**Class Blog Participation**

**Purpose:**

The class blog is designed to facilitate our investigation into the problem of evil throughout history as well as help you practice writing for a broader audience using a format that falls somewhere between your field reports/major essays and the reading journal in terms of formality. In your blog posts, you will present and analyze an artifact (sort of like you do in field reports) that tells us something interesting about how individuals have addressed the problem of evil either today or at some other point in history. You will also use comments to start conversations about the artifacts you present and to evaluate one another’s work.

**Format:**

I have set up a Wordpress blog for this class: [bloggingtheodicy.wordpress.com](http://bloggingtheodicy.wordpress.com/). All students will be granted “Author” status, which will allow you to edit and publish your own posts as well as upload images and files. For now, I will handle comment moderation and organize the site. You may feel free to publicize your posts on Twitter or your personal blog or online journal.

**Evaluation Criteria:**

**C—**4 posts of 300 words (3 should include multimedia elements), 5 comments on other posts

B—5 posts of 300 words (4 should include multimedia elements), 7 comments on other posts

A—6 posts of 300 words (5 should include multimedia elements), 10 comments on other posts

**Posts:**

As in your field reports, your posts should present and analyze an artifact that says something about the way people address the problem of evil. These posts should be at least 300 words long, though they can certainly be longer. You should upload images and video (be sure to credit—see below) and use external links to show us what you are analyzing. Your posts should also be reasonably well edited and polished. I won’t be counting off for grammar mistakes, but because Wordpress offers a spellcheck feature (and a customizable grammar check feature that you can play with in Personal Settings), there really are no excuses for egregious errors.

You may also use a post to offer an alternative view on an artifact that someone else has already written about. Be sure to link to the original post when you do so.

**You may use artifacts/analysis from your field reports, but you do not have to.**

**Comments:**

Comments that count toward your grade should be substantive, getting beyond “yeah, that sounds good.” You may (politely) add to or challenge the author’s analysis or offer a view of your own, though if your response runs on for more than a couple of paragraphs and refers to, say, scenes in a film that aren’t covered in the author’s original post, you may want to write your own post about that artifact. You can also respond to conversations occurring in comments in your own posts.

**Credits:**

Because your posts are being published on the open web, you need to be sure to credit the creators and/or distributors of any images, video, or text you use in your posts. Technically, we could be held liable for publishing any copyrighted images or video without proper citation. For text, you can simply create an html link at an appropriate point in your post, preferably just before the quotation.

Ex. According to [Wikipedia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_teaching_about_the_Devil): “Traditionally, Christians have understood the Devil to be the author of lies and promoter of evil; however, he can go no further than the word of God allows. But Liberal Christianity often views the devil metaphorically. This is true of some conservative Christian groups too, such as the Christadelphians and the Church of the Blessed Hope. Much of the popular history of the Devil is not biblical; instead, it is a post-medieval Christian reading of the scriptures influenced by medieval and pre-medieval Christian popular mythology.”

For images or video, place a credit line at the bottom of your post with the name of the creator/distributor and a link to the place where you found it.

Ex. Image Credit: [Luc Viatour, Wikimedia Commons](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Lucifer_Liege_Luc_Viatour.jpg)

For more information regarding copyright and fair use, see [this Wikipedia article](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fair_use).

**Tips for Using Wordpress:**

* If you are not logged into Wordpress, visit [wordpress.com](http://wordpress.com/) first and enter your user name and password at the top of the page. Then use the “My Blog” dropdown menu to navigate to the Dashboard.
* To create a new post, click the “My Blog” dropdown menu at the top of the page and click “New Post.” Your posts are automatically saved to the site as long as you are connected to the internet. You can access and edit your unpublished posts from the Dashboard.
* Wordpress allows you to write your post using an MS Word style interface or using HTML code. Unless you are particularly comfortable with HTML, you will want to use the “Visual” option. The only time you will need to use the HTML interface is when embedding a video clip.
* To upload an image, click the icon right next to “Upload/Insert.” This will allow you to upload a picture that is saved to your computer. Remember to select a size and click “Add to Post” after you’ve saved the image.
  + Don’t “hotlink” the image by inserting another site’s URL, as this puts strain on the hosting site’s server and is therefore considered to be poor blogging etiquette.
  + Write a brief description of your image in the “Alternate Text” line. This text will appear in browsers that do not show images and will be read by accessibility software for the visually impaired. You can also use “alt” tags if you are editing in HTML.
* To embed a video clip from, say, Hulu or YouTube, you just need to copy and paste the embed code into the HTML editor wherever you want the video to appear. The embed code will not work properly if you are using the “Visual” interface, so make sure you are in the correct mode. Once you’ve embedded the code, you can switch back to “Visual” and continue writing your post.
* You can add slide shows or video clips that are stored as files on your computer pretty much in the same way you upload images. Just select the correct icon next to “Upload/Insert.”
* There is a “Help” menu on the top right of every page in the Dashboard. If you are having a problem, try checking there before you e-mail me.