



Course details

Course title

Philosophy: Understanding Evil and Wickedness

Course code

Q00021440

Course date

Start: 30/04/25

End: 02/07/25

Number of classes

9 sessions

Timetable

Wed 30th Apr, 16:45 to 18:45

Wed 7th May, 16:45 to 18:45

Wed 14th May, 16:45 to 18:45

Wed 21st May, 16:45 to 18:45

Wed 4th Jun, 16:45 to 18:45

Wed 11th Jun, 16:45 to 18:45

Wed 18th Jun, 16:45 to 18:45

Wed 25th Jun, 16:45 to 18:45

Wed 2nd Jul, 16:45 to 18:45

Tutor

Bettina Lange

Fee:

£66.60

How you'll learn

You'll join a small group of fellow learners for classes online in video meetings and materials will be provided in our virtual learning environment.

Got it!
Online

Venue
Online

Level of study
Beginners

Course overview

People have always struggled to understand (and prevent) evil actions. Moral and political philosophers have also not found it easy but have developed some definitions and theories. Psychology can provide useful insights into the history and motivation of evil actions too. This course brings these together in the hope that they will increase learners' understanding of the nature of evil and provide ideas for how to prevent it. The content will include the question of whether 'evil' is a philosophically useful category, Hanna Arendt's analysis of evil, Mary Midgley's analysis of wickedness, and the 2024 Reith lectures on violence.

Course description

People have always struggled to understand (and prevent) evil actions – actions which seem beyond 'normal' human behaviour and morality. Moral and political philosophers have also not found it easy but have developed some definitions and theories, particularly in response to the decline of religious explanations of evil in academic Philosophy since the early 20th century. Psychology too can provide useful insights into how personal history and motivation can lead to evil actions. This course brings these together in the hope that they will increase learners' understanding of the nature of evil and provide ideas for how to prevent or reduce it. The content will include religious accounts of evil; the question of whether 'evil' is a philosophically useful category in a secular framework; insights from Psychology on how people in their day to day lives inadvertently cause significant harm by insulating themselves against the consequences of their actions; Hanna Arendt's analysis of evil as 'thoughtlessness'; Mary Midgley's analysis of the human potential for wickedness; the 2024 Reith lectures on violence; and current philosophical theories of evil. Knowledge of Philosophy is not expected. Learners will have the opportunity to present a topic to the group but this is not expected.

What financial support is available?

We don't want anything to stand in your way when it comes to bringing Adult learning within reach so if you need anything to support you to achieve your goals then speak to one of our education experts during your enrolment journey. Most of our courses are government funded but if you don't qualify or need alternative financial help to access them then let us know.

What other support is available?

All of our digital content, teaching and learning activities and assessments are designed to be accessible so if you need any additional support you can discuss this with the education experts during your enrolment journey and we will do all we can to make sure you have optimal access.

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