

Dr. Thomas Auxter
PHP 3786 Existentialism
MWF 11:45-12:35pm
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Office hours: Th 2:00-3:00pm (online)
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Existentialism
Spring 2022
3 credits

In this course we will examine the philosophical themes and concepts of existentialism in context -- including historical, geographical, cultural, religious, social, and political contexts. The goal is to evaluate contributions to philosophical debates about reality, knowledge, personal identity, sensibilities, consciousness, values, and commitment. We will read both classical and contemporary texts.

Topics:

- **What is existentialism?**
- **Who are the first existentialists?**
- **What are the historical conditions that give rise to existentialism as a movement or school of thought?**
- **Who are the major existentialist thinkers receiving the attention of the literary world? Of the philosophical world?**
- **What are the main themes and approaches?**
- **How do existentialist ideas change traditional conceptions of the relationship between reason and faith?**
- **How are existentialist themes developed in European texts? In African and Latin American texts?**
- **How are existentialist values related to traditional Western values?**
- **What are the traditional Western roles for women? How do existentialists challenge this? How are gender differences regarded in each type of view?**
- **How are people who were previously colonized regarded in the traditional Western approach? How do existentialists connect issues about oppression with issues about freedom?**
- **How does existentialism change as it moves across national boundaries?**
- **How does existentialism change with time?**

Requirements:

There will be a midterm essay exam (due March 2) and an essay written in a final examination (due April 23). Each of the essays will count as one third of the grade. Essay questions will be given to students at least 10 days in advance of the due date. Students are expected to attend class.

Required Texts:

Walter Kaufmann, ed., *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*

Albert Camus, *Resistance, Rebellion, and Death*

Jorge Luis Borges, *A Personal Anthology*

Paget Henry, "Rastafarianism and the Reality of Dread," *Existence in Black*," edited by Lewis R. Gordan. (recommended, not required)

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Details about grading policies and scale, as well as course policy, can be found at the end of this syllabus. Students are also invited to visit the Canvas site to familiarize themselves with details concerning grading and course policies. Grades and comments on graded work will be available only on the Canvas site.

For communication on most issues, contact instructor at tauxter@ufl.edu.

Communication requiring confidentiality is restricted to Canvas.

Readings

January

11 Introduction

13 Plato, *Apology of Socrates* (online: Harvard University, Center for Hellenic Studies)

15 " " "

18 Kaufmann Walter, ed., *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*

Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, pp. 52-62

20 Kierkegaard (in *Existentialism*), pp. 83-94

22 " pp. 95-105

25 " pp. 105-114

27 " pp. 114-120

Paget Henry, "Rastafarianism and the Reality of Dread," pp 157-164 in *Existence in Black: An Anthology of Black Existential Philosophy*, edited by Lewis R. Gordon (a Library e-book on reserve)

29 Nietzsche, "Live Dangerously" (in *Existentialism*), pp. 121-133

February

1 Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, pp. 31-32, 39-44

3 " " " pp. 41-49

5 " " " pp. 52-57

8 " " " pp. 58-65

10 " " " pp. 66-77

12 " " " pp. 82-84, 96- 99,

- 15 “ “ “ pp. 103-122
 17 Ortega, “Man Has No Nature,” pp. 152-157 (in *Existentialism*)
 19 Sartre, “Portrait of an Anti-Semite,” pp. 329-336
 22 pp. 337-345
 24 Sartre, “Existentialism is a Humanism,” pp.345-348 (in *Existentialism*)
 26 “ “ “ pp 348-359
 28 “ “ “ pp 359-369

March

- 2 Midterm examination (due at 11:59pm)
 4 Simone de Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (online)

Spring Break: March 5-13

- 8 Simone de Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (online)
 10 “ “ “ “
 12 Albert Camus, “The Myth of Sisyphus,” in *Existentialism*. pp. 375-378
 15 Albert Camus, *Resistance, Rebellion, and Death*, “Preface to Algerian Reports,” pp 111-125
 “ “ “ “Letter to an Algerian Militant” pp 126-130
 “ “ “ “Appeal for a Civilian Truce” pp 131-142
 17 Albert Camus, *Resistance, Rebellion, and Death*, “The Wager of our Generation,” pp. 237-248
 19 “ “ “ “Create Dangerously,” pp. 249-260
 22 pp. 261-272
 24 Recharge Day – no class
 26 Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, “On Violence,” pp 1-20 (a Library e-book on reserve)
 29 “ “ “ “ “ pp 21-32
 31 “ “ “ “ “ pp 32-42

April

- 2 “ “ “ “ “ pp 43-52
 5 Steve Biko, “Black Consciousness and the Quest for a True Humanity” (online)
 7 “ “ “ “ “
 9 Jorge Luis Borges, *A Personal Anthology*, pp 35-43
 12 pp. 44-64
 14 pp. 65-67, 75-76, 80-82
 16 pp. 115-127
 19 pp 194-195, 200-201, 203
 21 Conclusion
 23 Final examination due at 11:59pm

Note: The University asks faculty to post information about grading. Information about requirements for graded work and the criteria for evaluating graded work in this course follow. For information about the University grading scale, see below. – T.A.

Graded work and grading schema:

There will be a midterm essay test due March 5 at 11:59pm and two essays written in a final examination due on April 30 at 11:59pm. The essays are take-home exams, with choices of questions given to students at least ten days before essays are due. Each essay will count as one third of the grade.

CRITERIA FOR GRADING ESSAYS

CRITERIA FOR GRADING ESSAYS ARE AS FOLLOWS: CONSISTENCY, COHERENCE, COMPREHENSIVENESS IN RELATION TO SUBJECT MATTER AND UNIVERSE OF DISCOURSE, PLAUSIBILITY OF EXAMPLES AND COUNTER-EXAMPLES, AND ANTICIPATION OF OBVIOUS OBJECTIONS. AT LEAST TWO CLASS SESSIONS (ONE BEFORE THE MIDTERM AND ONE BEFORE FINAL EXAMS) WILL BE DEVOTED TO QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE MEANING OF THE CRITERIA AND WHAT COUNTS AS MEETING THE CRITERIA.

The following grade scale will be used to assign final letter grades for the course. See UF grading policies for assigning grade points at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>.

Grade Scale	Grade Value
100-93=A	A=4.0
92-90=A-	A-=3.67
89-86=B+	B+=3.33
85-82=B	B=3.00
81-79=B-	B-=2.67
78-75=C+	C+=2.33
75-72=C	C=2.00
71-69=C-	C-=1.67
68-66=D+	D+=1.33
65-62=D	D=1.00
61-60=D-	D-=0.67
59-0=E	E=0.00

STUDENTS CAN EXPECT MOST ESSAYS TO BE RETURNED IN SEVEN DAYS.

Course Policy:

- 1. Class attendance is required.**
- 2. Students will have an opportunity to raise questions at the beginning and end of each class.**
- 3. It is also permitted to ask questions during a lecture by raising a hand. This can be a request for clarification. It can also be to challenge a point that has been made.**
- 4. To communicate by email on most issues, contact tauxter@ufl.edu. To communicate regarding confidential issues, use Canvas.**
- 5. Policies on Academic Honesty, Assigned Work, Students with Disabilities, and Online Course Evaluation Follow:**

ACADEMIC HONESTY. UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge, which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class. Plagiarism on any assignment will automatically result in a grade of "E" for the course. Plagiarism is defined in the University of Florida's Student Honor Code as follows: "A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to): a. Quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution. b. Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student." Students found guilty of academic misconduct will be prosecuted in accordance with the procedures specified in the UF honesty policy.

ASSIGNED WORK REFLECTS THE CARNEGIE I STANDARD OF AT LEAST AT LEAST TWO HOURS OF WORK OUTSIDE OF CLASS FOR EACH CONTACT HOUR.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drp/>). The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

ONLINE COURSE EVALUATION. Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester. Students will be notified about specific times when they are open.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

(1) CONTENT: STUDENTS DEMONSTRATE COMPETENCE IN THE TERMINOLOGY,

(2) COMMUNICATION: STUDENTS COMMUNICATE KNOWLEDGE, IDEAS AND REASONING CLEARLY AND EFFECTIVELY IN WRITTEN AND ORAL FORMS APPROPRIATE TO THE DISCIPLINE. CONCEPTS, THEORIES AND METHODOLOGIES USED WITHIN THE DISCIPLINE.

(3) CRITICAL THINKING: STUDENTS ANALYZE INFORMATION CAREFULLY AND LOGICALLY FROM MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES, USING DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC METHODS, AND DEVELOP REASONED SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS.