

## GENERAL INFORMATION

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Seven [referenced hereafter using #7 to replace "seven" for simplification] Deadly Sins is a fully online, two semester Honors course that investigates a simple, three-letter word "**sin**" and its evolution into the list of the 7 deadly [capital/mortal] sins: anger, envy, gluttony, greed (avarice), lust, pride and sloth. These sins are central to moral philosophy and human behavior, and have been intensively examined through art and literature for more than fifteen hundred years, and recently through multimedia. This course provides the student with a background to gain understanding about these 7 sins, their historical roots as well as the corresponding virtues that emerged from them in Eastern and Western societies. In addition to the series of tests from The Oxford University Press/New York Public Library, the students will be required to view films in the course [also on reserve at the BBC Library under the course title], artwork, electronic material posted online.

Each major topic from (Pope) Gregory's original list (*The 7 Deadly Sins Sampler*, Chicago: The Great Books Foundation, 2007, Introduction by Al Gini, p xii) will share a complimentary discussion from the viewpoints of the BBC Poll and Mahatma Ghandi's list (p xiv) coupled with Pope Benedict XVI's new list that includes murder, contraception, abortion, perjury, paedophilia (pedophiles) adultery, and lust.

Required viewing: *Se7en* (1995); *Lolita* (1992 and 1997); *Road to Perdition* (2002); *Pulp Fiction* (1994); *The Exorcist* (1973); *The Sting* (1973); excerpts from Ken Burns *The War; Religion, War, and Violence: Ethics of Peace* (2003); *Cabaret* (1975); *The War of the Roses* (1989); *Wall Street* (1987); *Pride and Prejudice* (2005), *Envy* (2004), *The Last King of Scotland* (2006), *Hotel Rwanda* (2004), *12 Angry Men* (1957), *Clerk* (1994), *Mallrats* (1995) and TV version (1997), American reality TV series, "Keeping Up With the Kardashians" (that began in October 2007, and is now a Miami series), a reality TV show that documents the daily lives of the Kardashian/Jenner family. (Other media presentations may be added). Each video will be available for viewing online or on reserve at the Green or BBC Libraries.

Podcasts of appropriately selected music for each topic is available for download

online: some lyrics may accompany the musical genres: operatic, rock and roll, punk, ska, rap.

Additional material (art, music and multimedia) is posted prior to the beginning of each semester. The instructor reserves the right to make changes or additions as deemed necessary. Information regarding updated postings is sent through the course announcements and via course email; thus, **it is important that you check your course email on a regular basis**. All essays, papers and discussions are submitted online; papers and essays should be DOUBLE-LINE SPACED with your name and a word count. Discussion blogs and question responses are single-line spaced and do not require a word count. (See information regarding academic papers posted on the homepage.

Why does it often feel good to do something bad? In a world where we are encouraged to indulge and splurge lavishly, the question becomes the topic for commentary and controversy. Has the ancient religious concept of sin lost its sway over the moral imagination? The electronic files in Module 1 [PDF's] allow the student peruse the hidden arena of sin and non-virtuous behavior: *The 7 Deadly Sins Sampler*, "Foreword" by Al Gini; Solomon Schimmel's *The Seven Deadly Sins: Jewish, Christian and Classical Reflections on Human Psychology*, "Chapter One, The Persistence of Sin;" and *Sympathy for the Devil, Art and Rock and Roll Since 1967* by Dominic Molon.

From Gini's "Foreword," "...According to biblical tradition, we are all sinners, doomed because of the first couple's disobedience in the Garden of Eden. St. Augustine describes humankind as "full of evil lusts and inclinations from our mothers' wombs." In other words, we succumb to our passions. Fifteen hundred years ago, St. Gregory the Great created a list of seven sins as a tool for religious contemplation to help monks maintain their vows to help monks of chastity, poverty, and obedience...Through Platonic thought, from Socratic teaching, "The unexamined life is not worth living."

Gini continues, in dealing with the sins of human nature as from Catholic and Christian viewpoints, the capital vices or cardinal sins of The Roman Catholic Church are divided into two major categories: venial and mortal; venial sins are considered minor sins that can be forgiven through sacramental offerings to the Church (Roman Catholic) while mortal sins destroy the line of grade to God and carry the threat of eternal damnation unless there is some form of extreme absolution. Mortal sins are voluntary acts [those which cannot be committed accidentally], contradictory to eternal law. During the 14th Century, the "sins" became a major theme in European art and literature regarding: *SALIGIA*, [based on the first Latin letters of each sin], *s*uperbia (pride), *a*varitia (greed), *l*uxuria (lust), *i*nvidia (envy), *g*ula (gluttony), *i*ra (anger), and *a*cedia (sloth, apathy) and helped to deep seat them generally throughout the world. The sins will be discussed in context with the seven virtues: humility, charity, chastity, meekness, zeal, moderation, and generosity." This class uses the acronym, PESGGAL, for the order of study for pride, envy, sloth, gluttony in the fall semester, and greed, anger and lust in the spring.

## PROFESSOR BIOGRAPHY

Prof. Mary Lou Pfeiffer:

- Holds advanced degrees: LL.M in Intercultural Human Rights from St. Thomas University School of Law and MA in Religion from Florida International University;
- Currently a Fellow and full-time instructor in The Honors College at FIU;
- Her undergraduate degrees include religious studies, biology (minor-geology) and allied health breast care in radiology;
- Owns and operates an art glass studio specializing in stained/etched glass, stone and wood sculpting;
- Studied architectural glass in Germany with renowned glass artists and sculpting with Elliot Miller;
- Her specialty areas include American tribal cultures and human rights law (rights of women, the child, internally displaced persons/refugees, global indigenous peoples) and biodiversity;
- Attended the UN Sub-Commission on Human Rights for Indigenous Working Peoples in Geneva, Switzerland for several years;
- Her research areas encompass human rights, indigenous sacred sites, earth ethics, and studies involving breast cancer and asbestosis;
- Completing a project of her uncle's original "V" mail letters from WWII, and two current manuscripts- the Miami Circle, and a fictional work taken from her life as the wife of a Naval fighter pilot who participated in a "seagull society" during the Vietnam years;
- Sits the Advisory Board for Arts and Sciences at FIU, serves as President of the Women's Studies Board, and past chair of the Friends of Environmental Studies;
- Is a recipient of the Alumni Torch Award at FIU and has received two Outstanding Service Awards from Religious Studies; Who's Who of American Women, 2007 and Who's Who in America, 2008;
- Has two sons, both avid surfers: one is a paramedic firefighter and the other, a chef on Oahu 's north shore; and
- Her other family includes 2 dogs, 3 cats, an Umbrella cockatoo and an aviary of finches and canaries.

## TEXTBOOKS

*Pride,*

[Michael Eric Dyson,](#)

New York: Oxford 2006

ISBN 0-19-516092-4

*Anger,*

[Robert Thurman,](#)

New York: Oxford 2006

ISBN 0-19-531208-2

*Lust,*

[Simon Blackburn,](#)

New York: Oxford 2006

ISBN 0-19-516200-5

*Envy,*

[Joseph Epstein,](#)

New York: Oxford 2006

ISBN 0-19-515812-1

*Sloth,*

[Wendy Wasserstein,](#)

New York: Oxford 2006

ISBN 0-19-516630-2

*Gluttony, ,*

[Francine Prose,](#)

New York: Oxford 2006

ISBN 0-19-515699-4

*Greed,*

[Phyllis A. Tickle,](#)

New York: Oxford 2006

ISBN 0-19-515660-9

## COURSE PREREQUISITES

There are no prerequisites for this course.

For more information about prerequisites, [click here](#).

## COMMUNICATING WITH THE INSTRUCTOR

- **E-mail:** Contact me via my Blackboard email.

- **Discussion Forum:** It will be used for class discussions and other postings of general interest that are directly related to the course. Everyone can read Discussion Forum postings; therefore, do not post private information.
- **LiveChat:** It will be used during my online office hours.

## GRADING

Course Requirements	Weights
Discussion (required 15 graded blogs)	20%
Essays (5 @ 400 words)	40%
Fall: Synthesis Paper, Rating the Sins Required introductory Paragraph,	40%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Letter Grade	Range	Letter Grade	Range	Letter Grade	Range
A	above 93	B-	81 - 83	D+	67 - 70
A-	91 - 92	C+	77 - 80	D	64 - 66
B+	87 - 90	C	74 - 76	D-	61 - 63
B	84 - 86	C-	71 - 73	F	< 61

## CITIZENSHIP REQUIREMENTS, STUDENT PORTFOLIOS

All members of the Honors College are expected to be active citizens of the College, the university, and the community at large. To be a committed Honors College student is to take advantage of enhanced learning opportunities and to assume a leadership role in the world. All College members are expected to participate in the community-building activities listed below:

1. Attend one Honors Excellence Lecture per academic year and one Honors Colloquium per semester (fall and spring). (Attendance will be taken).
2. Participate in the Honors College Convocation each Fall. (Attendance will be taken).
3. Attend at least three Honors Hour sessions per semester or enrichment events specified by the Honors College as satisfying this requirement. (Attendance will be taken).

4. Perform at least ten hours of Community Service per semester either through the Honors College service partnerships (Sweetwater, Overtown Youth Center, etc.) or through other community service projects and/or events. If you want to apply this service to your graduation portfolio, be sure to document your hours.
5. For more information on Honors citizenship requirements, see the Honors College Student Handbook.

As a college, we care about and enforce the Policies and Procedures as they are important to the quality of the education we are providing to you. Details on FIU Policies can be found at:

[http://online.fiu.edu/wct\\_files/Policy/Policies\\_Requirements.html](http://online.fiu.edu/wct_files/Policy/Policies_Requirements.html)

The Honors College will be using a portfolio method to assess students' learning outcomes. The portfolio method allows for maximum flexibility in gauging student learning. Students decide (with instructor consultation) what "artifacts" or assignments to include for consideration in their portfolios to demonstrate successful achievement of each of the student learning outcomes over the 4-year Honors experience. Portfolios provide a rich context for students to show what they have learned and to explain their learning process. Because the Honors curriculum is meant to be thought-provoking and reflective, student self-assessment through portfolios will facilitate learning and provide in-depth assessment. Each course should include at least one assignment that could potentially fit portfolio requirements. For more information on the student learning outcomes and constructing a portfolio for your senior year, see [honors.fiu.edu/portfolios](http://honors.fiu.edu/portfolios).

## FIU LIBRARY SUPPORT

The FIU library provides a number of services to distance learning students. For example:

- Students can request a chat session in Blackboard for an explanation on how to access library resources.
- Students can request detailed instructions on how to access library resources.
- One-on-One assistance from the Distance Learning Librarian.

Don't struggle through your library research alone! Help is available. For further information, contact Sarah Hammill, Distance Learning Librarian, via email at [hammills@fiu.edu](mailto:hammills@fiu.edu) or call 305-919-5604.

You can visit the FIU Library at: <http://library.fiu.edu/>

## DISCUSSIONS

**Required weekly discussion "blogs" are found under the discussion tool (thumbtack) and posted with a due date for your initial post.** Post your initial comments to the statement or inquiry for each week. After your post, then **you and are expected to respond to your classmates' initial responses.** You should read the initial posts so that you can respond appropriately to your classmates. These are graded according to an online template, "Grading Rubric." Please be courteous and respectful of others ideas negative aggressive comments will not be tolerated. Please keep your discussion concise.

The topics are selected from:

**A)** Required reading, **B)** Video presentation, **C)** Music/lyrics, and **D)** Works of art [works imaged online in the Media Library and in the texts.

## STUDENT BIO

### **Student Bio Activity**

Please provide a brief biographical overview on the Student Bio Forum under Discussion Forum on BlackBoard CE 6. You are encouraged to include following in your bio:

Name, status in your current program, educational background to date, the reason you take this course, your expectation of this course, your experience with any aspect of online learning, work experience, career plans, and personal plans. (No longer than 200 words).

## MAKE-UP POLICY

**THERE ARE NO MAKE-UP ASSIGNMENTS OR EXAMS FOR THIS COURSE.** All assignments are due as indicated; a zero (0) grade will be awarded for anything turned in after the due date, with the following exceptions: If some unforeseen emergency arises that prevents you from taking an exam or handing in an assignment, documentation must be provided (i.e., a summons for jury duty, letter on Physicians letterhead stating explicitly why student could not hand in assignment/take exam, etc). This documentation will be verified by contacting the appropriate individuals. Once verified a decision as to how to proceed will be made by the Professor.

## ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

### **Statement of Understanding between Professor and Student**

Every student must respect the right of all to have an equitable opportunity to learn and honestly demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students must adhere to a standard of academic conduct, demonstrating respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. As a student in

the College of Business taking this class:

- I will not represent someone else's work as my own.
- I will not cheat, nor will I aid in another's cheating.
- I will be honest in my academic endeavors.
- I understand that if I am found responsible for academic misconduct, I will be subject to the academic misconduct procedures and sanctions as outlined in the Student Handbook.

Failure to adhere to the guidelines stated above may result in one of the following:

**Expulsion:** Permanent separation of the student from the University, preventing readmission to the institution. This sanction shall be recorded on the student's transcript.

**Suspension:** Temporary separation of the student from the University for a specific period of time.

By taking this online course I promise to adhere to FIU's Student Code of Academic Integrity. For details on the policy and procedure go to [ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT](#).

**NOTE:** Intensive Auditing of the course will be conducted to prevent academic misconduct.

### **Specific disciplinary action as follows:**

**1. Cheating:** Cheating is a form of academic misconduct that involves the unauthorized use of books, notes, aids or assistance from another person with respect to exams/assignments. ANY STUDENT CAUGHT CHEATING WILL AUTOMATICALLY FAIL THE COURSE AND FURTHER DISCIPLINARY ACTION MAY BE TAKEN. ANY STUDENT WHO AIDS/ABETS THE CHEATING STUDENT WILL ALSO BE PENALIZED.

**2. Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is a form of academic misconduct that involves presenting the words, beliefs, opinions, facts, data, hypotheses, information of others as your own. ANY STUDENT CAUGHT PLAGIARIZING WILL AUTOMATICALLY FAIL THE COURSE AND FURTHER DISCIPLINARY ACTION MAY BE TAKEN.

FALL FINAL PAPER/ SPRING SYNTHESIS PAPER

Detailed Research Paper instructions...

EXPECTATION OF THIS COURSE

This is a fully online course, meaning that all course work (100%) will be conducted online. Expectations for performance in fully online courses are the same as for traditional courses; in fact, fully online courses require a degree of self-



motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills that can make them more demanding for some students.

Fully online courses are not independent study courses. You will be expected to interact online with the professor and your fellow students; to do assignments; to MEET DEADLINE DATES; and in some cases, to work in virtual groups. In some fully online courses, you may be required to come to campus to take midterms and exams, but in most, you will take your tests online.

Tips for Success in your online course, [click here](#).

Online Etiquette, [click here](#).

## COURSE CALENDAR

### Module 1: Weeks 1-3

Aug. 23 - Sept. 12

#### Introduction: 7 Deadly Sins

- Glossary of terms posted on the homepage and in the learning module, definitive the to coursework and Quiz #1.
- Reading assignment for Weeks 1-3: *The 7 Deadly Sins Sampler* excerpts from the "Foreword," by Al Gini (pp ix-xxiv). Read the PDF file from Solomon Schimmel's *The Seven Deadly Sins, Jewish, Christian and Classical Reflections on Human Psychology*, "Chapter One: The Persistence of Sin,". Read and view the artworks from *Sympathy for the Devil, Art and Rock and Roll Since 1967*.
- Listen to the music listed in the Media Library
- Discussion #1 (Week 1) Discussion of the tables in the PDF: Gregory, the BBC poll, Ghandi and Pope Benedict XVI's new list posted in "The List of Sins."
- Discussion #2 (Week 2), "Intellectual Hubris."
- Discussion #3 (Week 3), *Sympathy for the Devil*
- Review the links to the following website for the 7 deadly sins, <http://www.deadlysins.com/sins/history.html>

## Module 2: Weeks 4 - 6

Sept. 13 - Oct. 3

Pride

- Reading assignment for Weeks 4-6, *Pride* by Michael Eric Dyson
- Examine artwork from "*Pride*."
- View *Pride and Prejudice*.
- Listen to the music listed in the Media Library.
- **Write an essay, minimum of 400 words on how the movie ties into Dyson's work on "pride," due Oct 3 at 12:00 PM (noon) through the assignment tool.**
- Discussion #4 (Week 4), from Chard's quote in Dyson's book ("Introduction," p5 being full of ourselves).
- Discussion #5 (Week #5), "The notion of pride." Discuss Dyson's idea of white pride and identify politics regarding Aristotle's 'proper pride' issue.
- Discussion #6 (Week #6) from Alexander Pope (1688-1744), a poem written in heroic couplets, "An Essay on Criticism" Consider the following and comment on its relevance today  
"Of all the causes which conspire to blind Man's erring judgment, and misguide the mind, What the weak head with strongest bias rules, Is pride, the never-failing vice of fools."

## Module 3: Weeks 7 - 9

Oct. 4 - Oct. 24

Envy

- Read *Envy* by Joseph Epstein.
- Examine artwork in the Media Library and from the text by Epstein.
- View *Envy* (2004), *The Last King of Scotland* (2006), *Hotel Rwanda* (2004). [Note, the following: *The Last King...* and *Hotel Rwanda* are pertinent to Greed in the spring semester]
- Refer to Envy Discussion for topic for discussion
- **Write a 400-word Essay due Oct 24 at noon. Please double-line space your essay and send as an attachment with your name, date, and word count.**

Listen to the music in the Media Library.

## Module 4: Weeks 10 - 11

Oct. 25 - Nov. 7

## Sloth

- Read *Sloth* by Wendy Wasserstein
- View MALLRATS; read the posted article from 11/09/2008 MIAMI HERALD, "Vatican Tackles Sin of Sloth,"
- Listen to "Get a Job" in Seeqpod as posted online. Afterward, write at least 350 words regarding sloth; you should include the following: Have we become apathetic and indolent are our life styles? Is this a sin that poisons the will? Are we infected with sloth? Does it prevent us from expressing love while at the same time allowing us to avoid responsibility? Reference the book, DVD's, articles and music

**Write a 400-word essay due Nov 7 at noon. Please double-line space your essay and send as an attachment with your name, date, and word count.**

## Module 5: Weeks 12 - 15

**Nov. 10 - Dec. 8**

## Gluttony

- View *Tom Jones, Enron documentary*; Chris Hansen's Investigation "Inside the world of counterfeit drugs" access through <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/13099555/> or <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/12319584/>
- View TOM JONES and the Kardashian Series. There is a new episode that is particularly interesting <<http://news.puggal.com/kourtney-and-khloe-take-miami-episode-1-6811/>> The premiere of the reality series "Kourtney and Khloe Take Miami" took place on August 16, 2009 on E! Entertainment Television. [I came across is accidentally, and decided it should be included in the course work for the sections on gluttony and greed. Think about: Do we eat to live, or live to eat? Should gluttony be so associated with food that other gluttonous habits are overlooked? Are our 'fast' food chains somewhat responsible for obesity and the guilt associated with gluttony in the US? How have fast food chains recently altered their menus? Does gluttony lead to greed?
- Gluttony will carry over into Spring Semester when Greed is addressed.

**Write two 400-word essays due Dec 7 at 12:00 PM (Noon) about Gluttony: one regarding food, and your take on it from *Gluttony*, the DVD *Tom Jones* and the Kardashian Series; write the other 350-word essay on gluttonous behavior other than food using Hansen's investigation, any pertinent material, Kardashian series. Please double-line space your essays and submit them as attachments under the assignment tool with your name, date, and word count.**

Note: Gluttony will bridge the discussion to greed in the spring semester

## **FINALS**

**Dec. 6 - Dec. 11**

Final Paper, 1500 words: In a short, introductory paragraph, rate the four sins according to your personal ideas from the material and concepts presented this semester. One introductory paragraph with your rating scheme is required. Which sin do you rate as the worst, and why? Which is the least harmful to society? Use your discussions, fall semester essays and materials. Double-line space your essay; due online by Dec 11 at 12:00 PM online through the assignment tool “final essay, synthesis of fall semester sins.