

ENGL299AL : Topics in Lit: Concepts of Evil

The recognition and appropriation of the term evil is one that is being constantly negotiated in society. It is a term that represents one of the core dichotomies that defines humanity: does a man or woman act in terms of good or evil? Historically, this term has followed an evolution of sorts that begins within Platonic idealism, becomes central within the birth of the Judeo-Christian world, is grasped at through theodicy, and then fractured through the 1775 Lisbon earthquake and the horrors of Auschwitz during World War II. This course will question the concept of evil in its various forms and explanations in an attempt to better understand its historical context, but also how it has come to be used and understood in today's society. Students will read and analyze various literary, philosophical, and cultural primary and secondary texts that consider manifestations of evil in violence, suffering, scapegoating, and apathy as they appear in characters such as Satan and witches and historical circumstances such as the Grand Inquisition, a modern plague, and Nazi Germany.

Credits 3

Lab Hours 0

Class Hours 3