UBC’s Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xwmaθkwəy̓am (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

<table>
<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 1-4 pm, BUCH A 203</td>
<td>PHIL 385A 001</td>
<td>3 credits</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Course Instructor and Contact Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Instructor</th>
<th>Contact Details</th>
<th>Office Location</th>
<th>Office Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Willow Verkerk</td>
<td><a href="mailto:willow.verkerk@ubc.ca">willow.verkerk@ubc.ca</a></td>
<td>BUCH E 158</td>
<td>4-5 pm, Tuesday and Thursday, in person or online by appointment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### OTHER INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF

TBA

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

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 Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, and Frantz Fanon. While Heidegger is often assumed to be the father of Existentialism, its legacy can be traced back further to Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. By looking at its foundations and innovations, this course examines the relevance of Existentialism today. We reflect on how existentialist ideas contribute to discourses on identity, the meaning of life, alienation, and interpersonal relationships. By engaging with European philosophy and literature, 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 schedule includes all the readings. Those not found it the textbook will be available through the Library Online Course Reserves (LOCR), through an online link provided, or under Modules on the Canvas course page.

### ASSESSMENTS OF LEARNING

1 University of British Columbia
Existentialism PHIL 385

Take Home 1 (750 words) 20% posted July 13; Due July 18
Take Home 2 (750 words) 20% posted July 20; Due July 25
Final Essay (3000 words) 50% posted July 25; Due August 15

Participation 10%. There are two ways to receive participation marks. 1. Speak in class; 2. Come to see me during my office hours with a question or comment; 3. Submit a response to one of the discussion questions in the Discussion section on Canvas. Assignments are submitted on Canvas.

SCHEDULE: TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS 1-4 PM

Tuesday July 4: Introduction: What is the Meaning of Existentialism?

Thursday July 6: Existentialism According to Jean-Paul Sartre

Tuesday July 11: The Death of God and the Problem of Nihilism

Thursday July 13: Becoming Human: Friedrich Nietzsche
LISTEN: Christopher Janaway on Nietzsche and Morality

*Take Home 1 posted July 13; Due July 18*

Tuesday July 18: The Singularity of Existence: Soren Kierkegaard
READ: Kierkegaard, “Problemata I” and “Problemata II,” in Fear and Trembling (BW, pages 3-39).
LISTEN: BBC In Our Times Kierkegaard
https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/b009fycc
Optional further listening: Clare Carlisle on Kierkegaard
https://philosophybites.com/kierkegaard/

Thursday July 20: The Paradox of Freedom: Fyodor Dostoevsky

*Take Home 2 posted July 20; Due July 25*

Tuesday July 25: The Question of Being: Martin Heidegger

WATCH: film except of *Heidegger: Only A God Can Save Us* by Jeffrey van Davis
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RuJvwyREoJo&t=11s

*Final Essay Topics posted July 25*

**Thursday July 27: Being and Nothingness: Jean-Paul Sartre**
READ: Sartre Selections from “Self-Negation” and “The Encounter with the Other,” in *Being and Nothingness* (BW, pages 369-409).
LISTEN: Sebastian Gardner on Sartre and Bad Faith

**Tuesday August 1: Existence and Sexual Difference: Simone de Beauvoir**
READ: 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
LISTEN: Interview with Beauvoir
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SFRTI_9CbFU

**Thursday August 3: Psychoanalysis, Sexuality, and the Meaning of Life: Luce Irigaray**
LISTEN: Interview with Irigaray:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=msyTCN6Yytw

**Tuesday August 8: Being Human First: Frantz Fanon’s Critique of Racialized Identity**
WATCH: film *Fanon, yesterday, today* by Mezine, Hassane (LOCR)

**Thursday August 10: Living with the Absurd: Albert Camus**
WATCH: *Is life meaningless? And other absurd questions* by Nina Medvinskaya
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vPtzpjc7TF4

*Final Essay due August 15*

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**
During the course, students will study key figures and concepts of Existentialism. They will learn how to think critically about the ideas and arguments. The take-home exams provide the
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 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 their actions. Details of the policies and how to access support are available on the UBC Senate website.

Plagiarism
Plagiarism, which is intellectual theft, occurs where an individual submits or presents the oral or written work of another person as his or her own. Scholarship quite properly rests upon examining and referring to the thoughts and writings of others. However, when another person's words (i.e. phrases, sentences, or paragraphs), ideas, or entire works are used, the author must be acknowledged in the text, in footnotes, in endnotes, or in another accepted form of academic citation. Where direct quotations are made, they must be clearly delineated (for example, within quotation marks or separately indented). Failure to provide proper attribution is plagiarism because it represents someone else's work as one's own. Plagiarism should not occur in submitted drafts or final works. A student who seeks assistance from a tutor or other scholastic aids must ensure that the work submitted is the student's own. Students are responsible for ensuring that any work submitted does not constitute plagiarism. Students who are in any doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism should consult their instructor before handing in any assignments. A link about Academic misconduct is below:
http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/Vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,959

The use of Chat GPT and similar online resources may fall under “cheating” in the UBC policy if students make unauthorized use of this tool in the creation of assignments or on exams (“use...of unauthorized means to complete an examination or coursework...including, but not limited to, ...accessing websites or other online resources not specifically permitted by the instructor or examiner”).

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