

PHI 247 — Spring 2020
Existentialism

Tuesdays & Thursdays 11:30 a.m.–12:50 p.m.
N4006 Melville Library

Professor Robert Harvey
office hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 1-2 p.m. or by appt
241 Harriman Hall
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While the themes mentioned in the Bulletin description – alienation, anxiety, nihilism, absurdity, the self, value, death, and immediacy – will necessarily color and shade our exploration this semester, our focus will be on reading, discussing, analyzing, and interpreting a selection of the salient texts that make up the philosophical (and literary) tendency that bears the name of *existentialism*, from its origins in the 19th century through its mid-20th-century heyday, in order to situate it in the *history of ideas*. Readings from Kierkegaard, Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, Camus, Sartre, and Beauvoir. Plus a film by Hiroshi Teshigahara.

Required Readings

N.B. The first four texts must be purchased in the edition indicated by the ISBN number. PDFs will be provided for the remaining texts.

Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling* [1843]. London: Penguin Classics, 1986. ISBN 9780140444490

Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground* [1864]. New York: Vintage, 1994. ISBN 9780679734529

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* [1886]. London: Penguin Classics, 2003. ISBN 9780140449235

Albert Camus, *The Stranger* [1942]. New York: Vintage, 1989. ISBN 9780679720201
——, *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942).

Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness* (excerpts) (1943).

——, *Existentialism is a Humanism* (1946).

Simone de Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (excerpts) (1948).

——, *The Second Sex* (excerpts) (1949).

Woman in the Dunes, dir. Hiroshi Teshigahara (1964).

Course Requirements / Grade Determination

10% engaged reading, informed participation in class discussions. Attending class supposes preparation and a commitment to being attentive to the thoughts and words of others as well as one's own participation.

30% weekly reader's responses due at midnight most Sundays in the semester

30% midterm examination, including a short essay

30% final examination, including a short essay

No late work accepted.¹ No extra credit.

Please, please ...

... arrive promptly to class

... switch off and stow your cell phones

Official University Statements²

Responsibilities in the Classroom

Students are expected to attend class regularly unless other arrangements are made; arrive for class on time and leave the classroom only at the end of class; engage in class discussions and activities when appropriate; exhibit classroom behavior that is not disruptive of the learning environment; secure and turn off all electronic communications and entertainment devices during class time unless otherwise directed by the course instructor. Any use of a cell phone or other unauthorized electronic device during an examination may lead to an accusation of academic dishonesty.

Absentee Policy

Students are expected to report for their examinations and major graded coursework as scheduled. If a student is unable to report for any examination or to complete major graded coursework on time, the student must contact the faculty member immediately. If the student cannot reach the faculty member, then s/he should contact the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

Academic Integrity

Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person's work as your own is always wrong. Faculty are required to report any suspected instances of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty, please refer to the academic judiciary website at <http://www.stonybrook.edu/uaa/academicjudiciary/>

Disability Support Services (DSS)

If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Disability Support Services, ECC (Educational Communications Center) Building, Room 128 (631-632-6748). They will determine with you what accommodations, if any, are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation are confidential.

Semester Program

Tuesday, 28 January – Introductions & Preliminaries

¹ This is standard in colleges and universities. Coursework will be assigned with ample advance notice, with ample time for it to be accomplished. In cases where someone has an infectious or incapacitating illness or other emergency provisions will, of course, be made.

² For further information, see

https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/provost/faculty/handbook/academic_policies/minimal_instructional_and_student_responsibilities.php

Thursday, 30 January – Kierkegaard, *Fear & Trembling*

Tuesday, 4 February – Kierkegaard, *Fear & Trembling*

Thursday, 6 February – Kierkegaard, *Fear & Trembling*

Tuesday, 11 February – Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*

Thursday, 13 February – Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*

Tuesday, 18 February – Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*

Thursday, 20 February – Nietzsche, *Beyond Good & Evil*

Tuesday, 25 February – Nietzsche, *Beyond Good & Evil*

Thursday, 27 February – Nietzsche, *Beyond Good & Evil*

Tuesday, 3 March – Camus, *The Stranger*

Thursday, 5 March – Camus, *The Stranger*

Tuesday, 10 March – Camus, *The Stranger*

Thursday, 12 March – Camus, “The Myth of Sisyphus”

Tuesday, 24 March – **Midterm**

Thursday, 26 March – Sartre, *Being & Nothingness*

Tuesday, 31 March – Sartre, *Being & Nothingness*

Thursday, 2 April – Sartre, *Existentialism is a Humanism*

Tuesday, 7 April – Sartre, *Existentialism is a Humanism*

Thursday, 9 April – Sartre, *Existentialism is a Humanism*

Tuesday, 14 April – Beauvoir, *Ethics of Ambiguity*

Thursday, 16 April – Beauvoir, *Ethics of Ambiguity*

Tuesday, 21 April – Beauvoir, *Ethics of Ambiguity*

Thursday, 23 April – Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*

Tuesday, 28 April – Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*

Thursday, 30 April – film & existentialism ... existentialism on film

Tuesday, 5 May – *Woman in the Dunes*

Thursday, 7 May – Conclusions & Send-Off

Final Exam – Tuesday, 19 May, 11:15 a.m.–1:45 p.m.