The Seven Deadly Sins [referenced hereafter using #7 for simplification] is a fully online, two semester Honors course that investigates a simple, three-letter word “sin” and its evolution into the list of the 7 deadly [capital/mortal] sins: anger, envy, gluttony, greed (avarice), lust, pride and sloth. These are central to moral philosophy and human behavior, and have been intensively examined through art and literature for more than fifteen hundred years, and recently through multimedia. This course provides the student with a background to gain understanding of these sins, their historical roots as well as the corresponding virtues that emerged from them in Eastern and Western societies. In addition to one central reader, the students will be required to view films placed on reserve in the library, artwork, electronic material posted online, and visit MOCA (Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami) for the exhibit “Sympathy for the Devil: Art and Rock and Roll Since 1967 from May 30-Sept 7, and The Wolfsonian during the spring semester for a “Sins” exhibit from their collections.

Each major topic from Pope Gregory’s original list will share a complimentary discussion from the viewpoints of the BBC Poll (p xiv), Mahatma Ghandi’s list (p xiv), and Pope Benedict XVI’s new list that includes murder, contraception, abortion, perjury, paedophilia (pedofiles) adultery, and lust.

In the spring, two additional books are added to the required reading. The students will be responsible for a visit The Wolfsonian on South Beach.

Required viewing: Se7en (1995); Lolita (1992 and 1997); Road to Perdition (2002); Pulp Fiction (1994); The Exorcist (1973); The Sting (1973); excerpts from Ken Burns The War; Religion, War, and Violence: Ethics of Peace (2003); Cabaret (1975); The War of the Roses (1989); Wall Street (1987); Pride and Prejudice (2005), Envy (2004), The Last King of Scotland (2006), Hotel Rwanda (2004), 12 Angry Men (1957), Clerk (1994), Mallrats (1995) and TV version (1997), American reality TV series, “Keeping Up With the Kardashians” (October 2007), a reality TV show that documents the daily lives of the Kardashian/Jenner family. (Other media presentations may be added).

Podcasts of appropriately selected music for each topic is available for download online: some lyrics may accompany the musical genres: operatic, rock and roll, punk, ska, rap.

Additional material (art, music and multimedia) will be posted prior to the beginning of each semester. The instructor reserves the right to make changes or additions as deemed
necessary. These will be posted through the course announcements and sent via course email; thus, it is important that you check these items on a regular basis. All essays, papers and discussions are submitted online; papers and essays are double-line spaced with your name and a word count. Discussion blogs and question responses are single-line spaced and do not require a word count. (See information regarding academic papers posted on the homepage).

6


“Why does it often feel good to do something bad? In a world where we are encouraged to indulge, splurge, live a little—even visit “Sin City”—has the ancient religious concept of sin lost its sway over the moral imagination? The Seven Deadly Sins Sample… allows readers to peer into the hidden recesses of sinful thought and behavior. Without moralizing, the authors in this book—Margaret Atwood, Raymond Carver, Flannery O’Connor, and D. H. Lawrence, to name a few—use fiction to explore our all too human thirst for transgressive pleasure. For readers who know that good and evil isn’t simply a matter of black and white, this collection will provoke lively conversation and sober contemplation. The Seven Deadly Sins Sampler comes with discussion questions for both book group and classroom use, as well as a foreword by Al Gini that explains the history of the seven deadly sins and their place in popular culture.”

From the Foreword “According to biblical tradition, we are all sinners, doomed because of the first couple’s disobedience in the Garden of Eden. St. Augustine describes humankind as “full of evil lusts and inclinations from our mothers’ wombs.” To tone down the rhetoric a notch, one might say we succumb easily to our passions. Fifteen hundred years ago, St. Gregory the Great created a list of seven sins as a tool for contemplation, one to help monks maintain their ascetic regimen of chastity, poverty, and obedience…The authors in this collection offer us many different ways of thinking about sin. They don’t necessarily present a set of settled opinions on the deadly sins themselves, but they do keep us thinking and imagining what the moral life might be. Socrates put it another way, his student Plato tells us, in words that ring down through the centuries with equal force: The unexamined life is not worth living. —Al Gini”

Dealing with the seven deadly sins of human nature: as prescribed by the Biblical religions of Catholicism and Christianity that relate to capital vices or cardinal sins can be placed by The Roman Catholic Church and divided these cardinal sins into two major categories: venial and mortal; venial sins are considered minor sins that can be forgiven through sacramental offerings to the Church (Roman Catholic) while mortal sins destroy the line of grade to God and carry the threat of eternal damnation unless there is some form of extreme absolution. Mortal sins are voluntary acts [those which cannot be committed accidentally] that are contrary to eternal law. During the 14th Century, the “sins” became a major theme in European art and literature regarding: **SALIGIA**, [based on the first Latin letters of each sin], superbia (pride), avaritia (greed), luxuria (lust), invidia (envy), gula (gluttony), ira (anger), and acedia (sloth, apathy) and helped to deep seat them generally throughout the world. The sins will be discussed in context with the seven virtues: humility, charity, chastity, meekness, zeal, moderation, and generosity.

6

**Grades for fall:**

**Discussions (required blogs) 20%**

**Essays 25%**

**Midterm 25%**

**Final Paper (Critical book review from list) 30%**

**Required weekly or bi-weekly discussion “blogs” are found under the discussion tool and posted with a due date for initial postings.** After you post your initial response to each question or topic; then you and are expected to respond to at least two posts of your classmates’ initial responses.

The topics are selected from:
A) Required reading, *The 7 Deadly Sins Sampler*, B) Video presentation, C) Music/lyrics, and D) Works of art [works imaged online for each sin; some will offer descriptive commentary]. These are graded according to an online template.

Week 1 (Aug 25-AUG 31)  
INTRODUCTION; glossary of terms posted on the homepage and in the learning module, definite the to coursework; Reading assignment for Week 1, *The Seven Deadly Sins Sampler*: “Foreward,” “About Shared Inquiry,” (pp ix-xxvii) [The use of this book will be modified to fit the course online] Visit MOCA and write a critique of one video and one static presentation. (See assignment tool for further instructions and list of artwork.) Music TBP. Discussion of Gregory, the BBC poll, Ghandi and Pope Benedict XVI’s new list

Week 2-4 (Sept 1-21) PRIDE  
Reading assignment: pp 2-40. Examine artwork for “Pride.” Written assignment: respond to the 7 questions on p14 and p41 with a few sentences each. Write a short paragraph for questions #2, #3, p 15 and question #2, p. 41. Post your responses online under the assignment tool for week 2. View *Pride and Prejudice*. Write an essay, minimum of 250 words on how the movie ties into the short stories regarding pride. Due Sept. 20 at 12:00 PM (noon) online in the assignment tool. Read pp 44-81, (Envy) for weeks 5-7. Music TBA

Weeks 5-8 (Sept 22-Oct 19) ENVY  
Examine artwork (from the text) and additional postings. Written assignment: respond to questions 1-4, p61 and further reflection questions 1-3 in a few sentences for each; respond to questions, 1-7 p80 with a few sentences each; respond to further reflections 1-2, p 81. View *Envy* (2004), *The Last King of Scotland* (2006), *Hotel Rwanda* (2004). Read postings for “envy” on the homepage. Short essay regarding envy, 200 words, “I wish I were…” due Sept. 28 at 12:00 PM (noon) online in the assignment tool. Essay, 400 words: “How envy leads to terrorism?” Due Oct 12 at 12:00 PM (noon) through the assignment tool. Music TBP

Week 9 Midterm open from Monday, Oct 20 at 08:00 AM until 12:00 PM on Friday, Oct. 24; reading assignment for Weeks 10-12: Sloth, pp124-163


“druggie nation?” Can we and/or should we feed the starving? Discuss Enron, Oil Magnates, and Pharmaceutical companies; “Keeping Up With the Kardashians”

Finals Week: Critical book review (select from list provided) due online by Dec 11 at 12:00 PM online through the assignment tool

IDH 3006 #18164, IDH 4008 #18168 RVC [1081] Spring 2009

Grades for spring:
Discussion: required blog 20%
Essays 30%
Final Research Paper (Synthesis of the 7 Deadly sins coursework) 50%

All written assignments, artwork, videos, music will be posted prior to the beginning of the semester.
Weeks 1-5 GREED (Avarice) Reading assignment: pp 168-187; written assignment: all questions on pp164-65, p187. Does greed lead to abuse? View Wall Street; War of the Roses


Final paper: Synthesis project of “The Seven Deadly Sins,” select topics are posted online.