UBC’s Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xwməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam) people. The land it is situated on has always been a place of learning for the Musqueam people, who for millennia have passed on in their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Title, Time, and Location</th>
<th>Course Code Number</th>
<th>Credit Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Existentialism Tues and Thurs 13:00-16:00, BUCH A104</td>
<td>PHIL 385 001</td>
<td>3 credits</td>
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<tr>
<th>Course Instructor</th>
<th>Contact Details</th>
<th>Office Location</th>
<th>Office Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Willow Verkerk</td>
<td><a href="mailto:wverkerk@mail.ubc.ca">wverkerk@mail.ubc.ca</a></td>
<td>BUCH E172</td>
<td>By appointment</td>
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OTHER INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF

Alexandra Jewell: adjewell@mail.ubc.ca
Ceren Yildiz: ceren.yildiz@ubc.ca

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the tradition of Existentialism by looking to both its foundations and its innovations. Although Heidegger is often assumed to be the father of Existentialism, its legacy can be traced back further to Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, and to Hegel before them. Perhaps most well-known through Sartre’s statement that “existence precedes essence,” the existentialist movement flourished during the twentieth century in France with thinkers such as Sartre, Camus, Beauvoir, and Fanon. It continues to have relevance today, structuring our every-day discourses about identity, the meaning of life, and interpersonal relationships. By engaging with the French and German traditions, from Hegel through to Fanon, this course provides a comprehensive introduction to the philosophy of human existence. This is a lecture style course with class discussion. It has no prerequisites.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Students are expected to read the materials before class and come prepared to take part in class and small group discussion.

The textbook is available through the bookstore:

The schedule includes all the readings. Those not found in the textbook will be available through the Library Online Course Reserves (LOCR), through an online link provided, or under Modules (M) on the Canvas course page.

ASSESSMENTS OF LEARNING

Take Home Exam (1500 words) 30% due July 28.
Final Essay (3000 words) 60% due August 18. Participation 10% (class attendance and participation in class and small group discussion). Assignments are submitted on Canvas.

SCHEDULE: TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS 13:00-16:00

Tuesday July 7: Introduction: What is the Meaning of Existentialism?
Existentialism according to Jean-Paul Sartre

Thursday July 9: The Roots of Existentialism: Hegel and Nietzsche

Tuesday July 14: The Singularity of Existence: Soren Kierkegaard
Kierkegaard, “Problema I” and “Problema II,” in Fear and Trembling (BW, pages 3-39).

Thursday July 16: Becoming Human: Friedrich Nietzsche

Tuesday July 21: The Paradox of Freedom: Fyodor Dostoevsky

Questions for Take Home Exam distributed July 21

Thursday July 23: The Question of Being: Martin Heidegger

* Take Home Exam Due July 28 *

Tuesday July 28: Embodiment and Intersubjectivity: Maurice Merleau-Ponty
I. “The Spatiality of One’s Own Body and Motility,” in Phenomenology of Perception, trans. Colin Smith, London; New York: Routledge, 1958, pages 112-222 (last sentence ends: “quite simply he is his body and his body is the potentiality of a certain world.”) (LOCR)

Thursday July 30: Being and Nothingness: Jean-Paul Sartre
Sartre Selections from “Self-Negation” and “The Encounter with the Other,” in Being and Nothingness (BW, pages 369-409).

Essay Questions and Essay Writing Guidelines distributed July 30

Tuesday August 4: Existence and Sexual Difference: Simone de Beauvoir
I. “Ambiguity and Freedom” in The Ethics of Ambiguity
https://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/ethics/de-beauvoir/ambiguity/ch01.htm
II. “Introduction” and “Conclusion,” in The Second Sex
http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/ethics/de-beauvoir/2nd-sex/index.htm

Thursday August 6: The Phallocentric Status of Sex: Luce Irigaray

Tuesday August 11: Being Human First: Franz Fanon’s Critique of Racialized Identity

Thursday August 13: Living with the Absurd: Albert Camus

*Final Essay due Tuesday August 18*

LEARNING OUTCOMES
During the course, students will learn the key concepts of these existentialist philosophers. They will learn how to talk and think critically about the arguments and ideas. The take home exam provides an opportunity to demonstrate understanding of the concepts studied to date. The final paper is an exercise in critical thinking to explore and deepen understanding of one or more of the thinkers studied during the course. By the end of the semester, students will be familiar with the tradition of Existentialism and its central themes.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND SUPPORT
UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest
academic standards in all of their actions. Details of the policies and how to access support are available on the UBC Senate website.

AMS Speakeasy is a free, confidential, one-on-one drop-in peer support resource on campus for UBC students and staff facing a wide variety of challenges - located in Room 3125 of the Nest. Please see the AMS Speakeasy website for more information: https://www.ams.ubc.ca/student-services/speakeasy/

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Audio recordings of the class are allowed (video recordings and photographs are not permitted).