

In-Depth Study of Moral Scientific Problems (A002392)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 5.0 **Study time 150 h**

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2023-2024

A (semester 2)	Dutch	Gent	seminar lecture
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Lecturers in academic year 2023-2024

Segers, Seppe	LW01	lecturer-in-charge
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Offered in the following programmes in 2023-2024

	crdts	offering
Master of Science in Teaching in Arts and Humanities (main subject Moral Sciences)	5	A
Master of Arts in Moral Sciences	5	A

Teaching languages

Dutch

Keywords

group violence, genocide, perpetrators, bystanders, ethics of killing, holocaust, jihadism

Position of the course

The course is at the intersection of the ethics of killing and the dynamics of lethal violence: what do we know about the psychology of the perpetrators and their complicit in crimes of war, crimes against humanity, genocide ...; what are the societal and historical factors facilitating mass violence?; what are the ethical and legal considerations and rules governing the killing of humans in international conflicts, medical contexts, capital punishment, .. and what about the containability of justified or unjustified violence? A case study is about recent theories on the relationship between religion and the radicalisation of western foreign fighters who have joined the ranks of a.o. Islamic State.

Contents

The starting point of the course are theories of mainly historians on the perpetrators, bystanders and victims of the Holocaust and on how mass violence could amplify during the nazi-period. Recent research offers a good picture of the variety of perpetrator profiles. Treated are: the T4-campaign, the judeocide in the Aktion Reinhardt extermination camps, and the actions of SS-, SD- and Orpo-Einstzgruppen in Poland and the USSR. Starting point is Christopher Browning's book about Reserve Police Bataillon 101 in Poland. More recent studies have revised and relativised Browning's idea that the perpetrators were "ordinary men". The course equally weighs the relevancy of social psychological research that has been mentioned by historians for theory building on mass violence (the experiments of Milgram, Darley and Latané, Lerner, Zimbardo and Bandura's synthesis on disengagement of internal control in perpetrators). We also discuss the very influential view on perpetratorship proposed by Hannah Arendt in her reports of the Eichmann process in Jerusalem.

Another part of the course goes into the legal definitions of genocide, crimes of war and crimes against humanity and examines them in relation to concrete examples (the Native American genocides, the Cambodian and Rwandese genocides; the Argentinian en Indonesian crimes against "communist" opponents).

The course also ventures into the ethics of killing as exemplified in (e.g.) Medical Aid In Dying: the doctrine of doing and allowing, the doctrine of double effect, consequentialist alternatives and the normative power of the "medical exception" (articles by James Rachels, Govert den Hartogh, the teacher of the course).

Elaborating on "classical" theories of justified killing and just war, the course also goes into some recent developments in the ethics of warfare: the justifiability, (il)legality and dynamics

of the use of UCAVs and possible developments in the field of automated killing. The main theme is again that of perpetratorship and of the accountability of actions. A final part of the course is about the views of Olivier Roy, Bernard Rougier and Gilles Kepel on the links between religious fundamentalism and the radicalisation of certain muslim groups in the west. The debate between Roy and Kepel-Rougier is about the degree to which Islam faith is an effective source of readiness to use violence. The psychological profiles of western foreign fighters and the way in which the FF were involved in the war crimes of SS are discussed.

Initial competences

General Humanities and Social Sciences competences at bachelor level.

Final competences

- 1 Being able to construct a moral studies view on a complex topic by integrating results and methods from several disciplines (history, social psychology, sociology of religion, cultural studies, legal studies, ethical analysis, ...)
- 2 Being able, starting from academic literature, to give a sound introductory presentation on a topic to be discussed in the course

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is determined after successful competences assessment

Conditions for exam contract

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods

Seminar, Lecture

Extra information on the teaching methods

After an introductory part consisting of readings by the teacher, the students give introductions to specific themes, that are further discussed.

Learning materials and price

Required reading: Roy, O. (2017). Jihad and death: the global appeal of Islamic State. Hurst & Co.
Remaining materials are available at the UFORA-site of the course and the "college shelf" in the Arts and Philosophy Library.
Free of cost (except for whom would like to buy the book of Roy (available in faculty library): 19,09 euro.

References

- Arad, Y. (1987). Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka : the Operation Reinhard death camps. Bloomington, Indiana University Press.
- Arendt, H. (1964). Eichmann in Jerusalem; a report on the banality of evil. New York, Viking Press.
- Berger, S. (2015). Experten der Vernichtung. Das T4-Reinhardt Netzwerk in den Lagern Belzec, Sobibor und Treblinka. Hamburger Edition.
- Browning, C. R. (1992). Ordinary men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the final solution in Poland. New York, HarperCollins.
- Burleigh, M. (1994). Death and deliverance. "Euthanasia" in Germany 1900-1945. CUP.
- Fisanick, C. (2004). The Rwanda genocide. San Diego, Greenhaven Press.
- Friedländer, S. (1997-2007). Nazi Germany and the Jews (2 Vol). New York, HarperCollins.
- Glover, J. (1977). Causing death and saving lives. Harmondsworth, New York etc., Penguin.
- Goldhagen, D. J. (1996). Hitler's willing executioners: ordinary Germans and the Holocaust. New York, Knopf, Random House.
- Hilberg, R. (1961). The destruction of the European Jews. Chicago, Quadrangle Books.
- Kepel, G. (2020). Away from chaos: the Middle East and the Challenge to the West. Columbia University Press.
- Khosrokhavar, F (2018). Le nouveau jihad en Occident. Robert Laffont.
- Kogon, E. (2006, 1950). The theory and practice of hell. The German concentration camps and the system behind them. New York, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux.
- Latané, B. and J. M. Darley (1970). The unresponsive bystander: why doesn't he help? New York, Appleton-Century Crofts.
- Lerner, M. J. (1980). The belief in a just world: a fundamental delusion. New York, Plenum Press.
- Lifton, R. J. (1986). The Nazi doctors: medical killing and the psychology of genocide. New York, Basic Books.

- McMahan, J. (2002). The ethics of killing: problems at the margins of life. New York, Oxford University Press.
- Milgram, S. (1974). Obedience to authority: an experimental view. London, Tavistock.
- Rachels, J. (1975). "Active and passive euthanasia." The New England Journal of Medicine 292(2): 78-80.
- Rougier, B. (ed.) (2020). Les territoires conquis de l'islamisme. PUF.
- Roy, O. (2017). Jihad and death: the global appeal of Islamic State. Hurst & Co.
- Staub, E. (1989). The roots of evil: the origins of genocide and other group violence. CUP.
- Staub, E. (2013). Overcoming evil: genocide, violent conflict and terrorism. OUP.
- Walzer, M. (1977). Just and unjust wars: a moral argument with historical illustrations. New York, Basic Books.

Course content-related study coaching

Supervision by the lecturer.

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Oral assessment, Assignment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Oral assessment, Assignment

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Skills test

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible in modified form

Extra information on the examination methods

The exam is a conversation with the teacher about topics treated in the course.

A paper has to be submitted on O. Roy's book on Jihad and Islamic State, more specifically a critical analysis of the arguments underpinning his view of the relationship between revolt and Islam.

The student (alone or in duo) has also to introduce the fellow students to an assigned topic (presentation)

Calculation of the examination mark

Oral exam 35%; paper: 35%; presentation: 30%

Facilities for Working Students

Facilities:

- 1 Possible exemption from educational activities requiring student attendance on the condition of writing an additional paper.
- 2 Possible to reschedule the exam at another moment in the same academic year
- 3 Feedback can be given by email or other digital communication media.

For more information contact the monitoring service of the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy:

<https://www.ugent.be/lw/nl/student/studiestudentenbegeleiding/trajectbegeleiding.htm>