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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, music 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, listen to music, and read electronic material posted online.

Each 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 be complimented with discussions 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 (pedofiles) adultery, and of course, lust. This begins the coursework. References will be made throughout both semesters to the lists from Gregory/BBC/Ghandi/Benedict XVI

Required viewing: *Se7en* (1995); *Lolita* (1992 and 1997); *Road to Perdition* (2002); *Pulp Fiction* (1994); *The Exorcist* (1973); *The Sting* (1973); *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), *Clerks* (1994), *Mallrats* (1995) and TV version (1997) of the American reality TV series, "Keeping Up With the Kardashians" (that began in October 2007, followed by a Miami series).

Podcasts of appropriately selected music for each topic is available for download online: some lyrics are provided to accompany the musical genres: classical, 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. Live online chats are required using Adobe Connect through Learn 9.

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, served as President of the Women's Studies Board, and past chair 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 5 grandchildren
- Her other family includes 2 dogs, 3 cats, an Umbrella cockatoo and an aviary of finches.

Texts

*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

There are no prerequisites for this course.

**E-mail:** Contact Prof. Pfeiffer via Learn 9 course email.

**Discussions:** Discussions are posted with a Discussion Rubric and required responses about the topics and other points that are directly related to the course. Everyone can read discussion postings; therefore, do not post private information.

**Live Chat:** Adobe Connect will be used for biweekly “live” on line chats. Recommended is a headset with a microphone. For complete information, review the Adobe Connect folder; the chats will be about 1 hour in length, usually from 21:00-22:00 on Thursday evenings unless otherwise scheduled.

**Time is listed in the 24-hour clock so that there is no confusion re: 8 AM or 8 PM**

**All Learn 9 course material is listed in separate folders that are ‘titled’ according to “sinful” topics, and not so sinful ones.**

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], *superbia* (pride), *avaritia* (greed), *luxuria* (lust), *invidia* (envy), *gula* (gluttony), *ira* (anger), and *acedia* (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.

## **COURSE CONTENT**

### Course Requirements Fall 2011

Discussions 15%

Live chats 15 %

Quizzes (2) 5%

Essays (6 @ 400-word minimum) 20%

Synthesizing Pride, Envy, Sloth and Gluttony Essay (Fall) 15%

Final course essay 30%

### Course Requirements Spring 2012

Discussions 10%

Live chats 10 %

Essays (6 @ 400-word minimum) 20%

B. Bardot Project 5%

Gender Project 5%

Synthesizing Greed, Anger and Lust Essay (Spring) 20%

Final course essay 30%

## **GRADING**

Letter Grade	Range	Letter Grade	Range	Letter Grade	Range
A	93 and above	B-	81 - 83	D+	67 - 70
A-	90 - 92	C+	77 - 80	D	64 - 66
B+	87 - 89	C	74 - 76	D-	61 - 63
B	84 - 86	C-	71 - 73	F	< 61

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

- Students can request a chat session in Learn 9 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/>

**Required weekly or bi-weekly discussion "blogs" are found under discussions and posted with a due date for initial postings.** After you post your initial response to each question or topic **you and are expected to respond to your classmates' initial responses.** 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 readings, **B)** Video presentations, **C)** Music/lyrics, and **D)** Works of art [works are imaged online in each module] and throughout the texts.

### **Student Bio Activity**

Please provide a brief biographical overview on the Student Bio Forum under Discussions. 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).

**THERE ARE NO MAKE-UP ASSIGNMENTS, QUIZZES OR EXAMS FOR THIS COURSE. PLEASE DO NOT REQUEST A CHANGE OR DELAY!** 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. This will be at the discretion of the Professor.

### **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.

### **Academic Honesty and Plagiarism FIU Academic Misconduct Statement**

Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellence in teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas, and Community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and honestly demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct that demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Honors College Student Handbook.

Academic misconduct includes:

- Cheating – The unauthorized use of books, notes, aids, electronic sources, or assistance from another person with respect to examinations, course assignments, field service reports, class recitations or other work; or the unauthorized possession of examination papers or course materials, whether originally authorized or not. Cheating violates both University and College codes.
- Plagiarism –The use and appropriation of another’s work without any indication of the source, and the representation of such work as the student’s own is plagiarism. Any student who fails to give credit for ideas, expressions or materials taken from another source, including Internet sources, commits plagiarism. Plagiarism violates both University and College codes.
- Unacceptable behavior – Students who show repeated or egregious disrespect for classmates or instructors, are disruptive, or consistently violate course rules are subject

to the sanctions of the Honors College.

Registration in this course implies an acceptance of and compliance with the Honors College policies for students and the FIU Code of Academic Integrity. Please refer to the following documents for additional information:

FIU Code of Academic Integrity – <http://www.fiu.edu/~dwyere/academicintegrity.html>  
FIU Honors College Student Handbook – <http://honors.fiu.edu/handbook0910.html>  
FIU Honors College Plagiarism Policy – [http://honors.fiu.edu/current\\_policy\\_plagiarism.html](http://honors.fiu.edu/current_policy_plagiarism.html)

#### Religious Observances

Every effort will be made, where feasible and practical, to accommodate students whose religious practices coincide with class requirements or scheduling. Please make sure to notify your instructor at the beginning of the semester of which dates you will be absent or any anticipated problems with completing course work.

#### Physical, Mental and Sensory Challenges

Every effort will be made, where feasible and practical, to accommodate students who are so challenged. Should you require any special needs, notify the University and your instructor if you have not done so already.

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 complete assignments, to meet deadlines, and in many classes, 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.

#### **Fall 2011**

#### **Module 1 INTRODUCTION: THE 7 DEADLY SINS Weeks 1-3, Aug 22-Sept 11**

Glossary of terms posted in the Introduction folder, definitive to the course; Quiz 1, *The 7 Deadly Sins Sampler* from the “Foreword” by Al Gini (pp ix-xxiv); read PDF from Solomon Schimmel’s *The Seven Deadly Sins...* Ch 1; read and view artworks from *Sympathy for the Devil, Art and Rock and Roll, 1967*. Review the links to the following website for the 7 deadly sins: <http://www.deadlysins.com/sins/history.html>  
<<http://www.deadlysins.com/features/index/htm>> View the artwork, read lyrics and listen to the music

Week 1, Discussion #1 (Follow the information protocol listed for discussions): the differences of the tables from Pope Gregory, the BBC poll, Ghandi and Pope Benedict (electronic online readings) Short essay, #1-Research and post each sin with its animal representative, punishment and color; post this in the assignment drop box

Week 2, Online live chat, “intellectual hubris” Wednesday evening, Aug 31 @ 21:00; Discussion #2, Post your thoughts about “Intellectual Hubris,” discussion closes Sunday, Sept 4 at 12:00

Week 3, Discussion #3, *Sympathy for the Devil*; Essay #2, the title of the Rolling Stones notorious song, discussion closes Sunday, Sept 11 at 12:00

**Module 2 PRIDE Weeks 4-6 Sept 12- Oct 2** read *Pride* by Eric Dyson, view artwork, read and listen to musical presentations; review PPT on Pride

Week 4 Online live chat about pride; Discussion #4 from Chard’s quote in Dyson’s book (“Introduction” p 5, being full of ourselves from the go-it-alone perspective)

Week 5 Discussion #5 The notion of pride from Dyson’s idea of white pride and politics regarding Aristotle’s proper pride issue; live online chat, “pride and politics” Wednesday evening, Sept 28 @ 21:00

Week #6, Discussion from Alexander Pope’s poem (electronic posting) on the vice of pride, Essay #3 On Pride: is it positive or negative, select your argument accordingly

**Module 3 ENVY Weeks 7-9 Oct 3- Oct 23** view *The Last King of Scotland*, *Hotel Rwanda*, view PPT on Envy

Week 7, Online “live” chat regarding envy, Wednesday, Oct 5 at 21:00; Discussion #7 (Envy) Does pride lead to envy? Discussion closes Sunday, Oct 9 at 12:00

Week #8 Discussion #8 (Envy)  
From Epstein (p52), is there validity in everyone being equal, nothing would be left to envy? This discussion closes Sunday, Oct 16 at 12:00 PM

Week 9 Discussion #9 (Envy) From Epstein (p98), can we consider “envy less a sin than very poor mental hygiene”? This discussion closes Sunday, Oct 23 at 12:00 PM; Essay #4: Envy and Capitalism

**Module 4 SLOTH Weeks 10-12 Oct 24- Nov 13**, read Wasserstein’s *Sloth*, view artwork and review music, write essay’s on Sloth, view *Mallrats*, view PPT on Sloth

Week 10 Discussion #10 (Sloth)  
Are Americans (as a majority) too apathetic and indolent and infected with sloth. This discussion closes Sunday, Oct 30 at 12:00 PM

Week 11 Discussion #11 (Sloth) Do you feel sloth interferes with the ability to express love? This discussion closes Sunday, Nov 6 at 12:00 PM

Week 13 Online “live chat” Sloth, Wednesday, Nov 16, 21:00; Essay #5 on Sloth

**Module 5 GLUTTONY Weeks 13-15 Nov 14- Dec 4**, read Prose’s *Gluttony*, view artwork and review music, view *Tom Jones* and the Kardashian series

Week 14, Discussion #13 (Gluttony) Do we eat to live, or live to eat? This discussion closes Monday Nov 22 at 12:00 (Noon); Essay #6- Gluttonous habits

Week 15, Discussion #14 (Gluttony) Do you believe gluttony leads to greed? This discussion closes Monday, Nov 29 at 12:00; Essay: Synthesis of the four fall sins. Rate them from worst to least sinful and discuss your ratings; use outside information

Final Course Essay- (Think about your thesis statement for you semester’s final paper), select the “sin” of your choice and discuss it creatively

## **Spring 2012**

### **Module 1: GREED Jan 9 – Feb 5 Weeks 1-4**

**Greed** Read: Phyllis A Tickle’s *Greed*; View: Last King of Scotland, Wall Street, The Sting, Listen to the music posted and read the lyrics

Weeks 1, 2 Discussions, Online live chats, DVD’s, artwork  
Jan 9-22

Weeks 3, 4 Discussions, Online live chats, DVD’s  
Jan 23-Feb 5

### **Module 2: Feb 6 – Mar 6**

#### **Weeks 5-8**

Read: Robert A. F. Thurman’s *Anger*

View: *Hotel Rwanda*, *Pulp Fiction*, *12 Angry Men*, *War of the Roses*

Weeks 5-8  
Feb 6- Mar 4

### **Module 3: Mar 7 – April 3**

Lust

Read: Simon Blackburn’s *Lust*, Online PDF by Simone De Beauvoir, “Brigitte Bardot and the Lolita Syndrome:

View: *The Exorcist, Lolita, Belle de Jour*

Weeks 9-12  
Mar 5-Apr 1

Week 10 Spring Break  
Mar 12-18

**Module 4: April 4-- Apr. 24**

**Weeks 13-15 Finals: Synthesis of Sins**

View: *Cabaret, Road to Perdition, Se7en, The Magnificent Seven Deadly Sins*

Week 13, 14, 15  
Apr 2-22

Finals Apr 28-May 1

Commencement (Spring) 4/30, May 1