

# COURSE SYLLABUS



## **HON 331-09** **How to be a killjoy**

We often avoid and criticize conflict and dissent. Yet aren't they important, perhaps even necessary elements of our social lives? They can change hearts and opinions, free us from the pressures of conformity, and help us to think better, more critically, and more creatively. This seminar draws upon philosophy, social and organizational psychology, cognitive neuroscience, and behavioral economics to discuss the nature of killjoys. It considers historical and contemporary examples of killjoy behavior in order to understand what it means to be a killjoy. It also explores the social, organizational, and personal harms and benefits of being a killjoy, and considers whether killjoy behavior is ever morally necessary.

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### **CLASS INFO**

**website:** [blackboard.louisville.edu](https://blackboard.louisville.edu)

**meeting times:** Tue & Thu 1pm - 2:15pm

**location:** Strickler Hall 226

**office hours:** M 11am - 12pm & Tue 12pm - 12:50pm

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### **INSTRUCTOR**

*Dr. Andreas Elpidorou*  
*he/him/his*

Professor

Department of Philosophy

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**office:** Humanities 308 & Virtually

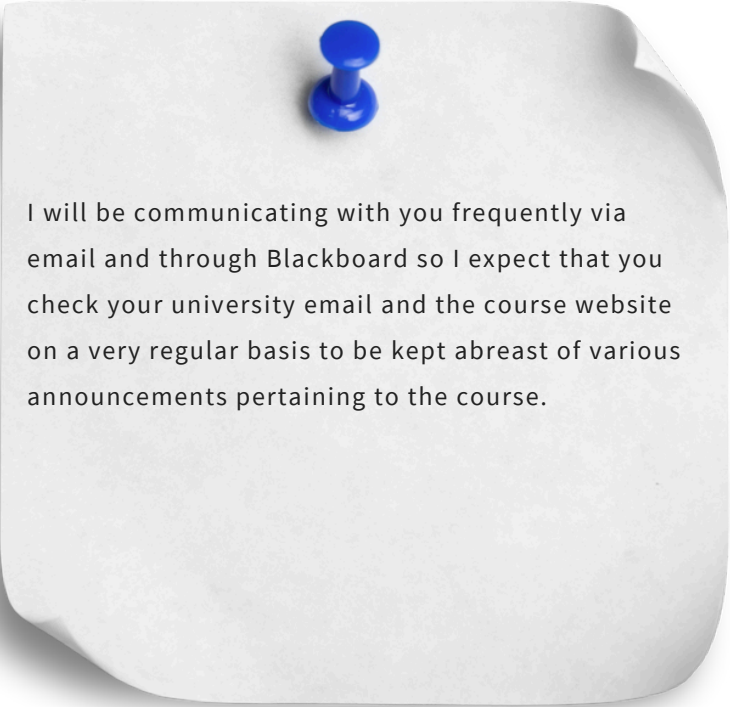
**FALL 2024 | 3 CREDIT HOURS**

# Learning Objectives

The course aims to familiarize you with a number of important issues in contemporary philosophy and social psychology, to teach you how to critically assess cultural assumptions, and to allow you to formulate, defend, and critique philosophical arguments. By the completion of the course, you will be able to:

1. Articulate the importance and necessity of conflict and dissent in social contexts, and discuss how these elements can positively influence individual and group dynamics.
2. Apply concepts from philosophy, social and organizational psychology, cognitive neuroscience, and behavioral economics to analyze the nature of killjoy behavior.
3. Examine and evaluate historical and contemporary examples of killjoy behavior to understand their implications and outcomes.
4. Assess the social, organizational, and personal harms and benefits associated with being a killjoy, and discuss whether killjoy behavior can be morally justified.
5. Develop your research and writing skills through the completion of writing assignments that require critical thinking, synthesis of course materials, and clear, coherent argumentation.

In addition to these aims, during the course you will have the opportunity to engage with and reflect on assigned readings and to participate in in-person and virtual class discussions.



I will be communicating with you frequently via email and through Blackboard so I expect that you check your university email and the course website on a very regular basis to be kept abreast of various announcements pertaining to the course.

Attending the lectures is **required** and **necessary** for the successful completion of this course. Attendance will be taken regularly. You may have no more than **two** unexcused absences. Each absence after that limit will lower your overall grade by 2%. **Seven or more unexcused** absences will result in a failure of the class. We will be studying difficult material, so attending class and engaging in discussion is essential for your understanding.

## PREREQUISITES

No prior knowledge is required for doing well in this class. Prior familiarity with philosophical and psychological texts is a benefit.

# Inclusivity and accommodations

I care about your success in this class and I am committed to helping you do well. To that end, I encourage you to discuss your learning styles with me. There are multiple ways to learn and one of my goals as your instructor is to make sure that this multiplicity is reflected both in the structure of the course and in the manner in which you are evaluated. If you expect that the readings, activities, and assignments planned out will prove to be an obstacle for your success in this class, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can think of ways of modifying them such that they meet both your needs and the requirements of the class.

Students with documented disabilities and special needs are entitled to accommodations. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation, please contact the **Disability Resource Center** (<http://louisville.edu/disability>) located in Stevenson Hall, room 119 (Phone: 502-852-6938). You can inform me directly of your needed accommodations or have the Disability Resource Centre do so on your behalf. I'm happy to help you determine what are the most effective accommodations for your needs in this class. UofL is committed to the Americans with Disabilities ACT ('ADA') of 1990 and it follows the legal requirements of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

## Statement on Basic Needs Security

Any student who lacks a safe and stable place to live, who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat, and believes that this may affect their performance in this course is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support (502-852-5787, [dos@louisville.edu](mailto:dos@louisville.edu)). This will enable them to provide you with any resources that they may possess. If you are uncomfortable doing so, I would be happy to work with you on this matter. Also, please be aware of the following resources available to all UofL students:

- The Free Store, which is open to all students, faculty, and staff to "shop" for free clothing, shoes, electronics, small appliances, household items, bath & beauty supplies, books, school & art supplies, non-perishable food and more (<https://www.facebook.com/UofLFreeStore>).
- The Food Recovery Network (<https://www.foodrecoverynetwork.org/kentucky/#UL>)
- Student Emergency Fund (<http://louisville.edu/dos/help/studentemergencyfund>)
- Health Promotion, which provides workshops in health and insurance literacy; sexual health and relationship; food, nutrition, and cooking; sleeping and napping; fitness and movement; alcohol and substance resilience; stress resilience, and more (<http://louisville.edu/healthpromotion>)

## COUNSELING

**Counseling Center:** If you notice you are having a difficult time or generally feel stuck, it may be helpful to work with a trained therapist at the Counseling Center in an individual or group setting. People come into the Counseling Center to discuss a range of topics, including relationships, family, identities, grief and loss, depression, stress, and many more experiences and concerns. The Counseling Center provides short term individual, group, and couples counseling, crisis intervention, and psychological testing. Clients seek services for a variety of areas of concern, including psychological, personal/social, academic, and career issues. **To schedule an appointment, please contact the Counseling Center at 502-852-6585 or stop by the office in the Student Activities Center Room W-204. More info:** <http://louisville.edu/counseling/>

Additional Counseling Resources:

- **24/7 Adult Crisis Line: 502-589-4313 or 800-221-0446 (available 24/7)**
- **The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 988 or 1-800-273-TALK (8255) (available 24/7)**
- **Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741 (available 24/7)**
- **The Trevor Project: 1-866-488-7386 (available 24/7 for individuals ages 13-24 who identify as LGBTQ)**

*If you have a name that differs from the one that appears on the roster, please let me know so that I can use your correct name and pronouns.*





## TEXTS

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No required textbook.

**All readings will be made available on Blackboard.**

## RESOURCES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE

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**REACH (Resources for Academic Achievement)** ([www.reach.louisville.edu](http://www.reach.louisville.edu)) provides a variety of academic support programs, including tutors, to help you achieve your academic goals. It is located in Belknap Academic Building, Suite 202 (Phone: (502) 852-6706; E-mail: [REACH@louisville.edu](mailto:REACH@louisville.edu))

**The Writing Center** ([www.louisville.edu/writingcenter/](http://www.louisville.edu/writingcenter/)) has outstanding staff dedicated to assisting you in becoming a better writer. It is located in Ekstrom Library, Rm 132 (Phone: 502-852-2173; Email: [writing@louisville.edu](mailto:writing@louisville.edu))

## Student preparedness

I recommend that you read the assigned readings at least twice: once before the lecture and once after. While doing the readings, practice active reading: read slowly; take lots of notes; underline difficult passages; use a dictionary to look up words that you don't understand; try to come up with questions; raise objections and offer responses.

Some of these readings are difficult. That is part of the course. Don't get frustrated. Be patient and it will pay off.

## Grading Policies

I always try to return work within 7 business days from the time of submission and often earlier. Sometimes it might take a few days longer and when it does, I will let you know.

Whenever it is possible, I practice anonymous grading. This means that I do not know whose assignment I am reading when I read it. The reason why anonymous grading is practiced is to avoid unfair treatment due to familiarity, gender, or race. Consequently, I ask that you do not include your name on any assignment, only your student number.

## Gender-Neutral Writing

In philosophy, gender-appropriate writing is the accepted practice recommended by the American Philosophical Association. Appropriate language use includes, for example: "humanity," "humankind," "her/his," "his or her," "their," etc. The use of the pronouns "they," "them," and "their" is grammatically correct when referring to a single person and is one way to be more gender-inclusive in writing or speaking. When quoting writers who utilize non-inclusive language, leave their words in the original. Gender specific language is, of course, appropriate when referring to a gender class such as "men" or "women."

# Course assessment

Your grade will be comprised of the following components:

## 1. Discussion Board (40%)

Learning is best done through dialogue. Because of that, much of this class will take the form of a discussion. For each discussion board assignment, you are required to post **three separate posts: one initial substantial post in which you engage with the provided prompt; and two substantive responses to posts made by other students.** For more information, please consult the provided grading rubric and instructions in Module 0.

## 3. Reading Reflections (10%)

During most modules, you will be asked to submit a reading reflection. In this entry, you will be providing your thoughts about the assigned readings. These reflections are opportunities for you to reflect on the theories, views, and arguments that we are discussing and to offer your own arguments and ideas. **Your reflections should be at least 3-4 fully developed paragraphs.**

Please consult the provided grading rubric and instructions in Module 0.

## 4. Final Essay (30%)

During the last module, you will be provided with a detailed question prompt and you will be asked to compose a 1500-2000-word paper that responds to the question. The purpose of this assignment is to synthesize your knowledge and to apply it to issues of contemporary significance. A grading rubric and detailed instructions as to how to compose this paper will be provided.

## 2. Homework Assignments (20%)

Two times in the semester, you will have to submit a 700-1200-word critical response to an assigned question. The question will be posted on Blackboard approximately one week before the assignment is due. A grading rubric will be provided with the assignment. For the due dates, please consult the schedule of readings.







## Questions about grading

Do you have questions about your grades? Would you like to know how you can perform better in your next assignment? If so, come and see me during (virtual) office hours. I am always happy to discuss your assignments with you and to recommend strategies that will help you improve.

## GRADE CONVERSION

A: 93 – 100 (4.0)	C: 74 – 76 (2.0)
A-: 90 – 92 (3.7)	C-: 70 – 73 (1.7)
B+: 87 – 89 (3.3)	D+: 67 – 69 (1.3)
B: 83 – 86 (3.0)	D: 64 – 66 (1.0)
B-: 80 – 82 (2.7)	D-: 60 – 63 (0.7)
C+: 77 – 79 (2.3)	F: 59 or below (0)

## LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY

Make-up assignments will be granted only in the event of prior approval from the professor or in the event of a documented emergency. Having said that, I know that many of you work full-time, work overnight shifts, and have non-negotiable family (and other) commitments that can impede your schoolwork. In case you are unable to complete an assignment on time, please let me know in advance so that we can work something out. I understand that we all have lives outside of our academic lives and with good reasons, I do grant extensions.

## Title IX

Sexual misconduct (including sexual harassment, sexual assault, and any other nonconsensual behavior of a sexual nature) and sex discrimination violate University policies. Students experiencing such behavior may obtain confidential support from the **PEACC Program** (852-2663), **Counseling Center** (852-6585), and **Campus Health Services** (852-6479). To report sexual misconduct or sex discrimination, contact the Dean of Students (852-5787) or the University of Louisville Police (852-6111).

Disclosure to University faculty or instructors of sexual misconduct, domestic violence, dating violence, or sex discrimination occurring on campus, in a University-sponsored program, or involving a campus visitor or University student or employee (whether current or former) is not confidential under Title IX. Faculty and instructors must forward such reports, including names and circumstances, to the University's Title IX officer. For more information, see the Sexual Misconduct Resource Guide:

<http://louisville.edu/hr/employeerelations/sexual-misconduct-brochure>.

### On asking questions.

You are strongly encouraged to ask substantive and/or clarificatory questions during class or via email. Many of our readings involve vocabulary that probably you have not encountered before. Also, feel free to schedule an appointment to meet with me.

## EMAIL POLICY AND ETIQUETTE

The best way to get in touch with me outside of class time and office hours is by email. I rarely answer my office phone or check voice messages. I am happy to set up appointments and to answer brief technical questions or concerns by email; however, for substantive questions about the course and lecture material, please see me in person during office hours or by appointment. Alternatively, and depending on the sorts of questions that you might have, I encourage you to ask them during class. Finally, I answer emails during business hours and will do my best to respond to you as soon as possible.

For better or worse, email is a part of your identity and it must be used professionally. In this and in all of your classes, when corresponding with your instructors:

- *Include the course number and the reason for your email in the subject heading (e.g., HON 331: request for extension).*
- *Start your email with a polite greeting.*
- *Write full sentences and spell properly (emails are not text messages!).*
- *Sign with your full name.*



## Student Conduct, Academic Integrity & Plagiarism

All students are required to adhere to the standards of academic integrity as stated in Student Rights and Responsibilities

(<http://louisville.edu/dos/policiesprocedures/student-rights-and-responsibilities-1-1.html>). The Dean's Office will be notified of all suspected cases of academic dishonesty (i.e., cheating, fabrication, falsification, multiple submission, plagiarism, or complicity in academic dishonesty). In Student Rights and Responsibilities, plagiarism is defined as follows:

### **Plagiarism:**

Representing the words or ideas of someone else as one's own in any academic exercise, such as:

1. Submitting as one's own a paper written by another person or by a commercial "ghost writing" service,
2. Exactly reproducing someone else's words without identifying the words with quotation marks or by appropriate indentation, or without properly citing the quotation in a footnote or reference.
3. Paraphrasing or summarizing someone else's work without acknowledging the source with a footnote or reference.
4. Using facts, data, graphs, charts, or other information without acknowledging the source with a footnote or reference. Borrowed facts or information obtained in one's research or reading must be acknowledged unless they are "common knowledge". Clear examples of "common knowledge" include the names of leaders of prominent nations, basic scientific laws, and the meaning of fundamental concepts and principles in a discipline. The specific audience for which a paper is written may determine what can be viewed as "Common knowledge": for example, the facts commonly known by a group of chemists will differ radically from those known by a more general audience. Students should check with their teachers regarding what can be viewed as "common knowledge" within a specific field or assignment, but often the student will have to make the final judgment. When in doubt, footnotes or references should be used.

If you have any questions regarding plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty, please do not hesitate to ask.

**The use of generative AI (e.g., CHATGPT) on your assignments is considered plagiarism, unless you can prove to me that generative AI was used merely as a tool to enhance your writing and research and not as substitute for writing or thinking.**

If you do decide to use generative AI, make sure that you save all your prompts and AI-generated outputs. These have to be submitted with your assignments. In addition, every use of AI should be cited and explained in your assignments.

**Important!** If I suspect that you have utilized generative AI when completing an assignment **and you have not properly disclosed the use of AI**, you will be asked to either redo the assignment (and may thus incur a late penalty) or complete the assignment orally.

# SCHEDULE OF READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS

*I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus if necessary to meet learning objectives, make up for missed class sessions, or other similar reasons.*

## Module 1: **Introducing Killjoy** [08/20 – 08/22]

<b>Themes</b>	Learn what this course is about. What is killjoy? A preliminary discussion and examples
<b>To Read &amp; Watch</b>	Read the syllabus and everything that is posted in Module 0
<b>To Do</b>	Discussion Board Assignment

## Module 2: **The Dark Triad** [08/27 – 08/29]

<b>Themes</b>	Dark psychology traits: Narcissism, Psychopathy, and Machiavellianism
<b>To Read</b>	Furnham et al., “The Dark Triad of Personality: A 10 year review” Koehn et al. “A primer on the Dark Triad Traits”
<b>To Do</b>	Take the test! <a href="https://openpsychometrics.org/tests/SD3/">https://openpsychometrics.org/tests/SD3/</a> Discussion board assignment Reading reflection

## Module 3: **Jerks and Assholes** [09/03 -09/12]

<b>Themes</b>	What are assholes? What are jerks?
<b>To Read</b>	James, <i>Assholes: A Theory</i> , selections Schwitzgebel, “A Theory of Jerks”
<b>To Do</b>	Discussion board assignment Reading reflection



#### Module 4: **Trolls and Bullies** [09/17-09/19]

<b>Themes</b>	Who are trolls? Why do trolls troll?
<b>To Read &amp; Watch</b>	Schwartz, “The Trolls Among Us” Buckels et al, “Trolls Just Want to Have Fun” Smith, “Bullying: Definition, Types, Causes, Consequences and Intervention”
<b>To Do</b>	Reading reflection First homework assignment due

#### Module 5: **Cynicism** [09/24 - 09/26]

<b>Themes</b>	What is cynicism? Is there value in being a cynic?
<b>To Read</b>	Schutijser, “Cynicism as a Way of Life” Laursen, “Cynicism Then and Now” Neumann and Zaki, “Towards a Social Psychology of Cynicism”
<b>To Do</b>	Discussion board assignment Reading reflection

#### Module 6: **Rudeness** [10/03-10/15]

<b>Themes</b>	Is it okay to be rude? Do we need manners? Is being civil a virtue?
<b>To Read &amp; Watch</b>	Olberding, <i>The Wrong of Rudeness</i> , selections
<b>To Do</b>	Discussion board assignment Reading reflection

#### Module 7: **Complaining** [10/17-10/22]

<b>Themes</b>	What is a complain? Why do we complain? Is complaining bad?
<b>To Read</b>	Kowalski, “Whining, Gripping, and Complaining: Positivity in the Negativity” Norlock, “Can’t Complain”
<b>To Do</b>	Reading reflection Second homework assignment

Module 8: **Conformity, Dissent, and Moral Rebels** [10/24-11/07 ]

<b>Themes</b>	What happens when we conform? What happens when we dissent?
<b>To Read</b>	Schacter, “Deviation, Rejection, and Communication” Asch, “Studies of Independence and Conformity” Martin et al., “Persuasion from majority and minority groups” Nemeth & Goncalo, “Rogues and Heroes: Finding Value in Dissent” Cramwinckel et al., “Reactions to Morally Motivated Deviance” Izuma,” The neural basis of social influence and attitude change”  <i>** read two essays per class</i>
<b>To Do</b>	Discussion board assignment Reading reflection

Module 9: **Feminist Killjoy** [11/12– 11/21]

<b>Themes</b>	Feminist Killjoy
<b>To Read</b>	Ahmed, <i>The Feminist Killjoy Handbook</i> , Selections
<b>To Do</b>	Discussion board assignment Reading reflection

Module 10: **Social Killjoys & Final Thoughts** [11/26 – 12/03]

<b>Themes</b>	Social Killjoys: Poverty and Racism
<b>To Read</b>	TBA
<b>To Do</b>	Final paper - Due date <b>Friday, December 6</b>