

## Syllabus for PHIL 385, Fall 2023, Term 1

# **EXISTENTIALISM**

*Instructor: Dr Anders Kraal*

### **1. Course Description**

In this course we study two major texts of Søren Kierkegaard, the father of the existentialist movement in modern philosophy. In *Either/Or*, Kierkegaard contrasts the life of fun and pleasure with the life of duty and commitment, and raises questions about whether there is an ultimate justification of one of these lives over the other. In *The Sickness unto Death*, Kierkegaard offers a pioneering and celebrated analysis of despair, which, he argues, provides the underlying framework of human life.

In addition to Kierkegaard, we will also read a shorter essay by Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism is a Humanism*, and a shorter essay by Martin Heidegger in reply to Sartre, called *A Letter on Humanism*, two key texts in 20<sup>th</sup> Century existentialism.

**2. Lectures**                      *MWF 14:00-14:50 in Chemical and Biological Engineering Building 102.*

**3. Instructor**                      *Dr. Anders Kraal (anders.kraal@ubc.ca)*

**4. Instructor Office Hours**                      *TBA*

**5. Instructor Email Policy**                      *Instructor will reply to emails weekdays, typically within 48 h.*

**6. Teaching Assistant**                      *TBA (TA will be marking exams and papers)*

### **7. Required Texts**

Kierkegaard, S: *Either/Or*, trans. Hannay (Penguin edition). (Or any other edition.)

Kierkegaard, S: *Sickness unto Death*, trans. Hannay (Penguin edition). (Or any other edition.)

(The above books will be available in the UBC bookstore.)

Jean-Paul Sartre: *Existentialism is a Humanism* (PDF on canvas)

Martin Heidegger: *A Letter on Humanism* (PDF on canvas)

### **8. Course Requirements**

Assignment	Percentage Worth
In-Class Exam (x3)	20% (x3)
Final Exam	40%

For dates, see the Schedule.

In the in-class exams you will be asked to provide answers to questions dealing with matters brought up in class prior to the date of the exam. If you miss the in-class exam you will automatically be assigned 0

points unless you provide the TA with an UBC Academic Calendar approved rationale for doing a make-up exam (this is to be provided within 1 week of the day of the exam).

The final exam will be held during UBC's final examinations period. A missed final exam will be assigned a grade point of 0 unless an explanation is provided that is acceptable by the standards of the UBC Academic Calendar (in which case there will be opportunity for a make-up exam).

### **9. Lecture Recordings**

If the class is online, lectures will be recorded and uploaded for easy student access.

### **10. Learning Outcomes**

At the end of the course the student will be expected to be familiar with some main ideas in Kierkegaard's *Either/Or* and *Sickness unto Death*, Sartre's *Existentialism is a Humanism*, and Heidegger's *A Letter on Humanism*, and be able to provide critical reflection on the aforementioned ideas.

### **11. Marking Parameters**

Your mark in this course will be a function of three main factors: 1) your performance on the examinable momenta *relative to your peers*, 2) your comprehension of the course material, 3) demonstration of skill in assessing and evaluating philosophical ideas.

### **12. Marking Scale**

<b>A+</b> 90-100%	<b>B+</b> 76-79%	<b>C+</b> 64-67%	<b>D</b> 50-54%
<b>A</b> 85-89%	<b>B</b> 72-75%	<b>C</b> 60-63%	<b>F</b> 0-49%
<b>A-</b> 80-84%	<b>B-</b> 68-71%	<b>C-</b> 55-59%	

The degree of difficulty on the examinable momenta will be set so as to *aim* at a class average outcome that by and large conforms to the department average for this course down the years, which is in the range 68%-75%, i.e., in the B/B- range. Upwards scaling may be used to this effect.

### **13. Policy on Review of Marked Work**

Marks on exams and papers will be posted on canvas. Feedback on expected outcomes of exams and papers will be provided (typically by the Instructor) in so-called Feedback Sessions. Any concerns about the marking of a paper or exam should be submitted to the marker (typically the TA) *via email*, and will be responded to (typically by the TA) *via email*.

### **14. Plagiarism (from the UBC Academic Calendar)**

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. See also <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/Vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,959>

#### **16. UBC Values and Policies (from the UBC Academic Calendar)**

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 and cultural 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 here (<https://senate.ubc.ca/policiesresources-support-student-success>).

#### **17. Schedule**

*The following schedule is tentative, and may or may not change.*

##### **September: Kierkegaard's Either/Or**

*This material will be examined via an in-class exam at the end of the month. (Exact date TBA)*

##### **October: Kierkegaard's Sickness Unto Death**

*This material will be examined via an in-class exam at the end of the month. (Exact date TBA)*

##### **November: Sartre and Heidegger**

*This material will be examined via an in-class exam at the end of the month. (Exact date TBA)*

All class content will be examined on the final exam in December [Exact date TBD].

#### **18. The Nature of this Syllabus**

This syllabus sets out the policies according to which this course will proceed. Enrollment in the course involves an acceptance of these policies.