

FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR COURSE PROPOSAL
UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON

Use this form to submit **FSEM 100 topics** courses for review **or** any **other existing course** that you wish to have designated to meet the first-year seminar requirement.

COURSE NUMBER:	FSEM 100		
COURSE TITLE:	THE BAD SEED		
SUBMITTED BY:	Virginia Mackintosh	DATE:	1/27/2016
<i>This course proposal has the department's approval. (Put a check in the box to the right.)</i>			

COURSE DESCRIPTION. In the space below, provide a one- to two-sentence description of this course. The description will be entered in Banner and will also be used in other publications about the first-year seminar program (such as the “Eagle Essentials” booklet).

What makes human beings do bad things? Are some people born immoral, or does a negative environment turn innocence into wickedness? This course will explore the roots of evil, from genetic, societal, and psychological perspectives.

RATIONALE. Include short statement addressing how this course meets the FSEM's basic components, explaining *specifically* how it will meet the common FSEM student learning outcomes (see FSEM call above), and arguing why this course should be approved to meet the FSEM General Education requirement. Please point to specific readings, assignments, and exercises and show how they will meet the learning outcomes.

This course was first taught in Fall 2012 and then again in Fall 2014. Students read from a wide variety of sources (both fiction and nonfiction) regarding the important topic of why people perpetrate evil. They consider many accounts of where evil comes from (e.g., genes, psychopathy, cultural/societal influences) and argue which of these explanations best applies to particular examples of evil. The class periods are almost entirely discussion based and students are assigned dates to lead those discussions. In Fall 2014, I added a game component where students form groups and use game design to consider what the crossroads are where a person can either move more toward an evil developmental trajectory, or toward a less harmful outcome. This activity promotes students synthesizing material from many sources and thinking through issues in a new and creative way. The group then presents their ‘game’ to the class and students have a chance to try out the games. Formal speaking experience comes from each student presenting a summary of his or her final topic to the class at the end of the semester. There is a strong emphasis on primary source readings – not just those assigned weekly, but also books and journal articles required for the final paper. To aid students in developing their critical thinking and writing skills, I meet with each student individually halfway through the semester (and throughout as necessary) to discuss their project, have them complete an annotated bibliography, and turn in a draft of their paper for editing. This is a challenging course, but students find it interesting. Who hasn't wondered, “How could someone have done such a terrible thing?!”

SYLLABUS. Attach a complete course syllabus.

SUBMIT this form and attached syllabus **electronically as one document** to Will Mackintosh (wmackint@umw.edu) by 5 PM on February 1, 2016. All submissions **must** be in electronic form.

The Bad Seed? Exploring the Roots of Evil

FSEM H05

Fall 2016

Instructor: Virginia Mackintosh, Ph.D.

Class Time/Place: TBD

Office Hours: TBD

Contact Information:

Office: Mercer 314
(540) 654-1556
vmackint@umw.edu

Required Texts:

Backderf, D. (2012). *My friend Dahmer*. New York, NY: Abrams ComicArts.

March, W. (1954). *The bad seed*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers.

Oakley, B. (2008). *Evil genes: Why Rome fell, Hitler rose, Enron failed, and my sister stole my mother's boyfriend*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books.

Selected readings from:

Baron-Cohen, S. (2011). *The science of evil: On empathy and the origins of cruelty*. New York: Basic Books

National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2000). *From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.

Travis, C., & Aronson, E. (2007). *Mistakes were made (but not by me): Why we justify foolish beliefs, bad decisions, and hurtful acts*. New York, NY: Harcourt, Inc.

Zimbardo, P. (2008). *The Lucifer effect: Understanding how good people turn evil*. New York, NY: Random House, Inc.

Course Overview

Where does evil come from? Is it from satanic possession? Bad genes? Mean parents? Negative peer pressure? This course will explore the causes of evil from a biological, sociological and psychological perspective. Students will be expected to read thoughtfully and completely, write weekly reflection papers, lead class discussions, and apply what is learned to the analysis of someone who is deemed evil.

Basic Components

First-year seminars will

- utilize active, discussion-based, participatory learning;
- be exploratory in nature, rather than just presenting conclusions;
- have students read primary sources, not simply textbooks;
- have students synthesize material from multiple sources to develop their own views on the topic; and
- be capped at 15 students.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of an FSEM course, students will

- utilize a variety of research techniques to retrieve information efficiently, evaluate retrieved information, and synthesize information effectively to support their messages or arguments;
- improve development and organization of written arguments;
- demonstrate the ability to edit and revise in the writing process;
- apply the basic theories and principles of oral communication; and
- communicate effectively in a variety of settings, including public speaking and group discussion.

Attendance Policy:

Your class attendance is expected. Participation in class discussion is an important element in comprehension and learning, and makes up a significant portion of your grade. If you are unable to attend class, please email me prior to class. Be punctual and turn off your cell phone.

Graded work

Reflection Papers: There will be frequent reflection papers. Each of these papers should be between 1 and 2 pages long, and should *end with a question that you had from the reading(s)*. The questions at the end will serve as the starting point for the class discussion.

These papers should provide a short summary of the readings, and a review of how the information fits in with what we have read and discussed in the class. Most helpful for you would be to relate what you've read to the topic and/or person about whom you are writing your final paper.

You are required to do 5 of these reflections out of a possible 7 weeks (meaning you can miss two weeks). If you hand in more than 5 reflection papers, I will drop your lowest grade(s) and only count the top 5. You ARE expected to do the readings even on weeks when you do not do a reflection paper so that you can participate fully in the discussions.

Leading Class Discussion: Once during the course of the semester, pairs of two students will be responsible for leading class discussion. To lead, students can read questions from the reflection papers, but should also have topics in mind to help facilitate the conversation if necessary.

Annotated Bibliography: In preparation for the final paper (see below) students will put together an annotated bibliography. This will consist of evaluative summaries of 4 to 5 resources related to your final topic.

Outline: You are responsible for doing an extensive outline for your final paper. This will include full topic sentences and parenthetical citations of the sources you will be using to support you points.

Final paper: Pick your favorite (or should I say *least* favorite) evil person and write a 7 to 10 page paper about his/her life, analyzing the factors that led to that villain's awful acts. I will work closely with you to help you incorporate multiple sources into a cohesive, persuasive paper. To help in this process, you will have your topic and sources picked out by the middle of the semester. A draft of the paper is due November 29 for peer review. You will need to turn the draft in along with your final paper so I can see how well you incorporated the changes suggested. If you do not hand in a draft, 10 points will automatically be subtracted from your final paper grade.

Final Game Design: Students will be working in groups to design a "game" that demonstrates the developmental trajectories that lead either to positive or negative (i.e., 'evil') outcomes. Throughout the semester, we will be reading about and discussing the basics of game design and how to use it to explore the pathways to bad behavior.

Final Presentation: At the end of the semester, each student will give a 5 to 7 minute presentation about his or her evil person.

Course Grade:

Class participation	50 points
Discussion leading	20 points
Reflection papers (5 X 10 Pts)	50 points
Annotated Bibliography	20 points
Paper Outline	20 points
Game design	20 points
Presentation	20 points
Final Paper (and draft)	<u>100 points</u>
	300 points

Letter Grade	Percentage Of Total Points
A	93 – 100%
A –	90 – 92%
B +	87 – 89%
B	83 – 86%
B –	80 – 82%
C +	77 – 79%
C	73 – 76%
C –	70 – 72%
D	60 – 69%
F	Below 60%

Honor Code: All students are expected to adhere to the Honor Code, and must write out and sign the pledge on all assignments.

Disability Statement: The Office of Disability Services has been designated by the University as the primary office to guide, counsel, and assist students with disabilities. If you already receive services through the Office of Disability Services and require accommodations for this class, make an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss your approved accommodations needs. Please bring your accommodation letter with you to the appointment. I will hold any information you share with me in the strictest confidence unless you give me permission to do otherwise.

If you have not contacted the Office of Disability Services and need accommodations, I will be happy to refer you. The office will require appropriate documentation of disability. Their phone number is 540-654-1266. The office is located in Lee Hall, Room 401.

TENTATIVE Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings due	Assignments Due
Aug. 30	Introduction		
Sept. 1	Nature and Nurture	Neurons to Neighborhoods 19 to 32	Reflection paper 1
Sept. 6	Meet in Simpson Classroom!!		<i>Checking for CRAAP</i> Module
Sept. 8			Have a source to share with the class
Sept. 13	Biological Influences	Oakley pp. 23 - 108	Reflection paper 2
Sept. 15			Have a source to share with the class
Sept. 20	Biological Influences	Oakley pp. pp. 131 - 209	Reflection paper 3
Sept. 22			Have a source to share with the class
Sept. 27	Environmental Influences	Zimbardo pp. 3 – 22 & 258 - 296	Reflection paper 4
Sept. 29	Visit from Student Success Coordinator		
Oct. 4	The Bad Seed	March Chapt. 1 – 6	Reflection paper 5
Oct. 6	The Bad Seed	Complete the book	Reflection paper 6
Oct. 11	Cognitive Beliefs	Travis & Aronson	
Oct. 13	Cognitive Beliefs	Travis & Aronson	Genre game ideas
Oct. 18	FALL BREAK! NO CLASS!		
Oct. 20	Lack of Empathy	Baron-Cohen pp. 15-94	Reflection paper 7
Oct. 25	Game design	Game Design Phase 1	Annotated Bibliography
Oct. 25	GAME NIGHT! 5:00 Pizza and fun!!!!		
Oct. 27	Game design	Game Design Phase 2-4	
Nov. 1	My Friend Dahmer	Backderf parts 1 & 2	
Nov. 3	My Friend Dahmer	Backderf part 3 - end	Paper outline
Nov. 8	Game design		*
Nov. 10	Game design		*
Nov. 15	Individual meetings with Dr. Mackintosh regarding your papers		
Nov. 17	Movie Night!		
Nov. 22	Individual meetings with Dr. Mackintosh regarding your papers		
Nov. 24	THANKSGIVING! NO CLASS!		
Nov. 29	Peer review of papers		Paper draft due
Dec. 1	Game play!		Final game
Dec. 6	Presentations		
Dec. 8	Presentations		
Dec. ?	Final Papers due during finals week		

*Be working on your paper draft