

WESTERN UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Undergraduate Course Outline 2023-2024

PHILOSOPHY 2557F
Existentialism

Fall Term

Instructor: N/A

PREREQUISITE CHECKING

“Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.”

DESCRIPTION

This course focuses on four philosophers of the existentialist movement: Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Sartre. A variety of themes will be investigated; most importantly, why these philosophers call into question the traditional view of the subject as detached from the world in a relation that is *epistemic*, and how, in doing so, they emphasize our existence as *living individuals*, that is, as always already situated *in a world* and as open to *future possibilities*. These two aspects come together in the idea that human existence involves having to create meaning out of the conditions in which we find ourselves—thus giving rise to related themes including: alienation, authenticity, freedom, and being with others. Accordingly, our investigation will include questions such as: What is our relation to the world and how does the world take on meaning in our everyday lives? What is freedom? To what extent is our freedom shaped by the world and others? What might it mean to live authentically? Who is the other and what role do others play in our lives?

TEXTS

Existentialism: Basic Writings, edited by Charles Guignon and Derek Pereboom

OBJECTIVES

- Understand the positions of the 4 philosophers examined.
- Understand why and how these philosophers challenge traditional dualisms, and the detached, epistemic perspective more generally.
- Understand the significance of lived experience and how perception is shaped by language, culture and forms of life.

- Examine certain key themes including, Being-in-the-world, Alienation, Freedom, Authenticity, Nothingness and Being-with-Others
- Develop skills of critical analysis by writing two term papers.

METHOD OF EVALUATION

Paper 1	35%
Paper 2	35%\
Final Exam	30%

AUDIT

Students wishing to audit the course should consult with the instructor prior to or during the first week of classes.

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY POLICIES

The Department of Philosophy policies that govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses are available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Philosophy website <http://uwo.ca/philosophy/undergraduate/policies.html>.

It is your responsibility to understand the policies set out by the Senate and the Department of Philosophy, and thus ignorance of these policies cannot be used as grounds of appeal.

ACCOMMODATION

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at

http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

EVALUATION OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

At least three days prior to the deadline for withdrawal from a course without academic penalty, students will receive an assessment of work accounting for at least 15% of their final grade. For 3000- or 4000-level courses in which such a graded assessment is impracticable, the instructor(s) must obtain an exemption from this policy from the Dean and this exemption must be noted on the corresponding course syllabus. In rare instances and at the Dean's discretion, other courses could receive a similar exemption, which also must be noted in the course syllabus.

COURSE ASSIGNMENT

The last day of scheduled classes in any course will be the last day on which course assignments will be accepted for credit in a course. Instructors will be required to return assignments to students as promptly as possible with reasonable explanations of the instructor's assessment of the assignment.

ACADEMIC OFFENCES

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:
http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

PLAGIARISM CHECKING

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. Immediate help in the event of a crisis can be had by phoning 519.661.3030 (during class hours) or 519.433.2023 after class hours and on weekends.