

SYLLABUS

This course could just as well have the title: ‘Introduction to Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Sartre, and Camus.’ We will explore their reflections on morality, freedom, suffering, and the meaning of human life. Each of the four philosophers is sometimes classified as an ‘existentialist’, but we will not focus on the origins or merits of this classification.

Instructors:

Lecturer

Christopher Vogel

1113 Skinner Building

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Office Hours

Tu 1pm–2pm

Th NOON–1pm & by appt.

Textbooks:

Camus: *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays* (Vintage, 1991)

Kierkegaard: *Either/Or* (Hannay tr., Penguin, 1992)

Kierkegaard: *Fear and Trembling* (Hannay tr., Penguin, 1985)

Nietzsche: *Basic Writings of Nietzsche* (Kaufmann tr., Modern Library Classics, 2000)

Sartre: *The Philosophy of J.P. Sartre* (an anthology; Cumming, ed. Vintage, 2003)

Assessment:

Each student’s success in learning the material for this course will be evaluated based on their performance on three(3) exams (and possibly in-class quizzes):

In-Class Exam 1	Feb 26	25% of grade	<i>Kierkegaard</i>
Take-Home Exam	Due Apr 14	35% of grade	<i>Nietzsche</i>
Final Exam	May 14	30% of grade	<i>Sartre, de Beauvoir, & Camus</i>
Quizzes	As Needed	10% of grade	

Quizzes will be administered during any class session in which a student uses an electronic device, as indicated below (see: ‘*In-Class Participation*’). Quizzes can only be made up if the student has a university-approved reason for missing class (see: ‘*Missed Classes*’).

Grading and Evaluation

Assignments and exam questions will (generally) be graded on a ten (10) point scale, with grades assigned as following:

Fail: <2; ‘D’: 2-3.99; ‘C’: 4-5.99; ‘B’: 6-7.99; ‘A’: 8-10

with a third of each grade range devoted to +/- grading (e.g. ‘B-’: 6-6.66). In order to pass the course, each student must complete each assignment.

Late Assignments

Assignments are due on the dates indicated in the *Course Schedule*. Late assignments will NOT be accepted. A student's late assignment will only be accepted if the student demonstrates that the circumstances that caused the assignment to be late were both unexpected and unduly burdensome, which will be determined by the course instructor.

Couse Conduct:

Academic Honesty

Each student is responsible for their own work. While students are encouraged to discuss course material both inside and outside class, each assignment/exam should be the product of the student's own thinking. Any apparent improper use of the intellectual work of others will be submitted to the Student Honor Council. Students are encouraged to review the university's Code of Academic Integrity (<http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/iii100a.html>), as the policies stipulated in that code will be exceptionlessly adhered to during this course.

In-Class Participation

Students are expected to read the course material prior to coming to each class session, and are also expected to contribute to discussion during lectures. This participation should be conducted with civility and respect for course instructors and fellow students. In this vein, any in-class use of wireless-network-enabled electronic devices is prohibited during this course. These devices invariably lead to distracting and disrespectful behavior during class sessions, even for students not tempted by the allure of these devices. **Thus, any use of laptop computers, tablet computers, smart phones, mobile phones, two-way messaging devices, pagers, or any other electronic communication device during class sessions is prohibited. Violation of this prohibition will be immediately followed by a Quiz administered to the class.**

Participation in class discussion is expected, though not explicitly evaluated. However, the degree and quality of a student's participation in class discussion can bear positively on a student's final course grade.

Missed Classes

-Due to Illness

Regular attendance and participation in this class is the best way to grasp the course material. However, in the event that a class must be missed due to an illness, the policy in this class, in conformity with the University's Attendance Policy (<http://president.umd.edu/policies/v100g.html>) is as follows:

For every medically necessary absence from class, a reasonable effort should be made by the student to notify the instructor prior to class. When returning to class, students should bring a note identifying the reason for the absence in order to inform their instructor that the absence was due to illness (as opposed to, say, laziness).

If a student is absent for any 'Grading Event' (i.e., any class day with an exam, quiz, or in which an assignment is due) they are required to notify the instructor of their absence as soon as possible (preferably in advance of their absence), and upon returning to class, the student must bring documentation of the illness, signed by a health care professional. Failure to do so will result in a considerably lower grade on the relevant exam or assignment.

-Due to Religious Observance

Students will not be penalized for missing class sessions due to religious observances. The *Course Schedule* is designed to minimize possible conflicts between students' academic and religious commitments. However, all students should review the *Course Schedule* within the first two(2) weeks of the term and determine any potential conflicts between their religious commitments and their responsibilities for this course. They should then inform their instructors of any such conflicts. Arrangements should be made between the student and their instructor to enable the student to satisfy their course responsibilities without undermining their religious commitments.

Correspondence with Instructors

Electronic mail has become the chief medium for out-of-class communication between university instructors and students. Because of the impersonal nature of this medium, email correspondence between students and instructors should be clear and respectful. A respectful email includes a salutation, the full name of the correspondent, and abides by English grammar rules. Correspondence that is not respectful, in this sense, will likely be ignored by instructors.

Accommodating Students with Disabilities

The University is committed to the accessibility of higher education. In light of this commitment, any student with a disability should contact the course instructor so that any needed accommodations can be made to establish an equitable learning environment. Also, any student with a disability is encouraged to contact the Disability Support Services office (<http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS/>) to learn about the resources available to them.

COURSE SCHEDULE

PART 1: KIERKEGAARD

Week of Feb 3 *Either/Or*: Preface; Diapsalmata; Crop Rotation
Week of Feb 10 *Either/Or*: Equi. Btw the Aes. & Ethical in the Dev. of Personality
Week of Feb 17 *Fear and Trembling*:

Preface; Attunement;
Speech in Praise of Abraham;
Preamble from the Heart; Problema I

Feb 24 *Fear and Trembling*: Problemas II & III; Epilogue

Feb 26 ***In-Class Exam 1***

PART 2: NIETZSCHE

Week of Mar 3 *Beyond Good and Evil*: Preface; Parts 1 & 2

Week of Mar 10 *Beyond Good and Evil*: Parts 4 & 5; Part 6, sections 211-213

Week of Mar 17 ***SPRING BREAK***

Week of Mar 24 *Beyond Good and Evil*: Parts 7 & 9

Week of Mar 31 *On the Genealogy of Morals*: Preface; First Essay

Week of Apr 7 *On the Genealogy of Morals*: Second Essay

Take-Home Exam due April 14

PART 3: SARTRE

Week of Apr 14 The Wall (online); The Pursuit of Being (in the Phil. of J.P. Sartre)

Week of Apr 21

The Encounter with Nothingness; Self Negation
(101–166 in the Phil. of J.P. Sartre)

Week of Apr 28 Being and Doing (242–281 in the Phil. of J.P. Sartre)

Week of May 5

Hell is Other People;
The Encounter with the Other;
(p. 185 in the Phil. of J.P. Sartre)
“Introduction” | *The Second Sex*
by Simone de Beauvoir (OL)

PART 4: CAMUS

Week of May 12

An Absurd Reasoning
The Myth of Sisyphus
(3–65, 119–123 in *Myth of Sisyphus*)

Thursday, May 14 | 8:00–10:00 am Final Exam