

# SATAN

## History, Poetics, and Politics of the Archenemy



Tu–Th 10:15–11:45 | Place TBD

This course explores the oldest and the most powerful antagonist of human history. Satan, the Devil, referred with many other names in different religious traditions, has a rich history from ancient dualist cosmologies, through the monotheistic traditions, up to the modern day. In this course, we will survey the many expressions of human creativity that underlie the emergence and development of this character. We will study mythology, scripture, philosophy, medicine, material culture, ritual practice, and iconographic representations to discover the various dimensions of the archenemy over the course of two millennia. Through an extensive study of the representations of Satan past and present, we will see the ways in which different communities and individuals answered questions such as: What is a human? How do we relate to the cosmos? How do we make meaning of suffering? How to define power and authority? What is morality?



**Why should you take this course?** There are myriad reasons to take any course. Let me offer two reasons to take this course. Firstly, it matters. We live in a world shaped by the religions that place human existence at the center of a cosmic spiritual battle between good and evil. This spiritual battle finds echoes in political speech, moral teachings, economy, science, pop culture, and other realms of life. Understanding the development of the main character of this battle makes a big impact in one's participation in the world. Secondly, everyone likes a good challenge. Accepting simplistic narratives, totalistic views of history, one-sided privileged perspectives are easy. By taking this course, you will challenge yourself to approach a controversial topic from different perspectives, with the help of various literary and material sources. Being a critical consumer of historical narratives is important, and this course will help you become one.



No  
electronics  
in the  
classroom

Our TA is Claire Elliot  
([celliot@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:celliot@sas.upenn.edu))

Introduce yourself to her. If you miss a class or need other help regarding the course, she can help you.

**NOTE THE  
QUIZ DATES**

This course is not for everyone. The material in this course is disturbing.

We will discuss literature and imagery that is racist, sexist, misogynistic, ableist, antisemitic, islamophobic, homophobic, sexually explicit, and violent.

This is inevitable given... well... the theme of the course.

If you think you will be uncomfortable encountering this material, please speak to me before enrolling in the course!

### Assessment

Attendance and participation	15%
Quiz on the syllabus (online on Canvas, by Feb 2)	5%
In-class quiz 1 on February 8	15%
In-class quiz 2 on February 29	15%
In-class quiz 3 on April 11	15%
10 Questions (upload on Canvas by April 10)	10%
Discussion posts	10%
Satan exhibition	15%

adjust your canvas settings to receive emails about updates and announcements

### Grade Scale

98-100: A+	87-89: B+	77-79: C+	67-69: D+
94-97: A	83-86: B	73-76: C	63-66: D
90-93: A-	80-82: B-	70-72: C-	60-62: D-

### Statement on Inclusion and Diversity in the Classroom

University of Pennsylvania considers the diversity of its students, faculty, and staff to be a strength and critical to its educational mission. Accordingly, all participants in this course are expected to contribute proactively and constructively toward creating an inclusive and respectful climate for everyone involved, both inside and outside of the classroom space. Dimensions of diversity can include sex, race, age, national origin, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, intellectual and physical ability, sexual orientation, income, faith and non-faith perspectives, socio-economic class, political ideology, education, primary language, family status, military experience, cognitive style, and communication style. As part of our shared academic endeavor as a community of scholars, it is essential that we honor the intersection of these experiences and characteristics as a core value. In this context, please note that Title IX specifically prohibits sex discrimination, including sexual misconduct, violence, harassment, and retaliation. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find confidential resources and information concerning reporting options at <https://www.diversity.upenn.edu>. In this context, this course is also firmly committed to supporting the work of the Office of Student Disabilities Services, which aims to “ensure equal access to all University programs activities and services.” For more information and resources, see <https://www.vpul.upenn.edu>. If you need to request academic accommodations, feel free to speak with me after class, during office hours, or via email. For all participants in this course, the cultivation of the classroom as a healthy, equitable, and inclusive workspace is a first priority.

### Statement on Academic Honesty and Integrity

The concept of honesty need not be explained, neither does this topic require a “statement” but here it goes: Students are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity in this course. The Pennbook contains our Code of Academic Integrity. These standards include the responsible use and citation of sources. In other words, whenever you use somebody else’s idea or writing orally or in writing, you should explicitly give them full credit. Likewise, individual assignments should fully reflect your personal work and ideas. For more information, see:

<https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/code-of-academic-integrity/>



There is more information on canvas.

Canvas is your best friend in this course.

## Weekly Schedule and Readings

### Week 1 Thursday January 18: Introduction

No readings.



**Be in the classroom at 10:15 sharp! Latecomers are distracting.**

### Week 2 Tuesday January 23: Mythology, cosmic battles, and authority

Hesiod, Theogony, “The Birth of Zeus”

Lincoln, “Constructing Authority,” 1-13.

### Thursday January 25: Demons, demonology, and the Devil

Frankfurter, “An Architecture for Chaos,” 13-30.

Reed, Demons, Angels, and Writing in Ancient Judaism, “Introduction,” 1-40.



**The readings are linked to external sources or uploaded on Canvas under “Files”.**

### Week 3 Tuesday January 30: Satan in the Hebrew Bible

Genesis 3; Genesis 6:1-8; Numbers 22:22-35; 1 Chronicles 21:1; Job

Book of Enoch 6-10; Book of Jubilees 10

Forsyth, “The Satan of the Old Testament,” 107-23.

Almond, “The Devil is Born,” 1-30.

### Thursday February 1: Satan in the New Testament

Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 3:1-34; Luke 22:1-6

Kotsko, The Prince of This World, 47-76.

A stylized orange flame icon.

Friday February 2 is the last day to take the “syllabus quiz” on Canvas. This is an online quiz testing your knowledge of the syllabus of this course. You can take it as many times as you want until 6pm on Feb. 2!

**Week 4**      **Tuesday February 6: Apocalypse**

Revelation of John

Forsyth, "Apocalypse and Christian Combat," 248-57.



**Thursday February 8: QUIZ 1**

In class. 30 multiple-choice questions. Bring a pen.

**Week 5**      **Tuesday February 13: Satan in Early Islam**

Qur'an 7:11-27; 14:21-22; 20:115-123; 17:61-65

Gardet and Wensinck, "Iblis," Encyclopedia of Islam (2nd ed.)

**Thursday February 1: Satan in Medieval Islam**

Ahmed, Satanic Verses, 11-40.

**Week 6**      **Tuesday February 20: Dialogue and Deal with the Devil**

Brock, "St. Marina and Satan," 35-57.

Lazar, "Theophilus: Servant of Two Masters," 31-50.

**Thursday February 22: Dante**

Divine Comedy, Inferno, Canto 34.

**Week 7**      **Tuesday February 27: Satan and ethnicity**

Kreyenbroek, "Yazidi," Encyclopedia of Islam (2nd ed.)



**Thursday February 29: QUIZ 2**

March 2-10 Spring Break

**Week 8**      **Tuesday March 12: The Frozen, Brooding, Fallen Satan**

Almond, "The Death of the Devil," 196-219.

Daniel Defoe, The History of the Devil.

**Thursday March 14: Visit to the Penn Museum**



**Week 9**      **Tuesday March 19: The Witch**

Almond, "The Devil and the Witch," 118-140.

**Thursday March 21: Class canceled.**

**Week 10**      **Tuesday March 26: Satan in America**

Poole, "Darkness Invisible: The Devil and American Revivalism," 32-64.

Duane, "Children in the Hands of Satan," 19-57.

**Thursday March 28: Apocalypse now**

Poole, "The Beast: Satan and the Theology of American Empire," 185-212.

**Week 11**      **Tuesday April 2: Satan and the Environment**

Remien, "Satan's Pause," 817-36.

Milton, Paradise Lost.

**Thursday April 4: Satan and animals**

Saramago, Gospel According to Jesus Christ, 182-98.

**Week 12**      **Tuesday April 9: Thinking about gender with Satan**

Behar, "Sexual witchcraft, colonialism, and women's powers," 218-46.

**Have you sent a total of 10 quiz questions? Tomorrow is the deadline!**



**Thursday April 11: QUIZ 3**

**Week 13      Tuesday April 16: Satan and Money**

Taussig, "The Devil and the Cosmogogenesis of Capitalism."

**Thursday April 18: Satanic Panic**

Poole, "Satanic Panics and Culture Wars," 155-184.

Goodwin, "Satan Sellers," 22-40.

**Week 14      Tuesday April 23: Satan and (Religious) Freedom**

Watch before class: Hail Satan? Documentary

"Satanic Temple displays on Capitol Building in Iowa."

**Thursday April 15: Satan in Hollywood**

Listen before class: MonsterTalk podcast, "The Exorcist Effect."

**Week 15      Tuesday April 30: Satan in Pop Culture and Concluding Remarks**

"From Lil Nas X to QAnon."

**This is the last day to add comments to the online discussion boards.**

No final exam. Submit your Satan exhibitions by May 15.