

THE CONTENT OF THIS DESCRIPTION IS NOT A LEARNING CONTRACT AND THE INSTRUCTOR IS NOT BOUND TO IT. IT IS OFFERED IN GOOD FAITH AND INTENDED AS A HELPFUL GUIDE TO THE STUDENT. THE OFFICIAL COURSE SYLLABUS WILL BE PROVIDED AT THE FIRST CLASS.

**TITLE:** Introduction to Existentialism

**TERM:** F **YEAR:** 2009

**PROFESSOR:** Dr. Sean Mulrooney

**REGISTRATION:** LIMITED TO 12

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Traditionally, Western philosophers have looked at the world in order to find the rational, the objective, the necessary, and the universal. In contrast, the existentialists emphasize those features of the world that resist human understanding: the irrational, the subjective, the contingent, and the unique. Themes to be discussed include: God, and the implications of God’s existence or non-existence for morality; subjectivity; the individual; and choice. We will look at Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Sartre and Marcel.

**CLASS OBJECTIVES:**

1. To ask intelligent and focused questions of the readings.
2. To write philosophical analyses of existentialists by quoting, explaining and giving original examples that illustrate what each means.
3. To lead a discussion on an aspect of existentialism that interests you.
4. To apply an existentialist critique to some aspect of contemporary society.
5. To explain, evaluate and compare the opinions of different existentialists.

**PREREQUISITES:**

None.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

A course reader will be supplied.

**POSSIBLE ASSIGNMENTS/PRESENTATIONS/TESTS:**

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| 1. | Weekly questions and comments posted on the Internet | 10% |
| 2. | 5 3-page assignments @ 10% each =                    | 50% |
| 3. | Lead a 15-minute discussion                          | 10% |
| 4. | Final exam   | 30% |

**ABRIDGED BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

*Existentialism: Basic Writings*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Charles Guignon and Derk Pereboom, eds.  
Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2002.

*Heidegger: Basic Writings*. Ed. D. Krell. New York: Harper and Rowe, 1977.