

**Existentialism**  
PHIL XXXX-XX  
Semester, Year:  
Meeting Time:  
Meeting Place:  
Course Web Page: <http://>

## SYLLABUS

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**Instructor:** Joseph W. Ulatowski  
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**Office Hours:** MWF or TR

**Required Texts:** Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, New York: Penguin Classics of Penguin Books USA, 1986. ISBN 0-14-044449-1.  
Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, trans. Walter Kaufmann & R.J. Hollingdale, New York: Penguin Books USA, 1978. ISBN 0-14-044118-2.  
Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Gregory Fried & Richard Polt, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000. ISBN 0-300-08328-9.  
Jean-Paul Sartre, *No Exit and Three Other Plays*, New York: Vintage Books, 1989. ISBN 0-679-72516-4.

**Recommended Texts:** Robert C. Solomon, *From Rationalism to Existentialism*, 2d ed., New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishing Co., 2001. ISBN 0-7425-1241-X.  
William Barrett, *Irrational Man: A Study in Existential Philosophy*, New York: Anchor Books, 1962. ISBN 0-385-03138-6.

**Course Description:** Existentialism's fundamental concern is the expression of a variety of views on the nature and significance of human existence. Existentialism focuses upon radical views of the freedom of human choice and action. In contrast to contemporary analytic philosophy, existentialism stresses the importance of the individual and how the individual must engage existence in a purely subjective manner. Existentialism views human existence not in terms of a spectator sport but in terms of each of us as actors. To act is to live authentically. To react or to live passively is to live in-authentically.

In this course, we shall examine the major themes of existentialism, i.e. authenticity v. in-authenticity, meaninglessness, absurdity, absolute freedom and anguish (to name a few), by reading the philosophical texts and narratives authored by four existential philosophers. We will begin with a discussion of the roots and predecessors of existentialism in the works of Hegel, Kant, and Schopenhauer. Next, we will explore Kierkegaard's existentialism by reading his mature work, *Fear and Trembling*, and emphasize his notion of stage's on life's way. Third, we will read Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. This text is a narrative philosophical text that engages the reader on a very primitive level. In our reading, we will attempt to extract the major philosophical themes, such as, the notion of the Übermensch, eternal recurrence, the death of God, and radical subjectivism. Then, we will tackle Martin Heidegger and his *Introduction to Metaphysics* by exploring such metaphysical questions as "what is there?" and "why is there something rather than nothing?" Finally, we will end the course by reading plays authored by Jean-Paul Sartre's.

Students who complete this course should be able to understand the central tenets of existentialism and how these themes are relevant to the humanities in the context of intellectual history. Students should also gain an appreciation for the role existentialism plays within contemporary culture, and be familiar with the thought of the key figures of existentialism, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Sartre.

This is an upper-division college level course, and the amount of assigned work reflects that fact. The student must keep up with the readings and should make an effort to attend all lectures. If the student does not understand something in the lectures or in the readings, then the student is advised to seek out the instructor's help during office hours or ask questions in class. *Course prerequisites* – a faint interest in the subject and at least an introductory to philosophy course.

**Requirements:** Actually *doing* philosophy requires class discussion, in which students dialogue back and forth with the instructor and with each other. Attendance, therefore, is vital for success in the course. The instructor will regularly call upon students to answer questions or contemplate philosophical problems. There is no attendance policy besides the policy outlined in the student handbook, but the student's grade will be severely affected if s/he does not attend lectures regularly.

Evaluation will be based upon two take-home essay examinations and two research papers (one short and one long). There will be two take-home essay examinations, a Mid-Term and a Final. The Mid-Term exam shall be composed of six questions. The student will choose four questions and shall write no more than one and one-half pages per question for a total of six pages. The student should use normal formatting procedure, i.e. 12-point font, double-spaced and 1-inch margins. The Final exam shall be composed of six questions as well, but the student will be required to answer one question, choose two of three questions in one section, and choose one of two questions in the last section.

In addition to the Mid-Term and Final examinations, the student shall complete two research papers. The first paper should be four to six pages in length. The instructor will assign the topic for this paper. The second paper should be ten to twelve pages in length. For this paper, the student will choose a topic, write a brief synopsis (one paragraph) of the intended topic, prepare a bibliography of texts used, and provide a detailed outline of the paper. The synopsis, bibliography, and outline will be due on DATE, DATE, and DATE, respectively. The instructor will distribute a list of potential topics during the second week of class. If the student has any questions pertaining to the requirements of this class, s/he is recommended to make an appointment with the instructor.

*Failure to complete any of the requirements will severely affect the student's grade for the course.*

**Grading:** There are no averages in this class, so put your calculator away. Grades will be determined according to a linear point scale. The student will earn a higher grade as more points accumulate. The points break down as follows:

Mid-Term: 100 points (12.5% of total grade)  
Short Paper 1: 200 points (25% of total grade)  
Final Examination: 200 points (25% of total grade)  
Long Paper 2: 300 points (37.5% of total grade)

Total points available equal 800 points.

The grading scale is as follows: (NOTE: WILL ADJUST FOR +, - GRADES)

760 points for an A (approximately 95%)  
680 points for a B (approximately 85%)  
600 points for a C (approximately 75%)  
520 points for a D (approximately 65%)

Failure to attain 480 points will result in an F for the course.

**Policies:** *Cheating.* Cheating on exams and papers will not be tolerated. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, copying from someone else's paper, or quoting or paraphrasing an author without crediting the source, i.e. plagiarism. If the student is caught cheating, then s/he will receive a zero on the work and will be subject to disciplinary action as stipulated in the university/college student handbook.

*Notice.* The student is so advised. All material contained herein, including the course design, content, all lectures, correspondence, Internet content, and written material, are the intellectual property of the instructor. Unauthorized use is prohibited without the express consent of the instructor. Also, the instructor reserves the right to change, revise, or alter the syllabus at any time, at his sole discretion, for any reason, without further notification to the student.

**Schedule & Assignments:** The table below outlines the approximate dates on which each topic will be discussed. Some topics will require additional class discussion time, while other topics may require less class discussion time. This only emphasizes the importance of attending class regularly and reading at the same pace or a little bit ahead.

COURSE SCHEDULE WILL ADJUST TO DAYS OF THE WEEK THAT THE CLASS MEETS

Topic	Assignment
Week 1: Introduction to the Course, "What is Existentialism?" and Predecessors of Existential Philosophy, including Schopenhauer, Kant, and Hegel	Handouts:
Week 2: Kierkegaardian Existentialism: Introduction to Theistic Existential Philosophy and <i>Fear and Trembling</i> (FT)	Handouts, (FT) Translator's Introduction p. 7-37, Preface p. 41-43, (FT) Attunement p. 44-48, (FT) Speech in Praise of Abraham p. 49-56.
Week 3: Kierkegaardian Existentialism: Stage's on Life's Way and the Problemata	(FT) Preface from the Heart p. 57-82, Problema I p. 83-95, Problema II p. 96-108. LONG TERM PAPER SYNOPSIS DUE
Week 4: Kierkegaardian Existentialism: A Review of his Existential Philosophy	(FT) Problema III p. 109-144, (FT) Epilogue p. 145-147; Handouts, if there is time SHORT TERM PAPER TOPICS DISTRIBUTED
Week 5: Nietzschean Existentialism: Introduction to F. Nietzsche, Zarathustra, and Atheistic Existentialism	Handouts, <i>Thus Spake Zarathustra</i> (TZ) Zarathustra's Prologue p. 39-53.
Week 6: Zarathustra I, Übermensch, man, and the death (untimely demise) of God	(TZ) Part I Discourses, p. 54-104.
Week 7: Zarathustra II	(TZ) Part II p. 107-169
Week 8: Zarathustra III	(TZ) Part III p. 173-247 SHORT TERM PAPERS COLLECTED
Week 9: Zarathustra IV	(TZ) Part IV p. 251-336
Week 10: Review of Nietzschean Existentialism and Introduction to Heideggerian Existential Philosophy	Handouts BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE
Week 11: Heideggerian Existential Philosophy and the Primacy of Being (w/ a big b) v. being (w/ a little b) and <i>Introduction to Metaphysics</i> (M)	(M) Translator's Introduction p. vii, Outline of (M) p. xx, (M) Prefatory Note p. xxix, (M) Chapter 1: The Fundamental Question of Metaphysics p. 1-55. MID-TERM DISTRIBUTED
Week 12: Heideggerian Existential Philosophy on the Grammar of "B" - eing	(M) Chapter 2: On the Grammar and Etymology of the Word "Being" p. 55-79. MID-TERM COLLECTED
Week 13: Heideggerian Existential Philosophy and the Question of the essence of Being	(M) Chapter 3: The Question of the Essence of Being p. 79-98, Chapter 4 The Restriction of Being p. 98-100, Chapter 4.1 Being and Becoming p. 100-103, and Chapter 4.2 Being and Seeming p. 103-122. DETAILED OUTLINE DUE
Week 14: A Review of Heideggerian Existential Philosophy and an Introduction to Sartrean Existentialism	(M) Chapter 4.3 Being and Thinking p. 122-210, Chapter 4.3 Being and the Ought p. 210-223. Sartre's Dirty Hands p. 125 FINAL EXAM DISTRIBUTED
Week 15: Sartrean Existentialism	Sartre's The Flies p. 47 Sartre's No Exit p. 1 FINAL EXAM COLLECTED

The Final Research Paper (Long Paper) will be due DATE by 5:00pm XXT during the final examination period.