

*Syllabus for PHIL 385, Fall 2024*

**Existentialism**

*Instructor: Dr Anders Kraal*

**1. Course Description**

In this course we study three 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 *Fear and Trembling*, Kierkegaard launches the idea of “the leap of faith” and a life beyond both pleasure and the ethical. 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 these texts, we will also look at shorter essays by Jean-Paul Sartre (*Existentialism is a Humanism*), Simone de Beauvoir (*What is Existentialism?*), and Martin Heidegger (*A Letter on Humanism*), three key texts of 20<sup>th</sup> Century existentialism.

**2. Lectures.** MWF 2:00-3:00pm in LSK 201

**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, *Either/Or*, trans. Hannay (Penguin edition) (In bookstore)
- Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, trans. Hannay (Penguin edition) (In bookstore)
- Kierkegaard, *The Sickness Unto Death*, trans. Hannay (Penguin edition) (In bookstore)
- Sartre, *Existentialism is a Humanism*. (Any edition.) PDF uploaded to Canvas.
- Simone de Beauvoir, *What is Existentialism?* (Any edition.) PDF uploaded to Canvas.
- Heidegger, “Letter on Humanism” (Any edition.) PDF uploaded to Canvas.

**8. Course Requirements**

*In-Class Exam (x3):* 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 these exams you will automatically be assigned 0 points unless you provide the TA with an UBC Academic Calendar approved rationale for make-up exam or transfer of the weight to the final exam.

*Final Exam:* The final exam will be held during UBC's final examinations period. A missed final exam will be assigned 0p unless an explanation is provided that is acceptable by the standards of the UBC Academic Calendar (in which case there will be a standing deferred final exam).

### **9. 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*, *Fear and Trembling*, and *The Sickness unto Death*, Sartre's *Existentialism is a Humanism*, Simone de Beauvoir's *What is existentialism?* and Heidegger's *A Letter on Humanism*. The student will be expected to be able to provide critical reflection on the aforementioned ideas on written exams.

### **10. Marking Parameters**

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

### **11. Marking Scale**

**A+** 90-100% / **A** 85-89% / **A-** 80-84% / **B+** 76-79% / **B** 72-75% / **B-** 68-71%

**C+** 64-67% / **C** 60-63% / **C-** 55-59% / **D** 50-54% / **F** 0-49%

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. Upwards scaling may be used to this effect.

### **12. 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*.

### **13. 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>

***14. 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>).

***15. Schedule (more detailed schedule will be published on canvas)***

4/9 Introductory remarks

6/9 Kierkegaard's *Either/Or*

9/9 cont'd

11/9 cont'd

13/9 cont'd

16/9 cont'd

18/9 cont'd

20/9 cont'd

23/9 cont'd

25/9 cont'd

27/9 cont'd

30/9 cont'd

2/10 Exam1 (Worth 20%)

4/10 Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling*

7/10 cont'd

9/10 cont'd

11/10 cont'd

14/10 Thanksgiving Day

16/10 cont'd

18/10 cont'd

21/10 Jean-Paul Sartre's *Existentialism is a Humanism*

23/10 cont'd

25/10 cont'd

28/10 Exam 2 (worth 20%)

30/10 Kierkegaard's *The Sickness Unto Death*

1/11 cont'd

4/11 cont'd

6/11 cont'd

8/11 cont'd

11/11 Remembrance Day: no class

13/11 Midterm break: no class

15/11 cont'd

18/11 Exam 3 (worth 20%)

20/11 Simone de Beauvoir's *What is Existentialism?*

22/11 cont'd

25/11 Heidegger's *Letter on Humanism*

27/11 cont'd

30/11 Truth Reconciliation Day: no class

2/12 cont'd

4/12 cont'd

6/12 cont'd

December: final exam (worth 40%) (day and time TBA)