EXISTENTIALISM AND FILM

WINTER 2009

LECTURE NOTES:

PROFESSOR: Chris Latiolais
Humphrey House #201
Phone # 337-7076
latiolai@kzoo.edu
Offices Hours:
1) Mon. 1:00 -- 3:00
2) Tue. 3:00 - 4:00
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 Unbearable Lightness of Being.
- The Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind or Memento
- 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.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Essays</td>
<td>1 @ 20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly Quizzes</td>
<td>8 @ 5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>1 @ 30%</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:
TUESDAY: DEFINITION OF “EXISTENTIALISM” AS A SCHOOL OF THOUGHT:

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

- Guignon, Introduction (pp. X111-XXXV111).
- 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 (OU 103, 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” (Guignon, pp. 55-77).

WEDNESDAY: FILM #2: The Hairdresser’s Husband (OU 103, 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: Memento (OU 103, 8:00 PM).

4. NIETZSCHE’S LATER CONCEPT OF THE WILL TO POWER:

THURSDAY: THE OVERMAN

- The Gay Science (Guignon, pp. 123-172).
- Twilight of the Idols (Guignon, pp. 172-183).

WEEK FIVE

TUESDAY: HUSSERL’S PHENOMENOLOGICAL REDUCTION AS CONTEMPLATIVE REFLECTION: THE DREAM OF A COGNITIVE SCIENCE:

- Husserl's Phenomenology and Anthropology (Guignon, 276-289).

WEDNESDAY: FILM #4: The Conversation (OU 103, 8:00 PM).

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

THURSDAY: HEIDEGGER'S PHENOMENOLOGY:

- 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) [Continued]
- Being and Time (Guignon, pp. 211-254).

WEDNESDAY: 1. FILM #5: Ikiru (OU 103, 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 (OU 103, 8:00 PM).

6. BUTLER'S THEORY OF GENDERED IDENTITY:

THURSDAY: BAD CONSCIENCE AND CIRCUITS OF POWER:

- Discussion of The Unbearable Lightness of Being.
- Selections from The Psychic Life of Power.

WEEK EIGHT

TUESDAY: SUBJECTIVITY AS CONSTITUTIVE RESTRICTION:

- Selections from The Psychic Life of Power.

WEDNESDAY: 1. FILM #7: Flawless (OU 103, 8:00 PM).

THURSDAY: SUBJECTIVITY AND SELF:

- Selections from The Psychic Life of Power.

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 & HEGEL'S MASTER/SLAVE DIALECTIC.

- Sartre Introduction (Guignon, pp. 255-276).
- The Humanism of Existentialism (Guignon, pp. 290-308).
- Being and Nothingness (309-359).
- "Women's Situation and Character," Simon de Beauvoir [Handout]

WEDNESDAY: 1. FILM #8: Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolf (OU 103, 8:00 PM).

THURSDAY: BAD FAITH, FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY.

- "Women's Situation and Character," Simon de Beauvoir.
- Discussion Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolf.

WEEK TEN

TUESDAY:
Review.

THURSDAY: REVIEW & COURSE EVALUATIONS

FINALS WEEK: