Suffering and Evil, Fall 2022

Rel St 103/Philos 123

Thesis-based worksheet

40 points

**Essay Prompt:**

Drawing upon at least **5 course sources** primarily from **Weeks 5–10,** please use the following prompt to complete the below worksheet**. Upload this Worksheet by Monday, Dec. 5, 2pm.**

**It is common for individuals and communities to denounce extreme evil and suffering without examining the ways in which one perpetuates mundane evils or suffering that provides us some social, political, economic, material, ecological, or psychological benefit.**

**Given our readings from Weeks 5-10, articulate 1-3 strategies or practices that would enable you\* to better address your personal cooperation and/or accountability with common and mundane forms of evil and suffering that provide you some benefit.**

*\*The personal perspective of this essay should not prevent you from articulating strategies or practices through engagement with the texts. This is not a personal reflection essay; it still requires a thesis assertion that emerges from careful “neighborly” readings of the course texts.*

**Length**: No mandated length; do what is needed to complete the Worksheet sections. Include Works Cited/Bibliography

**Due**: Worksheet 2 due Monday, Dec. 5, 2pm

**WORKSHEET**

*Please read all the questions before starting. Although they are listed in a particular order, you will have to move back and forth between these items and even adjusting certain elements as you create others.*

1. **8 POINTS Considering the prompt, and putting the prompt question to the course texts, what FIVE sources will help you answer this prompt?** Please create a Works Cited of those sources here. Using *The Bedford Handbook,* create an alphabetized list of consistently formatted entries.
2. **12 POINTS Underneath each source above, create a minimum of four bullet points you draw from each source that addresses the prompt in some way (Prompt: articulate 1-3 strategies or practices that would enable you\* to better address your personal cooperation and/or accountability with common and mundane forms of evil and suffering that provide you some benefit).** These bullet points can include key terms and definitions, statements of a problem, unique facets on evil/suffering, strategies or practices, relevant “quotations,” and/or paraphrases. Every bullet point should include an in-text citation, e.g. (24) or (Plumwood), etc.
3. **8 POINTS Drawing upon the notes you create above, create a working thesis.** Though it may feel constraining, I am challenging you to create a thesis that directly answers the prompt without confusion, compound sentences, or excess words, such as any of the following:
   * 1. Three strategies that would enable me to better address my personal cooperation with mundane forms of evil and suffering I benefit from are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
     2. The primary strategy that would enable me to reduce my personal cooperation with common evil that benefits me is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
     3. Two practices that could enable me to more clearly consider my personal accountability with mundane forms of evil and suffering that benefit me are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

*You can use any of these examples as models, adjusting if needed. You can also make your own, but PLEASE (!!!) honor my challenge to stick very close to the language of the prompt. No thesis should appear very different from the above examples: concise, clearly addressing prompt, to the point.*

1. **6 POINTS Create a Roadmap/Statement of Purpose for your above thesis.** 
   1. A roadmap is not just a list of authors. It details the major themes that will enable you to support your thesis drawn from the bullet points of support you think you might rely on. Your roadmap reflects your thesis. Here are examples of composite, made-up theses and roadmaps I’ve created from a variety of Essays #1):
      1. **Thesis A:** In the face of evil and suffering, opposite reactions of despair and hope both challenge evil’s power in the world, but the impossibility of hope makes it more virtuous to strive for**.** 
         1. **Roadmap A:** To make this argument, I define evil as a natural defect, describe examples of hope and despair to those defects, and assert that hope, while nearly impossible to maintain amidst suffering, is better to minimize the absolutizing of evil.
      2. **Thesis B:** Suffering due to moral and natural evils is an existential fact, but confronting suffering through creativity and art can neutralize evil’s power in the world.
         1. **Roadmap B:** In this essay, I will explain evil as inevitable fact of moral and biological existence and argue that confronting evil through creative and artistic responses can prevent adopting the means by which evil functions.

*Given your thesis (and the bullet point support you have gathered), create your roadmap.*

1. **6 POINTS Create at least three topic sentences for the body of your imaginary paper that clearly restate aspects of your roadmap.** I’m using the sample roadmaps above.

* **Roadmap A:** To make this argument, I define evil as a natural defect, describe examples of hope and despair to those defects, and assert that hope, while nearly impossible to maintain amidst suffering, is more adequate to limit absolutizing evil.

**Topic sentences (these would start body sections of your possible paper)**

TS1: Evil has been described by many philosophers and theologians as a natural defect.

TS2: When confronted with defects experienced as evil, one can respond with hope.

TS3: One can also confront evil with despair.

TS4: Though hope is nearly impossible to maintain when suffering, it is a virtue that can best minimize evil’s power in the world.

*(\*see how closely or even exactly these topic sentences mirror the roadmap. That simplicity helps a reader through your points!)*

* **Roadmap B:** In this essay, I will explain evil as inevitable fact of moral and biological existence and argue that confronting evil through creative and artistic responses can prevent adopting the means by which evil functions.
  + **Topic sentence practice. You try for Roadmap B!**

**TS1:**

**TS2:**

**TS3:**

1. **Reread and recheck**

Now you are going to use a different color font and revisit all of the above, correcting and clarifying every section so I can see your recheck assessement.

* 1. Are my citations correctly formatted with authors listed by last name first, inside titles in “”, outside container sources/websites in *italics*? Are my anthology sources correct? What about single author books? Is there punctuation, correct hanging indents? *Make or note any adjustments with your color.*
  2. Do my bullet points for each source actually support and produce the thesis I developed? Do I need to add or adjust anything anything? Do I have a minimum of four bullet points? Have I included in-text citations that provide a page number or author?*Make or note any adjustments with your color.*
  3. Does my thesis restate the central question of the prompt? Can I support the thesis with most of the bullet points I’ve noted under each source? Do I need to adjust it? Can I make my strategies/practice more concise, clear and to the point? Let me ask my friend to read my thesis and have them tell me if it is unique, not a question, clear to understand (no confusing compound sentences!), productive of discussion or debate. *Make or note any adjustments with your color.*
  4. How can I make my roadmap more concise, clear, and to the point? Can I support the roadmap assertions with most of the bullet points I’ve noted under each source? Do I detail main themes rather than authors? *Make or note any adjustments with your color.*
  5. Do my topic sentences closely (even exactly) mirror my roadmap contents? Can I make them more clear, concise, and to the point? Ask a friend if they understand your roadmap and see it clearly stated in your topic sentences**.** *Make or note any adjustments with your color.*

1. **Grade yourself.** 
   1. Each section (1-5) above has a points total. Below, assign Under each section, assign yourself a colored number for each section *after* you have made all your corrections.
      * 1. My five sources (8 possible points)
        2. My four bullet points (12 possible points)
        3. My working thesis (8 possible points)
        4. My roadmap (6 possible points)
        5. My topic sentences (6 possible points)
        6. My Total (out of 40)