

POWER & EVIL
(SOCI 260)
Spring 2012
Monday & Wednesday, 4-5:15pm
208 Davis Hall

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The world can be a frightening place, with frequent news reports of war, terrorism, torture, murder, rape, slavery, and genocide. This course on the social chemistry of power and evil is intended to help answer why the world can be so frightening, but also expand our imaginations as to the ways power and evil are practiced. Power and evil are not the same thing, power does not always lead to evil, and power can in fact be used for good. Yet evil usually involves an exercise of power. So we will first examine power, then focus on evil exercises of power.

Over the course of the semester, we will explore answers to the following core questions:

- 1) What is power? What are its forms and bases?
- 2) What is evil? What kinds of evil exist in the contemporary world? Under what social conditions does evil emerge?
- 3) What can we do, and what are people doing, in the contemporary world to prevent evil, and restrict abuses of power?

This course is primarily sociological. Accordingly, we will not examine genetics, human nature, or the lives and minds of famous tyrants or serial killers to explain power or evil in the world. Instead, we will take a more situational approach. What this means will become clearer over the course of the semester. For now, suffice it to say that you may be surprised and challenged at times to question certain comforting assumptions people commonly have about themselves and the world around them.

This course is not for the faint of heart. This course will sometimes be disturbing, especially when we get to the parts of the course devoted to evil. I urge you to keep an open mind, respect differences, and be open to changing how you think.

COURSE GOALS:

- 1) Develop a richer, more sociological understanding of the nature of power and evil.

- 2) Nurture responsible citizenship by developing knowledge of the conditions that can create evil, and the ways evil and abuses of power can be prevented, or mitigated.

REQUIRED READINGS:

In addition to a reader available at cost from the Department of Sociology and Anthropology (see Diana Smith in the Department's main office), the following book is required and available at the Stetson Bookstore:

Zimbardo, Philip. 2007. *The Lucifer Effect: Understanding How Good People Turn Evil*. New York: Random House.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

3 tests (15%, 20%, and 25%)	60%
Reading assignments (themes and quotes)	30%
Attendance and participation (5% each)	10%

The three tests (60%)

There will be three tests over the course of the semester. The days on which the tests occur are indicated in the course schedule below. The tests will draw from my lectures and the course readings, and will consist of one essay, short answer questions, plus a sprinkling of multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, and/or true/false questions. The essay portion of the final/third test will be a take-home essay. At least five days prior to each test, I will post on Blackboard a list of possible test questions, from which I will select the actual test questions. In other words, you get the test questions in advance, so if you study carefully and thoroughly, you should do well on the tests.

Please do your best not to miss any of the three tests. *If you miss a test without prior notice and a valid excuse, or at least a valid excuse (e.g., a doctor's note, or athletic coach's note, including their contact info), you will receive a 0% on that test, which will have a significant adverse impact on your course grade.* Even if you feel unprepared for any given test, it is better to take the test than to not take the test. Even 10% is better than 0%, which is what you will receive if you do not show up for a test without a valid excuse.

On test days, there will be no assigned reading, and you will have the entire class time to complete the test. *Once the test is handed out, you cannot leave the room. If you leave the room, you must hand in your test, and you cannot come back to finish it. Accordingly, make sure to go to the bathroom before class on test days. Also, please do not cheat. If I catch you cheating on a test, you will automatically get a 0% on the test, and I am obliged to report the cheating to Stetson's Honor Council.*

Reading assignments: themes and quotes (30%)

It is essential that you do the assigned reading in order for us to have an informed dialogue in class, and for you to learn and do well on the assigned tests. Accordingly, *I expect you to bring to each class for which we have a reading at least three themes and quotes from the reading.* I will provide you with a model and example for this assignment at the start of the semester. While we will not have a chance to have each student report their themes, quotes and reflections I may on any given day ask you to tell us about your chosen themes, quotes and reflections, and you will all hand me your own reading assignment at the end of each class. I will typically get your assignments back to you within a week, and will grade them as follows:

✓++	= A range grade
✓+	= B range grade
✓	= C range grade
✓-	= D range grade
F	= Failing grade

Lastly, you may skip up to four reading assignments over the course of the semester without grade penalty. If you choose to complete all or all but one, two or three of the writing assignments you will receive extra credit for each of those assignments. I recommend committing to write all the reading assignments from the start to earn extra credit, and saving those four skips for if and when you really need them.

Attendance and participation (10%)

Attendance: I expect you to attend every class, and will accordingly take attendance at the start of each class. *If you are more than five minutes late to class by my watch, I will not count you as attending, though you may still earn participation points by participating even if you arrive late to class.* Please let me know *in advance* if you cannot make a class. Medical or team-related absences are acceptable, with a note from your doctor or coach, including their contact information.

Participation: In my experience as both a teacher and student, students pay more attention, feel more interested, and learn better when they are active participants in the class conversation, rather than strictly listeners. Thus, your participation in class is highly valued. You will have plenty of opportunities to participate as I will frequently pose comprehension questions about the readings, and solicit your opinions about the readings and related social issues. *Importantly, grounding your participation in the readings, rather than just your opinion, is most valuable to our collective learning (e.g., “Zimbardo says that...but I think...” or “What does Dennis Wrong mean when he says...” or “Underhill’s statement that... reminds me of Wrong’s concept...”). Everyone has an opinion, but not everyone has an informed opinion.*

If you are shy about participating in front of everyone, one way you might participate is to simply pose questions about the reading, or lecture. I will not always have the answer, and even when I do, I will at times encourage you all to propose answers to each other’s questions. Conversely, for those of you who tend to participate a lot, I urge you to get in the habit of waiting to allow those who participate less to speak first.

CLASS CONDUCT

Please adhere to the following basic rules for class conduct:

- 1) Do not read books, magazines, newspapers, etc. during class unless instructed to do so.
- 2) Do not listen to headphones during class.
- 3) *Do not arrive late to class and do not leave early. If you must arrive late or leave early for a compelling reason, please notify me in advance. Please get in the habit of getting a drink or going to the bathroom before or after class, not during class.*
- 4) Do not talk to other classmates while the professor or another student is speaking as this is both disrespectful and distracting.
- 5) *Raise your hand to be recognized before you begin speaking.*
- 6) Do not interrupt anyone who is speaking.
- 7) Use a reasonable tone of voice when speaking in class, and during class discussions do not curse at or otherwise disrespect anyone.
- 8) *Do not bring your computer to class. Write your lecture notes in a notebook instead.*
- 9) *Turn off your cell phone during class and put your cell phone out of sight.*
- 10) *Once you have begun a test, you may not leave the class until you have finished your test. If you leave the class during your test, you may not return to complete the test.*

GRADING SCALE

The grading scale in this course is as follows:

A+ = 97-100%
A = 94-96%
A- = 90-93%
B+ = 87-89%
B = 84-86%
B- = 80-83%
C+ = 77-79%
C = 74-76%
C- = 70-73%
D+ = 67-69%
D = 64-66%
D- = 60-63%
F = 59% and below

**STETSON UNIVERSITY
GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE
STATEMENT**

In order to assure that Stetson University is meeting its goals in providing an excellent General Education, the College has established specific General Education Learning Outcomes for all courses meeting a particular area requirement in the General Education curriculum. To monitor how well students are meeting those outcomes, instructors of those courses regularly submit work to the committees assessing each outcome. While the outcomes of these assessments are primarily for our internal use in monitoring and enhancing our curriculum, we may occasionally report the results of these assessments in published research or academic conferences. All such reports will include aggregate (not individual) data and will not include information that could identify the student or the instructor. While the use of this information within the institution is part of normal educational practice, you may choose **not to allow** data derived from your own work to be used for published reports or presentations by signing an “opt out” form in the Registrar’s office.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, PLAGIARISM, COLLUSION AND THE UNIVERSITY HONOR CODE

From the Stetson University Honor Code Webpage:
<http://www.stetson.edu/honorsystem/>
<http://www.stetson.edu/honorsystem/pledge.php>

Preamble

As an institution of higher learning, Stetson University depends upon its members—students, faculty, staff, and administration—to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Without a commitment to this ideal, the foundation of our educational mission is undermined, and truth—the ultimate goal of our pursuits at the university—loses its meaning and force. The Honor System seeks to nourish a vital campus culture, one where students, faculty, administration, and staff are mutually committed to pursuing truth in a spirit of cooperation and respect. Laws and rules exist to protect a society and its members, but truly to flourish, a community relies upon the individual to take responsibility for his or her actions and to uphold certain bedrock principles. The Honor System specifies actions that are harmful to the community and establishes ways of dealing with those who violate basic standards. But the primary justification for the Honor System is that it challenges individuals to reflect upon the ethical issues they face as members of a university and encourages them to take positive steps to maintain the integrity of themselves and their community. Moreover, by affirming student self-governance in the form of an Honor Council, this Honor System underscores the central roles that both students and faculty play in upholding academic integrity.

The Honor Pledge

A. The Honor Pledge is a promise made by undergraduates to uphold high standards of integrity and honesty in their academic work. By enrolling in Stetson University, students commit themselves to abide by the principles and spirit of the Honor System. They will be asked

to demonstrate that commitment by signing a written pledge that will be kept on file by the Honor Council.

B. Faculty are encouraged to underscore the continuing vitality of the Honor Pledge by having students reaffirm their promise when turning in tests, quizzes, papers, or other assignments. For the purposes of assignments, a student who writes the word "Pledged" followed by her or his signature is understood to be reaffirming her or his commitment to the principles of the Honor System.

C. The Pledge: As a member of Stetson University, I agree to uphold the highest standards of integrity in my academic work. I promise that I will neither give nor receive unauthorized aid of any kind on my tests, papers, and assignments. When using the ideas, thoughts, or words of another in my work, I will always provide clear acknowledgement of the individuals and sources on which I am relying. I will avoid using fraudulent, falsified, or fabricated evidence and/or material. I will refrain from resubmitting without authorization work for one class that was obtained from work previously submitted for academic credit in another class. I will not destroy, steal, or make inaccessible any academic resource material. By my actions and my example, I will strive to promote the ideals of honesty, responsibility, trust, fairness, and respect that are at the heart of Stetson's Honor System.

Plagiarism & Collusion:

Refer to your "Guide to Plagiarism and Collusion", which defines plagiarism and collusion, and explains the correct format for direct quotations from another person's work. Be sure to correctly cite any direct quotations, and correctly reference paraphrasing of theorists' words. If there are examples of plagiarism and/or collusion in the paper, the grade will be lowered one letter grade for every incidence of uncited references and plagiarism. For example, if you have one incidence of plagiarism and your grade was a 90, you will receive an 80 on that assignment. If you have three incidences of plagiarism, and your grade was 90, then you will receive a grade of 60. If you have more than three incidents of plagiarism in your paper you will receive a '0'. Students who have cheated, plagiarized or colluded will be reported to the Honor Council, according to University policy.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Wednesday, January 18:

- 1) Introductions
- 2) Discussion of the syllabus

PART I: FORMS AND BASES OF POWER

Monday, January 23:

Reading due for today's class:

Handout: "Power and Participation" (p.3-32) in *Power and Powerlessness* by John Gaventa.

Wednesday, January 25:

Reading due for today's class:

- 1) Reader: "The Forms of Power: Force, Manipulation, Persuasion" (p.21-34) in *Power* by Dennis Wrong.
- 2) Reader: "The Forms of Power: Authority" (p.35-64) in *Power* by Dennis Wrong.

Monday, January 30:

Reading due for today's class:

Reader: "The Forms of Power: The Interaction of Coercion and Legitimation" (p.84-123) in *Power* by Dennis Wrong.

Wednesday, February 1:

Reading due for today's class:

Reader: "The Bases of Power: Individual and Collective Resources" (p.124-145) in *Power* by Dennis Wrong.

PART II: DIVERSE EXAMPLES OF POWER

Monday, February 6:

Political and Economic Power in America

Reading due for today's class:

Reader: "Power and Authority in America" (p.120-152) in *Political Sociology* by Anthony Orum and John Dale.

Wednesday, February 8:

Power in Media

Reading due for today's class:

- 1) Reader: "Propaganda Mill" (p.405-411) in *Our Unfree Press* by Robert W. McChesney.
- 2) Reader: "Foreword," (p.vii-viii) and "The Age of Show Business" in *Amusing Ourselves to Death* by Neil Postman.

Monday, February 13:

Power and Gender in Everyday Life

Reading due for today's class:

- 1) Reader: "Fraternities and Collegiate Rape Culture: Why Are Some Fraternities More Dangerous Places for Women?" (p.179-189) by A. Ayres Boswell and Joan Z. Spade, in *Men's Lives*, eds. Michael S Kimmel and Michael A. Messner.
- 2) Reader: "Strategies Men Use to Resist" (p.469-475) by Francine M. Deutsch, in *Men's Lives*, eds. Michael S Kimmel and Michael A. Messner.

Wednesday, February 15:

Power and the Food Industry

Reading due for today's class:

- 1) Reader: "Introduction: The Food Industry and 'Eat More'" (p.1-28) in *Food Politics* by Marion Nestle.
- 2) Reader: "The Most Dangerous Job" (p.169-190) in *Fast Food Nation* by Eric Schlosser.

Monday, February 20:Power in Shops

Reading due for today's class:

- 1) Reader: "A Science Is Born" (p.11-33) in *Why We Buy* by Paco Underhill.
- 2) Reader: "Shoppers Move Like People" (p.75-85) in *Why We Buy* by Paco Underhill.

Wednesday, February 22:

****TEST 1 TODAY.** No reading for today. You will have the whole class to complete the test.

PART III: A SITUATIONIST APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING EVIL**Monday, February 27:**

Reading due for today's class:

Chapter 1 (p.3-22) in *The Lucifer Effect* by Philip Zimbardo.

Wednesday, February 29:

Reading due for today's class:

Chapter 2 (p.23-39) and Chapter 3 (p.40-56) in *The Lucifer Effect* by Philip Zimbardo.

**Saturday March 3 – Sunday, March 11:
SPRING BREAK****Monday, March 12:**

Reading due for today's class:

Chapter 4 (p.57-79) in *The Lucifer Effect* by Philip Zimbardo.

Wednesday, March 14:

Reading due for today's class:

Chapter 5 (p.80-99) in *The Lucifer Effect* by Philip Zimbardo.

Monday, March 19:

Reading due for today's class:

Chapter 6 (p.100-129) in *The Lucifer Effect* by Philip Zimbardo.

Wednesday, March 21:

Reading due for today's class:

Chapter 7 (p.130-153) in *The Lucifer Effect* by Philip Zimbardo.

Monday, March 26:

Reading due for today's class:

Chapter 8 (p.154-173) in *The Lucifer Effect* by Philip Zimbardo.

Wednesday, March 28:

Reading due for today's class:

Chapter 9 (p.174-194) in *The Lucifer Effect* by Philip Zimbardo.

Monday, April 2:

Reading due for today's class:

Chapter 10 (p.195-228) in *The Lucifer Effect* by Philip Zimbardo.

Wednesday, April 4:

Reading due for today's class:

Chapter 12 (p.258-296) in *The Lucifer Effect* by Philip Zimbardo.

Monday, April 9:

Reading due for today's class:

Chapter 13 (p.297-323) in *The Lucifer Effect* by Philip Zimbardo.

Wednesday, April 11:

****TEST 2 TODAY.** No reading for today. You will have the whole class to complete the test.

PART IV: SOME FORMS OF EVIL, AND WAYS TO COMBAT EVIL IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

Monday, April 16:

Forms of Slavery in the Contemporary World

Reading due for today's class:

- 1) Introduction to the U.S. State Department's 2011 "Trafficking in Persons Report," p.7-47 (from Table of Contents on p.7 of the PDF through "Global Law Enforcement Data" ending on p.47 of the PDF). <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/164452.pdf>
- 2) View the photo galleries under the titles (1) "sexual exploitation," (2) "slave labor," and (3) "at risk, rescued and sheltered" all located at:
<http://www.gtipphotos.state.gov/index.cfm>

Wednesday, April 18:

NO CLASS DUE TO SURCAS

(Stetson Undergraduate Research & Creative Arts Symposium)

Monday, April 23:

Terrorism

Reading due for today's class:

Wikipedia entry on terrorism at: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terrorism>

Wednesday, April 25:

Ways to Combat Evil, Part 1 of 3

Reading due for today's class:

Reader: "The Cultural and Psychological Origins of War" (p.249-260), "The Nature of Groups: Security, Power, Justice, and Positive Connection" (p.261-273), and "The Creation and Evolution of Caring, Connection, and Nonaggression" (p.274-283) in *The Roots of Evil* by Ervin Staub.

Monday, April 30:Ways to Combat Evil, Part 2 of 3

Reading due for today's class:

Reader: "Chapter 4: Preventing Extremism" (p.127-148) and "Chapter 5: Good Extremism" (p.149-159) in *Going to Extremes* by Cass R. Sunstein.

**Wednesday, May 2:
(Last day of class)**Ways to Combat Evil, Part 3 of 3

Reading due for today's class:

Chapter 16 (p.444-488) in *The Lucifer Effect* by Philip Zimbardo.

*****TEST 3 will occur on Saturday, May 5, 11am-1pm, in our classroom.***