EXISTENTIALISM AND FILM
Phil 109 – Winter 2018

PROFESSOR: Chris Latiolais
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Offices Hours:
  1. Tuesday: 11:00 - 12:0
  2. Thursday: 11:00 - 12:00

REQUIRED TEXTS:
  • Handouts:

RECOMMENDED LITERATURE:
  • Olafson, Frederick:

FILMS: (Shown on Wednesday evenings, 8:00 PM, Dewing 103):
  1. Network (1976, American, written by Paddy Chayefsky, directed by Sidney Lumet)
  2. Babette's Feast/Babettes Gæstebud (Danish, 1987: directed and written by Gabriel Axel, adopted from Isak Dinesen’s (Karen Blixen) story.
  3. The Hairdresser's Husband (French,1990: written by Patrice Leconte and Claude Klotz, directed by Patrice Leconte)
  5. The Conversation (American, 1974: directed by Francis Ford Coppola)
  6. Ikiru [To Live] (Japanese, 1952: written and directed by Akira Kurosawa)
  7. The Unbearable Lightness of Being (Czech, 1984: adapted from Milan Kundera’s novel by the same name)
**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, vocabulary quizzes, midterm examinations and a final paper.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Breakdown of Points of Evaluation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation:</td>
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<td>Responses (The purpose of a response paper is to hold us accountable to our reading. In the paper, identify core concepts from the readings and clarify, present, and explain them via artistic examples, personal experiences or other tangible material. 1-3 pages in length, double spaced)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Paper</td>
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<td>Final Paper</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 pages marked where they have encountered difficulties in understanding the material. Quizzes offer students the opportunity to identify and to clarify central terms and concepts. The midterm assignments allow students to write response and an essay on key philosophical issues and arguments, 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. The following are basic policies:

- **3 unexcused absences will result in a full course grade reduction** (exceptions allowed only with proper documentation).
- **Late papers are marked down a half grade per day** (exceptions allowed only with proper documentation).
- **No active electronic devices** such as computers, mobile phones, Blackberries, Blueberries, or any other electronic fruits and vegetables are permitted in the classroom, although recording devices are permitted if permission is granted.
- All documented disabilities will happily be accommodated upon the student’s request.
• An act of plagiarism result in a failing grade for the specific assignment. A second act will result in an F course grade.
• During seminar discussions, students must attend to the person holding the floor, responding to his or her contribution. In other words, no one-on-one lateral comments, which divert attention from the ongoing discussion.
• 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

1. HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION: WESTERN PHILOSOPHY BETWEEN ATHENS AND JERUSALEM.

WEEK ONE
• TUESDAY: DEFINITION OF EXISTENTIALISM AS THE VOLUNTARIST CRITIQUE OF INTELLECTUALISM; THE AESTHETICS OF INDIVIDUAL EXISTENCE:
  • Course Mechanics.
  • Introductory Lecture.
  • Guignon, Introduction.

Wednesday Evening Film: Network (Dewing 103, 8:00 PM).

2. KIERKEGAARD’S CRITIQUE OF MODERNITY: THE LEVELING OF THE PRESENT AGE:

• THURSDAY: THE LEVELING OF THE PRESENT AGE & PSEUDONYMOUS AUTHORSHIP AS RHETORICAL STRATEGY:
  • Two Ages: The Age of Revolution and the Present Age: A Literary Review

WEEK TWO
• TUESDAY: THE LEVELING OF THE PRESENT AGE & PSEUDONYMOUS AUTHORSHIP AS RHETORICAL STRATEGY:
  • Two Ages: The Age of Revolution and the Present Age: A Literary Review

3. KIERKEGAARD’S ANALYSIS OF DEFINING RELATIONS: LOVE OF ANOTHER AS ANALOGY FOR FAITH
• THURSDAY: THE DEMANDS OF PSEUDONYMOUS AUTHORSHIP UPON KIERKEGAARD’S READERS & JOHANNES DE SILENTO’S ADMIRATION OF ABRAHAM.
  • Kierkegaard Introduction.
  • FEAR AND TREMBLING, Preface, "A Panegyric Upon Abraham" & "Problemata: Preliminary Expectoration".

WEEK THREE
• TUESDAY: KNIGHTS OF FAITH; KNIGHTS OF RESIGNATION.
  • FEAR AND TREMBLING, Preface, "A Panegyric Upon Abraham" & "Problemata: Preliminary Expectoration" [Continued].
Wednesday Evening Film: Babette’s Feast (Dewing 103, 8:00 PM).

- **THURSDAY:** THE TELEOLOGICAL SUSPENSION OF THE ETHICAL & RELIGIOUS ABSOLUTION.
  - "Problem 1" & "Problem 2".
  - First Midterm Assignment.

**WEEK FOUR**

- **TUESDAY:** ANTI-CLIMACUS’S DEFINITION OF THE SELF AND JOHANNES CLIMACUS’S CONCEPT OF SUBJECTIVE TRUTH.
  - Sickness Unto Death.
  - Concluding Unscientific Postscript.

Wednesday Evening Film: The Hairdresser’s Husband (Dewing 103, 8:00 PM).

- **THURSDAY:**
  - Discussion of The Hairdresser’s Husband
  - Review.

4. NIETZSCHE’S EARLY DUALISM AND HIS LATER CONCEPT OF THE WILL TO POWER:

**WEEK FIVE**

- **TUESDAY:** THE APOLLONIAN AND DIONYSIAN
  - Nietzsche Introduction.
  - The Birth of Tragedy.

Wednesday Evening Film: Nobody’s Fool (Dewing 103, 8:00 PM).

- **THURSDAY:** THE OVERMAN
  - The Gay Science.

**WEEK SIX**

- **TUESDAY:** THE OVERMAN
  - Twilight of the Idols.

Wednesday Evening Film: The Conversation (Dewing 103, 8:00 PM).

- **THURSDAY:** HUSSERL’S PHENOMENOLOGY: PHILOSOPHY AS CONTEMPLATIVE REFLECTION
  - Husserl Extract.
  - Editors’ Introduction to Heidegger.

5. HEIDEGGER’S CONCEPT OF BEING IN THE WORLD: CARE, CONSCIENCE AND AUTHENTICITY:
WEEK SEVEN

- **TUESDAY:**
  - *Introduction, Being and Time*

Wednesday Evening Film: *Ikiru* (Dew 103, 8:00 PM).

- **THURSDAY:** HUSSERL’S PHENOMENOLOGY: PHILOSOPHY AS CONTEMPLATIVE REFLECTION
  - *Being and Time.*

WEEK EIGHT

- **TUESDAY:** THE EXPERIENCE OF DISRUPTION REVEALS OUR SITUATION & HEIDEGGER’S CRITIQUE OF TRANSCENDENTAL REFLECTION
  - *Being and Time.*
  - *NB:* Additional Excerpt from *Being and Time:* Sections 54-60 [Handout]

Wednesday Evening Film: *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (Dewing 103, 8:00 PM).

- **THURSDAY:** HEIDEGGER’S CONCEPTS OF AUTHENTICITY: THE "CONCRETE SITUATION”:
  - *Being and Time.*
  - Discussion of movies and text.

WEEK NINE

- **TUESDAY:**
  - *Being and Time* (End).

5. SARTRE’S REINTERPRETATION OF AUTHENTICITY: RADICAL CHOICE AND BAD FAITH

- **THURSDAY:** FACTICITY AND TRANSCENDENCE.
  - Editors’ Introduction to Sartre.

WEEK TEN

- **TUESDAY:** BAD FAITH, FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY
  - *Being and Nothingness.*
  - “Existentialism as Humanism”

Wednesday Evening Film: *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Wolf?* (Dewing 103, 8:00 PM).

- **THURSDAY:** SUMMARY OF HISTORICAL LEGACY OF EXISTENTIALISM AND ITS CONCEPT OF FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY