

# Psychology 1077

## Written Project Assignment Details

Objective: Apply one or two of the psychological theories of evil covered in class to a specific real life character or scene in a film or documentary about evil.

**Note: This is not a research paper. You should have all the materials you need if you have the course textbook, FOL materials, and have watched an approved film/documentary. You still need to reference all these materials both in-text and at the end of the paper.**

### Overview

In addition to entertaining us, movies offer detailed portrayals of human social behaviour. Your task in this assignment is to analyze -- from a psychological perspective -- the behaviours and events depicted in a popular film about evil of your choice. You are not being asked to critique the film in terms of its value as a work of art or as entertainment. Rather, you should think carefully about the evil actions and events portrayed in the film. Then, to make sense of this material, apply what you've learned this semester regarding the factors that predict and explain evil human behaviour. This assignment is comprehensive: I urge you to bring any/all concepts encountered in this course that relate to the issues, interactions, and behaviours portrayed.

### Some Topic Choice Examples

- Watch one of several war movies (with preference for ones that document real events) and discuss the psychological underpinnings of human evil within war (e.g., crossing the line, how evil grows and spreads).
- Watch a film based on a real life mass-murderer (e.g., Pickton, Dahmer, Monster, The Iceman) and apply the criteria of the Psychopath found in class readings to the person depicted in the film.

- Watch one of several films about genocide (e.g., Hotel Rwanda, Attack on Darfur, The Act of Killing) and apply the roots of evil concepts to the events depicted.

Step One (5%)

**Be sure to use a movie that is based on a real life event or person and related to human evil.** In order to verify if your movie choice is a good one, please post about it first in the discussion area of the course (on FOL). In order to receive your marks for this stage of the project, you need to post a reply to a posted movie title, or if you want to watch a film that is not yet listed in the topic area, start a new thread related to one of the movies listed.

**Option 1:** If you reply to a movie title that is already listed, then you should indicate in the thread your intention to watch the indicated film/documentary. As part of your response you should also suggest one or two ways in which you plan to analyze the film (try to choose an analysis that is different from your classmates if they have already posted on that movie choice). For example, if you choose the movie *Monster*, you might post something like this:

*"I intend to watch the movie Monster, and I will analyze it based on what we discussed in class and read from the textbook chapter on Borderline Personality Disorder and how empathy is related to feelings of guilt."*

I will then reply to your post with a follow-up question, or just a comment saying your choice and analysis is approved (your grade item will then be updated), and you're free to start your work on your project.

**Option 2:** If you want to watch something (movie or documentary) that is not yet listed as one of the options, then make a new thread, with the movie name as the thread title, with the publication date also included. The content of post should very briefly describe the film. You can then reply to your thread post with your intention to watch the film and other details listed in Option 1 above.

**If you're not sure about your movie choice, or what analysis to use for your chosen movie, feel free to contact me either directly or through the discussion board.** You do not need to research any psychological theories beyond what is available in the textbook and what is discussed in class. Remember that you **MUST DOCUMENT ALL SOURCE MATERIALS** (including the movie and the textbook).

Step Two: Write the movie/documentary analysis (95%)

**Individual Project:** This is an individual project; you may not work in groups.

**Length:** Analysis should be 3 pages in length, NOT including the title page and reference page. That is, there should be three pages of double spaced text that is original that you wrote.

**Sample Outline:**

- Page 1: Briefly introduce the film and in detail give the important aspects of the person or scene that will be analyzed.
- Page 2: Describe, with proper textbook or class lecture citations, the psychological theory or concept that you will relate to the film details. **Be specific and thorough.** I want to clearly see that you understand the concept before you apply it to the movie.
- Page 3: Using explicit examples of dialogue and/or actions from the film, explain how the actions of the person or the events depicted are explained with the psychological theory/concept you described on page 3.

Note: This is a rough outline for those who require it. Feel free to mix these three elements (1) detail of movie, (2) detail of theories, (3) analysis of movie with theory, into your own writing style if you feel confident.

**Timeline:** You must submit your assignment via the **FOL drop-box** in .docx, .doc, .pdf, or .rtf format (my system I cannot read Mac .pages formatting). The due date and time is listed on the assignment dropbox in FOL. Late papers will be accepted seven days after the due date with a one rubric point per day late penalty.

**Documentation Required:** APA style in text citations for all quoted and paraphrased work, including full APA references in a complete reference list. You do **not** need APA style abstract, running head, headers, or table of contents.

**Mechanics:** 11 or 12 point font, Times New Roman or Calibri font, double spaced, no colour, APA reference style documentation.

**Value to Course:** This assignment is worth a total of 25% of your final grade (from two stages, 5% from the first, and 95% from the second)

### **Minimal Standards:**

- **Integrity:** Ensure your assignment contains no plagiarized segments. If it does, it will immediately fail.
  - Plagiarism includes:
    - Copy/pasting content from online or other sources and changing only occasional words (even if you reference the source)
    - Using other people's work without proper referencing
    - Handing in your own work that was used in a previous course
- **Purpose:** Ensure that your assignment achieves the primary purpose at least in a minimal way. If not, it will fail.
- **Readability:** Ensure that your assignment is edited to account for the majority of grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors. If it contains too many errors that create confusion of meaning and severely limits communication, then it will fail.

### **Plagiarism Policy:**

PLAGIARISM - Plagiarism is cheating and an appropriate penalty (e.g., zero on the assignment, zero in the course, expulsion from Fanshawe) will be applied and a report will be placed in the student's file in conformance with College Policy 2-G-04 on cheating. Plagiarism (the intellectual dishonesty resulting from a student's failure to acknowledge indebtedness to sources used) is a serious academic offence that shall result in appropriate penalties, to be determined at the discretion of the course professor in consultation with the Divisional Chair. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, submitting the same work to more than one professor for credit in different courses without prior written permission from.

### **Notes:**

- Get started now. As you watch movies, think about the theories you are learning about, and test to see if they fit the film events.
- Wikipedia is not considered an academic source!!!! You can use it as a start to research, but move beyond it and check the references and sources of information that go into it.

- Clearly define all uncommon terms or concepts

**Past concerns from this assignment:**

- Failure to clearly define key terms
- Unclear relevance and linkage of ideas = disjointed, incomplete ideas.
- Failure to pursue the topic from a scientific psychological perspective (**do not hand in a movie review!!!**)
- Inadequate depth of analysis (e.g., no critical analysis).
- More descriptive than analytical (e.g., strings of quotations, or lists versus explanations).
- Failures to organize, edit, and proofread.
- Examples from film/documentary were not specific enough. Using quotations, dialogue, and detail in descriptions of behaviour is better than general descriptions and hypothetical explanations.