: <http://uwo.ca/philosophy/undergraduate/proceduresappeals.html>. It is your responsibility to understand the policies set out by the University Senate and the Department of Philosophy, and thus, ignorance of these policies cannot be used as grounds for appeal.