

PHIL 2---: Existential Philosophy

Class Time: TBD

Class Location: TBD

Instructor: Chris Rahlwes

Email: TBD

How to reach me: *Please drop by my open office hours (TBD) or email me to make an appointment (either in-person or online). Always include PHIL 2--- in the subject of your email for a quicker response. I will respond within 48 hours Monday-Friday.*



Course Description:

This course is an introductory course to Existentialism. This course highlights our search for meaning in a world that has freedom and angst, joy and suffering, affirmation and despair, and is always on the verge of utter meaninglessness. This search is the human condition, and we will approach it through Atheism, Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, and Zen Buddhism as well as Decolonial philosophy. In addressing the search of meaning, we will discuss our obligations to ourselves and to others and why we embrace the values that we embrace. In short, this course is meant to provide the necessary vocabulary and framework to understand our search for meaning in the contemporary world.

Course Goals

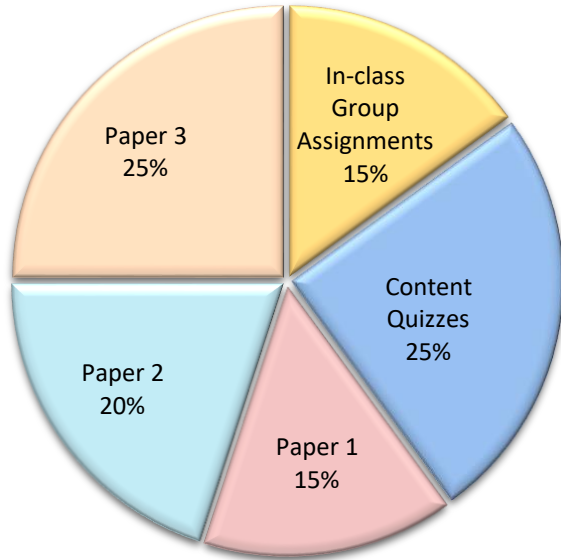
By the successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Communicate (orally and in writing) the ideas and arguments presented in the readings as well as your own.
 2. Evaluate and distinguish different approaches to Existentialist philosophy.
 3. Summarize the issue of nihilism and our attempt at finding meaning in an unkind world.
 4. Describe how authenticity relates to both intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships.
 5. Develop an account of how Existentialism connects with our contemporary world.
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Means of Evaluation

- **In-Class Group Assignments (15%).** These are weekly in-class group assignments that require both a discussion element as well as a writing element. These cannot be made up under normal circumstances, but you can miss up to four in-class group assignments without it affecting your grade. Some circumstances may go outside the scope of “normal”; as such, you may make up missing group assignment through a one-on-one discussion with me (either in-person or online) with an included writing element.
- **Content Quizzes (25%).** You will have seven take home quizzes biweekly throughout the semester. Extensions to the quizzes will be granted per email request, but all quizzes must be submitted before we discuss them in class. After discussing the quiz in class, you are allowed to correct your quiz for half credit. To receive this half credit, you will need to not only list the correct answers but to also explain why the answers are correct. The half credit is determined by your explanation. It should be noted that the lowest quiz grade will be dropped.
- **Paper 1 (15%) 750–1000 Words.** This paper focuses on your ability to clearly and precisely explain one of our author’s philosophical positions. Your grade is determined by your accuracy in demonstrating you understand the author’s position as well as how convincing your explanation is.
- **Paper 2 (20%) 750–1000 Words.** This paper has the same focus as Paper 1, but one must also relate the author’s position to the contemporary world. Your grade is determined by your accuracy in demonstrating you understand the author’s position, convincing your explanation is, and how well you apply to author’s position to the contemporary world.
- **Paper 3 (25%) 2000–3000 Words.** This paper should be a revision of Paper 1 or Paper 2, in which you further develop your explanation, ideas, and/or argument. This paper is the culmination of the course and will be graded along the lines of Paper 1 and Paper 2 both with stricter criteria.

Grade Weight per Course Component



Letter Grade Cutoffs:

Grade	Percentage
A	93%
A-	90%
B+	87%
B	83%
B-	80%
C+	77%
C	73%
C-	70%
D+	67%
D	63%
D-	60%
F	Below 60%

Note: These are cut-off points: *decimals will not be rounded up.* Temporary grades: N (no basis for grade), I (incomplete grade), X (final assessment absence)

Required Materials:

- All course readings will be available online. (When possible, I will include the readings as an audiobook as well.)
- You will need to bring material to write, take notes, and access the internet during class.
- You will need a word processor (such as [Google Docs](#) or [Microsoft Word](#)), a pdf reader (such as [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#)), and a web browser.

Tentative Schedule (Subject to Change)

	Date	Topic/Readings	Assignments
Module 1: European Atheistic Existentialism			
Week 1		Introduction to the Course Nietzsche <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Beyond Good and Evil</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part Four • Part Seven • <i>The Gay Science</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book Three (esp. 108 & 125) • Book Four (esp. 341) 	Week 1 In-class Group Assignment
Week 2		Finish Nietzsche Sartre <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Being and Nothingness</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part One <u>Recommended Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Being and Nothingness</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part Two • Part Three 	Week 2 In-class Group Assignment
Week 3		Sartre <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Being and Nothingness</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part Four <u>Recommended Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Being and Nothingness</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conclusion 	Quiz 1 Due Week 3 In-class Group Assignment
Week 4		Beauvoir <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Ethics of Ambiguity</i> (esp. § 1 & 2) <u>Recommended Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Second Sex</i>, Introduction 	Week 4 In-class Group Assignment

Week 5		Camus <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Myth of Sisyphus</i> 	Quiz 2 Due Week 5 In-class Group Assignment
Module 2: European Theistic Existentialism			
Week 6		Kierkegaard <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fear and Trembling</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problemata and Problem I 	Week 6 In-class Group Assignment
Week 7		Kierkegaard <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fear and Trembling</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem II and Problem III 	Quiz 3 Due Week 7 In-class Group Assignment
Week 8		Weil <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Decreation” • “Love of God and Affliction” 	Paper 1 Due Week 8 In-class Group Assignment
Week 9		Buber <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I and Thou</i> 	Quiz 4 Due Week 9 In-class Group Assignment
Module 3: Global Existentialism			
Week 10		Fanon <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Black Skin, White Masks</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Fact of Blackness” • <i>The Wretched of the Earth</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Colonial Wars & Mental Disorders” 	Week 10 In-class Group Assignment

Week 11		Sri Aurobindo <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Future Evolution of Man</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch 2–4 • Ch 7–9 	Quiz 5 Due Week 11 In-class Group Assignment
Week 12		Nishitani <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Religion and Nothingness</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch 1 & 2 	Paper 2 Due Week 12 In-class Group Assignment
Week 13		Nishitani <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Religion and Nothingness</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch 3 & 4 	Week 13 In-class Group Assignment
Finals Week			Quiz 6 Due Paper 3 Due

Resources Available to All Students: **TBD**

College is a challenging time in your life.

Here is a list of resources that can help you navigate your experience as a student at TBD. It is important to remember that you are not alone, and these resources are there for you when you need help to achieve your academic goals.