

UBC's Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xwməθkwəyəm (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.

Course Title, Time and Location	Course Code Number	Credit Value
Existentialism Tues and Thurs 12:30-14:00 Web Oriented Course	PHIL 385 001	3 credits

Course Instructor	Contact Details	Office Location	Office Hours
Dr. Willow Verkerk	willow.verkerk@ubc.ca	Online	By appointment

OTHER INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF

TBA

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. 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, Merleau-Ponty, Camus, Beauvoir, and Fanon. It continues to have great 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 Irigaray, 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. Online lectures on Collaborate Ultra are scheduled on Tues/Thur from 12:30-13:30. The remaining 30 mins from 13:30-14:00 will include asynchronous activities.

The textbook can be found in the bookstore:

Gordon Marino, *Basic Writings of Existentialism*, New York: Modern Library, 2004, hereafter BW (\$20).

The schedule includes other readings to be found on LOCR or online.

ASSESSMENTS OF LEARNING

Take Home Exam (1500 words) 30% due October 22

Final Essay (3000 words) 60% due December 5

Participation 10% (attendance and participation in class and small group discussion).

Assignments are submitted on Canvas.

SCHEDULE: TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS 12:30-14:00

September 10: Introduction: What is the Meaning of Existentialism?

September 15-17: Existentialism according to Sartre

Selection from *Existentialism and Human Emotions* (BW, pages 337-367)

September 22-24: The Roots of Existentialism: Hegel and Nietzsche

I. G.W.F. Hegel <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/hegel/phindex.htm>

("Lordship and Bondage," Paragraphs 178-196 in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*)

II. Friedrich Nietzsche, "The Madman," s. 125 in *The Gay Science* (LOCR)

September 29-October 1: The Singularity of Existence: Soren Kierkegaard

"Problema I" and "Problema II," in *Fear and Trembling* (BW, pages 3-39)

October 6-8: Becoming Human: Friedrich Nietzsche

Second Essay in *On the Genealogy of Morals* (BW, pages 107-109; 145-187)

October 13-15: The Paradox of Freedom: Fyodor Dostoevsky

"Part I: Underground," in *Notes from the Underground* (BW, pages 189-230)

Questions for Take Home Exam distributed October 15

* *Take Home Exam Due October 22* *

October 20-22: The Question of Being: Martin Heidegger

"The Possible Being-A-Whole of Dasein and Being-Toward-Death" (sections 46-53) in *Being and Time* (BW, pages 295-336)

October 27-29: Embodiment and Intersubjectivity: Maurice Merleau-Ponty

I. "The Spatiality of One's Own Body and Motility," pages 112-122 in *Phenomenology of Perception* (last sentence ends: "quite simply he is his body and his body is the potentiality of a certain world.") (LOCR)

II. "Other Selves and the Human World," pages 403-425 in PP (LOCR)

November 3-5: Being and Nothingness: Jean-Paul Sartre

Selections from "Self-Negation" and "The Encounter with the Other" (BW, pages 369-409)

Essay Questions and Essay Writing Guidelines distributed November 5

November 10-12: Existence and Sexual Difference: Simone de Beauvoir

I. "Amiguity and Freedom" in *The Ethics of Ambiguity*

<https://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/ethics/de-beauvoir/ambiguity/ch01.htm>

II. <http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/ethics/de-beauvoir/2nd-sex/index.htm>

("Introduction" and "Conclusion," in *The Second Sex*)

November 17-19: The Phallogentric Status of Sex: Luce Irigaray

Irigaray, "The Sex Which is Not One," in *The Sex Which is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter, New York: Cornell Uni Press, pages 23-33 (LOCR).

November 24-26: Being Human First: Franz Fanon's Critique of Racialized Identity

Fanon, "Introduction" and Chapter 1; Chapter 5; "The Black Man and Hegel" and "Conclusion" in *Black Skin White Masks*, trans. Richard Philcox, New York: Grove Press, 2008, pages xi-23; 89-119; 191-206 (LOCR).

December 1-3: Living with the Absurd: Albert Camus

"An Absurd Reasoning," in *The Myth of Sisyphus* (BW, pages 437-492)

December Final Essay due December 5

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](#).

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course by the copyright owner. Redistribution of these materials by any means without permission of the copyright holder(s) constitutes a breach of copyright and may lead to academic discipline.

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