EXISTENTIALISM AND FILM

WINTER 2007

LECTURE NOTES:

PROFESSOR: Chris Latilais
Humphrey House #201
Phone # 337-7076
latiolais@kzoo.edu
Offices Hours:
1) Mon. 8:00 -- 10:00
2) Tue. 10:30 - 11:30
3) By Appointment.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

SECONDARY LITERATURE:

FILMS: (Shown on Wednesday Evenings, 8:00 PM, Recital Hall):
- Babette's Feast.
- The Hairdresser's Husband.
- The Conversation.
- Ikuru (To Live).
- The Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind.
- Nobody's Fool.
- The Passenger.

COURSE GOALS:
The primary goal of this course is to introduce students to existentialism as a philosophical movement critical of the predominance of Graeco-Hellenic philosophy within the Western tradition (See detailed course description after Reading Schedule). Films are used as cinematographic artworks that raise important issues associated with particular existentialist figures. Paper assignments allow students to offer philosophical interpretations of such artworks.

EVALUATION:
Students will be evaluated on the basis of class participation, quizzes, two midterm examinations, and a final paper.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Participation</th>
<th>20%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Essays</td>
<td>1 @ 20% = 20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly Quizzes</td>
<td>8 @ 5% = 40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>1 @ 30% = 20%</td>
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POLICIES:
Students are expected to follow the reading schedule and to come to class prepared to actively discuss the texts they have read. More specifically, students must bring their texts to class with marginal notes, highlighted or underlined passages of particular importance, and 3 written questions to pose for discussion. Quizzes offer students the opportunity to identify and clarify central terms and concepts. The midterm assignment allows students to an essays on the key philosophical issues and arguments of the course, and the final paper offers students the opportunity to respond in depth to a single topic. The final paper is due on the day scheduled for the final examination. 3 unexcused absences will result in a full grade reduction. Late papers will be marked down a half grade for the first day and a full grade for the second day. All work must be turned in at the end of term, unless alternative assignments have been given by the instructor.

SCHEDULE OF READING

WEEK ONE
1. HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION: EXISTENTIALISM AS A CRITIQUE OF INTELLECTUALISM:

THURSDAY: THE VOLUNTARIST CRITIQUE OF INTELLECTUALISM & THE ETHIC OF AUTHENTIC INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS:

- Guignon, Introduction (pp. X111-XXX111).
- Handout.

2. KIERKEGAARD'S ANALYSIS OF DEFINING RELATIONS: LOVE OF ANOTHER AS ANALOGY FOR FAITH

WEEK TWO

TUESDAY: THE DEMANDS OF PSEUDONYMOUS AUTHORSHIP & JOHANNES DE SILENTIO'S ADMIRATION OF ABRAHAM

- Kierkegaard Introduction (Guignon, pp. 1-18).
- Fear and Trembling
  - Preface.
  - "A Panegyric Upon Abraham"
  - "Problemata: Preliminary Expectoration" (Guignon pp. 26-55).

WEDNESDAY: FILM #1: Babette's Feast (Recital Hall, 8:00 PM).

THURSDAY: KNIGHTS OF FAITH; KNIGHTS OF RESIGNATION.

- Fear and Trembling [Continued].
- Discussion of Babette's Feast.

WEEK THREE

TUESDAY: THE TELEOLOGICAL SUSPENSION OF THE ETHICAL & RELIGIOUS ABSOLUTION.

- Fear and Trembling
  - "Problem 1"
  - "Problem 2" (Guignon, pp. 55-77).

WEDNESDAY: FILM #2: The Hairdresser's Husband (Recital Hall, 8:00 PM).

THURSDAY: ANTI-CLIMACUS’S DEFINITION OF THE SELF AND JOHANNES CLIMACUS’S CONCEPT OF SUBJECTIVE TRUTH.

- Sickness Unto Death (Guignon, pp. 78-85).
- Concluding Unscientific Postscript (Guignon, pp. 85-92).
- Discussion of The Hairdresser's Husband.
- Midterm Assignment

3. NIETZSCHE'S EARLY DUALISM AND LATER CONCEPT OF THE WILL TO POWER:

WEEK FOUR

TUESDAY: THE APOLLONIAN AND DIONYSIAN

- Nietzsche Introduction (Guignon, pp. 93-118).
- The Birth of Tragedy (Guignon pp. 119-123).

WEDNESDAY: 1. FILM #3: The Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind (Recital Hall, 8:00 PM).

4. SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR’S AND JUDITH BUTLER’S ANALYSES OF ESSENTIALISM:

WEEK FIVE

THURSDAY: THE OVERMAN

- The Gay Science (Guignon, pp. 123-172).
- Twilight of the Idols (Guignon, pp. 172-183).
- "Women's Situation and Character," Simon de Beauvoir [Handout].

WEDNESDAY: FILM #4: The Conversation (Recital Hall, 8:00 PM).

5. HEIDEGGER’S CONCEPT OF BEING IN THE WORLD AND AUTHENTICITY

THURSDAY: HUSSERL’S PHENOMENOLOGY: PHILOSOPHY AS CONTEMPLATIVE REFLECTION

- "Women's Situation and Character" (Continued).
Lecture: Philosophy as Conceptual Analysis: The Phenomenological Reduction.  
Discussion of The Conversation.

WEEK SIX
TUESDAY: THE EXPERIENCE OF DISRUPTION REVEALS OUR SITUATION: HEIDEGGER’S CRITIQUE OF TRANSCENDENTAL REFLECTION
- Heidegger Introduction (Guignon, pp. 183-211).
- Being and Time (Guignon, pp. 211-254).

WEDNESDAY: 1. FILM #5: Ikiru (Recital Hall, 8:00 PM).
THURSDAY: HEIDEGGER’S CRITIQUE OF MODERN PHILOSOPHY.
- Being and Time (Continued).
- Discussion of The Conversation.
- Discussion of Ikiru.

WEEK SEVEN
TUESDAY: HEIDEGGER’S CONCEPTS OF AUTHENTICITY: THE “CONCRETE SITUATION”
- Being and Time (End).

WEDNESDAY: 1. FILM #6: The Unbearable Lightness of Being (Recital Hall, 8:00 PM).

6. BAKHTIN’S EARLY WORKS: THE EXISTENCE OF THE ACT
THURSDAY: ONCE-OCCURRENT BEING AND THE TIME OF OUR LIVES.
- Discussion of The Unbearable Lightness of Being.
- The Philosophy of the Act.

WEEK EIGHT
TUESDAY: MORAL UNIVERSALITY AND AESTHETIC INDIVIDUALISM
- The Philosophy of the Act.

WEDNESDAY: 1. FILM #7: Nobody’s Fool (Recital Hall, 8:00 PM).
THURSDAY: MORAL UNIVERSALITY AND AESTHETIC INDIVIDUALISM
- The Philosophy of the Act.

WEEK NINE
7. SARTRE’S REINTERPRETATION OF AUTHENTICITY: RADICAL CHOICE AND BAD FAITH WEEK NINE
TUESDAY: FACTICITY AND FREEDOM: SARTRE’S INTERPRETATION OF BEING AND TIME.
- Sartre Introduction (Guignon, pp. 255-276).
- The Humanism of Existentialism (Guignon, pp. 290-308).
- Being and Nothingness (309-359).

WEDNESDAY: 1. FILM #8: The Passenger (Recital Hall, 8:00 PM).
THURSDAY: SARTRE’S CONCEPT OF EXISTENTIALISM.
- Discussion of The Passenger.

WEEK TEN
TUESDAY: BAD FAITH, FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY.
- Review.

THURSDAY: REVIEW & COURSE EVALUATIONS

FINALS WEEK: