

**Existentialism (Phil 324)**  
**Syllabus, Spring 2005**  
**Tues/Thurs 2:00-2:50 (+ Friday discussion)**  
**ARM 0112**

This course could just as well have the title: “Introduction to Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Sartre, and Camus.” Its main aim is to help you to understand and evaluate some central ideas of these four philosophers. 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.

**Instructor**

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**Teaching Assistant**

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**Books:**

Camus: *The Plague* (Vintage, 1992)

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: *Nausea* (New Directions, 1975)

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

**Requirements:**

In-class exam	Feb. 24	20% of grade	Kierkegaard
Long take-home exam	due April 8	30% of grade	Mostly Nietzsche
Short take-home exam	due May 5	20% of grade	Sartre
Final Exam	May 19 (8:00-10:00 AM)	20% of grade	Mostly Camus
Attendance/Participation in Friday discussion		10% of grade	

### **Academic integrity:**

- The University of Maryland Honor Pledge reads: "I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this assignment/examination." The Pledge statement should be handwritten and signed on the front of your exams. Students who fail to write and sign the Pledge will be asked to confer with the instructor.
- We take incidents of academic dishonesty very seriously. We will forward to the office of judicial programs any possible cases of it that come to our attention.
- The Student Honor Council identifies four types of academic dishonesty: cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and plagiarism. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes dishonesty of these four types. Please consult the Student Honor Council Website at [www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/whatis.html](http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/whatis.html). If you would like any further clarification, e.g., on what constitutes plagiarism, please speak with the instructor or teaching assistant.

### **Midterm and Final Exams**

- If you have a university-approved excuse for missing either of these exams, you may take a make-up. However, you must alert the teaching assistant (by email or phone) that you will be absent prior to the exam, unless unusual circumstances prevent you from doing so.
- These exams will be composed of essay questions.
- You will be permitted to use your books, but no notes, to help you to answer examination questions.

### **Take-home Exams**

- Take-home examinations will be handed out less than one week before they are due.
- They will consist in short answer and essay questions.
- Your answers to examination questions must be typed and double-spaced.
- Late examinations will be accepted, but they will be penalized 1 full grade per school day. For example, if your examination is due on Tuesday and you turn it in on Wednesday, the highest grade you could receive on it would be a B+. Only a university-approved excuse will free you from this penalty.

### **Discussion sections:**

- They are an integral part of this course. You are expected to attend them.
- 10% of your grade will depend on your attendance/participation in Friday discussions.

### **Grading:**

- Your final grade will depend on the percentage you earn of the total points possible in the class: A+: 98-100; A: 94-97; A-: 90-93; B+: 87-89; B: 84-86; B-: 80-83; C+: 77-79; C: 74-76; C-: 70-73; D+: 67-69; D: 64-66; D-: 60-63.

- There will be no opportunities for extra credit.
- Failure to complete an assignment will result in your receiving no credit (a zero) for that assignment.

**Students with disabilities:**

- Students with disabilities should inform the instructor of their needs as soon as possible so that appropriate accommodations can be made.

**Religious Observances:**

- You will not be penalized for any absence that results from religious observance.
  - However, it is your responsibility to inform the teaching assistant in advance of any intended absences for religious observance. You should notify him by Feb. 4th.
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**Schedule:**

(Depending on the flow of the course, we might change some reading assignments. Any changes will be announced.)

Jan 27: Introduction

**Part 1: Kierkegaard**

Week of Feb. 1: *Either/Or*: Preface; Diapsalmata; Crop Rotation

Week of Feb. 8: *Either/Or*: Equilibrium between the Aesthetic and Ethical in the Development of Personality

Week of Feb. 15: *Fear and Trembling*: Preface; Attunement; Speech in Praise of Abraham; Preamble from the Heart; Problema I

Feb. 22: *Fear and Trembling*: Problema II, Problema III; Epilogue

Feb. 24: **In-class exam**

**Part 2: Nietzsche**

Week of March 1: *Beyond Good and Evil*, Preface, Parts 1 & 2

Week of March 8: *Beyond Good and Evil*, Parts 4 & 5, Part 6 sections 211-213

Week of March 15: *Beyond Good and Evil*, Parts 7 & 9

**Spring Break**

Week of March 29: *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Preface and First Essay

Week of April 5: *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Second Essay

**Long take-home exam due April 8**

**Part 3: Sartre**

Week of April 12: *Nausea*

Week of April 19: The Pursuit of Being; The Encounter with Nothingness; Self-Negation (101-166 in the *Phil. of J.P. Sartre*)

Week of April 26: Hell is Other People; The Encounter with the Other; The Body (185-230 in the *Phil. of J.P. Sartre*)

May 3: Being and Doing (242-281 in the *Phil. of J.P. Sartre*)

**Short take-home exam due May 5**

**Part 4: Camus**

May 5: An Absurd Reasoning (1-65) and The Myth of Sisyphus (119-123) both in *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*

Week of May 10: *The Plague*

**Final Exam: May 19, 10:30-12:30 AM**