The second semester of this course focuses on the origins of ideas, particularly ideas about morality, ethics, good and evil, justice, free will, redemption. How are such ideas linked to ideas about the origins of the universe, of the human species, of society/civilization/culture, of human identity and individuality? And how do ideas, once originated, develop influence, change, become transformed over time? How are ideas about morality related to conceptions of human freedom? How do you develop ideas about morality and what role do they play in your life? Our goal is to expand our ability to frame questions, think both critically and with originality, and explore together issues central to all human cultures.

**Required Reading** (All assigned texts are available in the FIU Bookstore. It helps if we all use the same edition. Please bring texts to class on the days they are assigned for discussion.)

- Genesis Chapter 4 (Cain and Abel) Several biblical texts including King James Version may be found online at [http://etext.lib.virginia.edu](http://etext.lib.virginia.edu)
- Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (Vintage International)

**Class Schedule**

1/10 Introduction to IDH 1002, Some review of IDH 1001, Read and discuss Genesis chapter 4 (Cain and Abel)
1/17 Ideas about Right and Wrong
1/24 Read and discuss Kant’s *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*
1/31 Film: “A Doll’s House”; **Project proposals due**
2/7 Read and discuss Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*
2/14 Film: “Mystic River”; **Paper 1 due**
2/21 Read and discuss Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*
2/28 Film: “Crimes and Misdemeanors”
3/7 Film: “L’Enfant”
3/14 Read and discuss Morrison, Beloved; Paper #2 due
3/21 SPRING BREAK
3/28 Film: “Do the right Thing”
4/4 Project Presentations
4/11 Project Presentations
4/18 Project Presentations, Project Papers due

**Class Philosophy**

This class is very much a collective endeavor. Attendance and participation are important and will form part of your grade. We will discuss together what we read and each student is expected to come to class prepared and to participate in the discussion. Reading is due on the day assigned and is intended to form the basis of stimulating and thoughtful discussion. Students are responsible not just to themselves, but also to all other students in the class. The class can only be successful to the extent that everyone prepares and participates. Different students may have very different reactions to, and interpretations of, what we read. These differences help us to think more clearly and comprehensively.

**Assignments** – We will discuss these in more detail in class.

1. Journals – 10% of your grade – You will keep a journal for each reading assignment. Each journal entry should be approximately 1 page (longer is OK if you are bursting with ideas) and should be the place where you reflect on what you have read, react to it, ask questions you would like to discuss further or questions about things you do not understand. I will collect the journal entries at the start of each class where a reading assignment is due and return them the following class. These will not be graded, only checked off (I will note, however, if they are shallow or give no indication of having done the reading); they will form a basis for class discussion. It helps to get discussion going when you have written down your responses to the reading in advance.

2. Film Discussion – 5% of your grade – I will divide the class into groups and assign each group a film to be viewed in class. Each group will plan and lead the discussion of the film. I will loan you the film in advance of the class. You should give me a one page outline of your plan for the discussion.

3. Paper 1 – 20% or your grade – 5 pages - Paper 1 deals with philosophical approaches to questions of morality/ethics/good and evil. Think about your reading of Kant and Nietzsche. Write a paper in which you relate their ideas and concerns to some issue of contemporary morality of concern to you. It may be an event or ethical issue from the news, popular culture, film, art, music or your life.

4. Paper 2- 20% of your grade – 5 pages - Paper 2 deals with literary approaches to questions of morality/ethics/good and evil. Think about your reading of Dostoevsky and Morrison. Write a paper in which you relate their ideas and concerns to some issue of
contemporary morality of concern to you. It may be an event taken from the news, popular culture, film, art, music or your life.

5. Project – 30% of your grade – 6-8 pages or equivalent – We will talk more about the projects in class. (See additional handout on Class Projects).

6. Idea Presentation - 5% of your grade – I will divide the class so that each reading assignment has 3-4 students assigned to present to the class some other work of art, music, literature, pop culture, etc. that relates to the theme of the reading assignment. We will talk more in class about how to do this.

7. Project Presentation – 10% of your grade – 15 minute presentation to the class on your project. (See handout on Class Project)

In grading I will also take into account your class participation which can raise or lower your grade by one notch, e.g. from B to B+ or B to B-.

You are expected to be aware of, and strictly adhere to, the university’s Code of Academic Integrity which may be found in the Student Handbook. Plagiarism is defined as submitting as your own work something written in whole or in part by someone else. It is a serious offense and could result in failure in the course and expulsion from the Honors College.

And, yes, I know some of this reading is “hard.” “Challenging” might be a better word to describe what we are reading. We will talk about the reading in class. All of the reading is subject to multiple interpretations, even conflicting and contradictory interpretations. Don’t be afraid to ask questions and don’t be timid about speaking up. Challenging the reading may be, but it takes us into the arena of the big questions. What could be more satisfying!