

Philosophy 3030: Existentialism
MWF 2:30pm
Peabody 220

Dr. Farnham
MW 3:30-4:30
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The Course – Philosophers classified as existentialist typically address the peculiar aspects of our first-personal, self-conscious existence. What is it like to be a human? Are there characteristic human concerns? Is there a meaning to life, or are we saddled with the project of inventing one for ourselves? What does it mean for us to be free? Where does reason fit into all this? We will look at some of the most important existentialist thinkers and their approaches to these and related questions. The main aim of this course is for you to use these thinkers as springboards for your own thoughts about these questions, and to develop your own view of human existence.

Reading – For the most part, these are notoriously difficult texts. Some of this comes from the peculiar phenomena the authors address, and some of this is a function of the author's intentions in writing. Much of our in-class discussion will involve sorting out and clarifying what is going on in the text. We will go fairly slow. Come to class prepared with questions or comments about the reading. Try to both understand what the author is getting at and think about whether it is plausible.

Texts –

Guignon and Pereboom: *Existentialism: Basic Writings* (Hackett, 1995)
Other stuff on WebCT
Gide, *The Immoralist*

Requirements –

Participation (20%): You are responsible for the content of both the readings and the in-class discussions. There will be a variety of assignments that count toward your participation grade, including in-class writing, homework, paper comments, and attendance.

Exams (20% each): Two exams with short-answer and essay questions.

Papers (20% each): Two 5 page peer-reviewed papers. Students will give their papers to two other students for comments, and revise them in light of these.

Policies: Late work and make-ups: Late papers will be penalized one-third of a grade for each day the paper is late. I will not give a make-up exam, quiz, or in-class assignment without either an excuse I have approved in advance or concrete evidence of an emergency which kept you from attending.

Grade complaints: I will discuss your grade in the course at any time. If you want a grade changed, you must provide me with a detailed written argument justifying the change, along with the work for me to review.

Academic honesty: **All academic work must meet the standards contained in “A Culture of Honesty.” All students are responsible to inform themselves about those standards before performing any academic work** (see http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/honesty/culture_honesty.htm). Talk to me if you have any questions or concerns. Be especially aware of plagiarism, which consists in passing off someone else's ideas or words as your own, with or without that person's consent. I will push for the strongest available punishment if you are found guilty of such an offense.

Important Dates

First Exam:	February 20
First Paper Due:	March 6
Second Paper Due:	April 24
Final Exam:	May 1, 3:30pm

Course Outline

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

1. Introduction
2. Aquinas: "God Has Made a Home for Us, Instructions Included" *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Book III, Chs. 1, 2, 3, 17, 18, 25 (WebCT)
3. Hegel and Marx: "We Have a Role to Play in the Self-realization of Spirit/Growth of the Forces of Production" Cohen, "Images of History..." (WebCT)
4. Kierkegaard
 - a. "Not So Fast." Selections (WebCT)
 - b. Reflections on Abraham p. 21-47
 - c. Is there a Teleological Suspension of the Ethical? p. 47-69
 - d. Despair p. 70-76
 - e. Truth is Subjectivity p.77-84
5. Bergman, "The Seventh Seal" (Movie)
6. Dostoyevsky, "Notes from Underground": Attacking Reason
7. Nietzsche: The Glories of Self-Creation
 - a. The Gay Science p. 111-164
 - b. Against Philosophers, p. 164-173, Selections from the *Genealogy* (WebCT)
8. Gide, *The Immoralist*
9. Heidegger: Understanding Human Being (Dasein)
 - a. The Question of Being p. 203-211
 - b. Dasein p. 211-238
 - c. Dasein and Temporality p. 238-246
10. Nolan, "Memento" (Movie)
11. Sartre: "We are Condemned to be Free"
 - a. Existentialism is a Humanism p. 268-286
 - b. Negation p. 287-295
 - c. Nothingness p. 296-306
 - d. Bad Faith p. 306-326
 - e. Others p. 326-330
 - f. Ethics p. 330-340
12. TBA