



TYNDALE
University College & Seminary

Course Syllabus

CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY: EXISTENTIALIST ROOTS OF POSTMODERN THEOLGOY

PHIL 4043 / THEO 0537

FALL 2011
THURSDAYS 8:30 AM – 11:45 AM

INSTRUCTOR: DR. VICTOR SHEPHERD

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Office Hours (as posted)

To access your course materials at the start of the course, please go to
<https://www.mytyndale.ca>

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course aims at introducing students to existentialist philosophy in both its theistic and atheistic expressions, and in having students discern the influence of existentialism as either an ingredient of or a foil to contemporary philosophy and theology. In addition the course endeavours to have students assess whether existentialism is the precursor of postmodernism or the latter's contradiction.

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the course, students:

- 1: will be acquainted with the thought of major representatives of the philosophical movement known as "existentialism", and will be helped to see the influence of existentialism in the genesis and development of contemporary philosophy and theology.
- 2: will be able to locate existentialism in the history of western philosophy and theology.
- 3: will be equipped to trace the putative link between an existentialist thinker like Nietzsche (the most widely-read philosopher in history) and postmodernism.
- 4: will gain an understanding of Hegel's philosophy as the occasion of the existentialist reaction.
- 5: will be able to assess existentialism's repudiation of Hegel's claim that his philosophy was the *terminus* of metaphysics since his philosophy, unlike others', was not a description of, approach to and articulation of a metaphysical ultimate but was rather an *aspect* of the Absolute's self-realization, and therefore itself

“absolute.”

- 6: will identify the ontic structure presupposed in each *existentialist* thinker’s anti-*essentialist* protest.
- 7: will recognize the incorporation of existentialist themes in other disciplines; e.g., theology, literature, drama, and fine art.
- 8: will see how existentialist philosophy is related to existentialist psychology and psychotherapy.
- 9: will be able to relate classroom investigations to thinkers not scheduled to be discussed in class; e.g., Albert Camus and Simone de Beauvoir.
- 10: will appreciate the manner in which existentialism recalls theology to its proper vocation whenever theology appears to be in danger of becoming a species of rationalism that uses religious vocabulary.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED TEXTS

Charles Guignon and Derk Pereboom, eds. *Existentialism: Basic Writings*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2001. ISBN: 0-87220-595-9 (pbk)

This book provides the necessary readings in Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre. The instructor will provide photocopied readings for Martin Buber and Gabriel Marcel.

B. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1. Interaction Papers: Due dates: Oct. 20, Nov. 17, Dec. 7: 50% of final grade.

The paper may be an analysis of the reading, a criticism of it, a discussion of some or several of its implications, or a comparison between it and other thinkers/readings in the course, or a theological comment on or assessment of material read for class. This paper must be submitted no later than 12:00 noon on the due date.

Oct. 20: 700-word paper concerning any aspect of *Overview*, Hegel, Kierkegaard.

Nov. 17: 700-word paper concerning any aspect of Nietzsche, Buber/Fackenheim, Marcel.

Dec. 14: 700-word paper due concerning any aspect of Heidegger, Sartre, etc.

2. Essay: A 2000 to 2500-word essay from list of topics or by permission of instructor. Due on December 14, 12:00 noon: 50% of final grade.

C. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

Students should consult the current *Academic Calendar* for academic policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System. The Academic Calendar is posted at www.tyndale.ca/seminary/calendar. An excerpt is attached with this syllabus for easy reference.

D. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

Interaction Papers	50%
Essay	50%
Total Grade	100%

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

Sept. 15	Existentialism: An Overview	Text: xiii-xxxviii
Sept. 22	Hegel: The Occasion of the Protest "Lordship and Bondage" (handout)	Text: pp.19-25
Sept. 29	Kierkegaard	Text: pp.85-92
Oct. 6	Kierkegaard	Text: pp.5-17
Oct. 13	Kierkegaard	Text: pp.29-55
Oct. 20	<i>No Class: UC Reading Day</i>	
Oct. 27	Nietzsche	Text: pp.119-122 Text: p.123,#1,#4,#57,#109,#124,#270, #283,#382,#383
Nov. 3	Nietzsche	Text: p.172,#1,#10 Text: p.178, #4 - #6 Text: pp.180-181
Nov. 10	Buber* <i>The Martin Buber Reader: Essential Writings</i> , pp.181-188 Fackenheim* <i>Jewish Philosophers and Jewish Philosophy</i> , pp.75-88	
Nov. 17	Fackenheim* <i>Jewish Philosophers and Jewish Philosophy</i> , pp.57-74	
Nov 24	Marcel* <i>Man Against Mass Society</i> , pp.27-56	
Dec. 1	Heidegger	Text: pp.196-210; 211-230; 243d-251
Dec. 8	Sartre	Text: pp. 328-355

* Handouts are provided for class readings.

IV. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Introduction

- Balthasar, H.; *The Christian and Anxiety*;
(San Francisco: Ignatius, 2000)
- Barrett, W.; *What is Existentialism?*;
(New York: Grove Press, 1964)
- Cooper, D.; *Existentialism*;
(Oxford: Blackwell, 1999)
- Fackenheim, E.; *Encounters between Judaism and Modern Philosophy*;
(London: Jason Aronson Inc., 1994)
- Fackenheim, E.; *The Religious Dimension in Hegel's Thought*;
(Bloomington: Indiana U. Press, 1967)
- Guignon, C. (ed); *The Existentialists: Critical Essays Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger and Sartre*;
(Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004)
- Loewith, K.; *From Hegel to Nietzsche*;
(New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964)
- Macquarrie, J, *Existentialism*;
(London: Penguin, 1972)
- Olson, R.; *An Introduction of Existentialism*;
(New York: Dover, 1962)
- Reardon, B.; *Hegel's Philosophy of Religion*;
(New York: Harper and Row, 1977)
- Solomon, R.; *From Hegel to Existentialism*;
(Oxford: O.U.P., 1987)
- Warnock, M.; *Existentialism*;
(Oxford: O.U.P., 1999)
- Wartenberg, T.; *Existentialism: A Beginner's Guide*;
(Oxford: Oneworld, 2008)

Kierkegaard

- Collins, J.; *The Mind of Kierkegaard*;
(Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 1983)
- Evans, C.; *Faith Beyond Reason: A Kierkegaardian Account*;
(Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998)
- Evans, C.; *Passionate Reason: Making Sense of Kierkegaard's Philosophical Fragments*;
(Bloomington: Indiana U. Press, 1992)
- Gouwens, D.; *Kierkegaard as a Religious Thinker*;
(Cambridge: C.U.P., 1996)

- Hannay, A. and Marion, G. (eds); *The Cambridge Companion to Kierkegaard*;
(Cambridge: C.U.P., 1999)
Rae, M.; *Kierkegaard's Vision of the Incarnation*;
(Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997)

Buber

- Fackenheim, E.; *Jewish Philosophers and Jewish Philosophy*;
(Bloomington: Indiana U. Press, 1996)
Friedman, M; *Martin Buber: The Life of Dialogue*;
(London: Routledge, 2002)
Hodes, A.; *Encounter with Martin Buber*;
(Middlesex: Penguin, 1975)
Kramer, K.; *Martin Buber's I and Thou: Practicing Living Dialogue*;
(Montreal: Novalis, 2003)
Mayhall, C. and Mayhall, T.; *On Buber*;
(Toronto: Nelson Education Ltd., 2003)
Mendes-Flohr, P.; *From Mysticism to Dialogue: Martin Buber's Transformation of
German Social Thought*;
(Detroit: Wayne State U. Press, 1989)
Schaeder, G.; *The Hebrew Humanism of Martin Buber*;
(Detroit: Wayne State U. Press, 1973)

Nietzsche

- Burnham, D.; *Reading Nietzsche: An Analysis of Beyond Good and Evil*;
(Montreal: McGill-Queen's U. Press, 2007)
Cooper, D.; *Authenticity and Learning: Nietzsche's Educational Philosophy*;
(Brookfield, Vermont: Avebury, 1991)
Kaufmann, W; *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*;
(New York: Meridian Books, 1965)
Laurin, J.; *Nietzsche and Modern Consciousness*;
(New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1973)
Magnus, B. and Higgins, K. (eds.); *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche*;
(Cambridge: C.U.P., 1999)
Solomon, R. and Higgins, K.; *What Nietzsche Really Said*;
(New York: Schocken Books, 2000)
Stern, J.; *A Study of Nietzsche*;
(Cambridge: C.U.P., 1979)

Marcel

- Cain, Seymour; *Gabriel Marcel*;
(Washington: Regnery, 1979)
Cain, Seymour; *Gabriel Marcel's Theory of Religious Experience*;

- (New York: P. Lang, 1995)
- Gallagher, Kenneth T.; *The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel*;
(New York: Fordham University Press, 1975)
- Konickal, Joseph; *Being and My Being: Gabriel Marcel's Metaphysics of Incarnation*;
(New York: P. Lang, 1992.)
- Moran, Dennis; *Gabriel Marcel: Existentialist Philosopher, Dramatist, Educator*;
(Lewiston, N.Y.: Mellen Press, 1992)
- Van Ewijk; *Gabriel Marcel: An Introduction*
(New York: Paulist, 1965)
- Wall, Barbara; *Love and Death in the Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel*;
(Lanham, M.D.; University Press of America, 1977)

Heidegger

- Barrett, W.; *What is Existentialism?*
(New York: Grove Press, 1964)
- Guignon, C. (ed.); *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*;
(Cambridge: C.U.P., 1995)
- Inwood, M.; *Heidegger*;
(Oxford: O.U.P., 1997)
- Macquarrie, J.; *Heidegger and Christianity*;
(New York: Continuum, 1994)
- McGrath, S.; *Heidegger: A (Very) Critical Introduction*;
(Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008)
- Michael, M. (ed.); *Heidegger and Modern Philosophy: Critical Essays*;
(New Haven: Yale U. Press, 1978)
- Rorty, R.; *Heidegger and the History of Philosophy*;
(Special issue of *Monist*, 64 [Oct. 1981])

Sartre

- Aronson, R.; *Jean-Paul Sartre: Philosophy in the World*;
(New York: Schocken Books, 1980)
- Cox, G.; *Sartre: A Guide for the Perplexed*;
(New York: Continuum, 2006)
- Caws, P.; *Sartre*;
(London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979)
- Howells, C. (ed.); *The Cambridge Companion to Sartre*;
(Cambridge: C.U.P., 1999)
- Warnock, M.; *The Philosophy of Sartre*;
(New York: Hilary House, 1967)
- Wilcocks, R. (ed.); *Critical Essays on Jean-Paul Sartre*;
(Boston: G.K. Hall, 1988)

Suggested Essay Topics

Indicate how existentialism's notion of the 'self' differs from the 'pure ego' of Descartes.

Expound and comment on Hegel's understanding of Christianity as a penultimate, pictorial depiction suitable for those incapable of 'rising to the Absolute Standpoint' of self-thinking thought.

Explore Hegel's 'Unhappy Consciousness' as illustrated by his 'Lordship and Bondage'.

Expound Kierkegaard's claim, 'Truth is Subjectivity.'

Discuss Kierkegaard's 'Stages of Existence.'

Explore why Kierkegaard maintained, 'Existence cannot be thought.'

State and assess Kierkegaard's notion of the 'Teleological Suspension of the Ethical.'

Expound Kierkegaard's 'Religion A', 'Religion B' and 'Existential Pathos.'

Amplify Kierkegaard's notion of despair; namely, one's life '...hinges on a condition outside of oneself.'

Amplify Kierkegaard's notion of inwardness; namely, '...one's relationship to oneself before God.'

Explore Nietzsche's notion of 'Ueberschmensch' and its misuse (e.g., in Nazi Germany).

Expound Nietzsche's notion of 'Perspectivism' or 'Eternal Recurrence' or 'Slave morality' or 'Will-to-Power.'

Discuss Nietzsche's understanding of 'resentment' and the 'herd.'

Explore Nietzsche's hostility to Christianity.

Examine Nietzsche's veneration of pre-Socratic philosophy and his rejection of metaphysics.

What does Nietzsche understand by 'Transvaluation of value'?

Comment on the ontic structure of Buber's 'I-it'/'I-thou.'

Compare Buber's notion that God's address constitutes us persons with Sartre's insistence that such an address would annihilate the person.

Contrast 'the other' in Buber and Sartre.

Discuss Buber's "The Education of Character" (in *Between Man and Man*) in light of his philosophy of the two-fold relationship.

Relate Marcel's "Techniques of Degradation" (in *Man against Mass Society*) to Neil Postman's *Amusing Ourselves to Death*.

Compare Marcel's "Techniques of Degradation" to selected aspects of Jacques Ellul's *Propaganda* or *The Technological Society*.

Expound Heidegger's 'Present-at-hand' and 'Ready-to-hand.'

Expound Heidegger's concept of 'care.'

Explore Heidegger's notion of 'inauthenticity.'

Expound Heidegger's notion of the 'they.'

Amplify Heidegger's notion that *Dasein* is a 'project' that is always 'ahead of itself.'

Compare 'fallenness' in Heidegger and Christian thought.

Amplify Sartre's ontic distinction between 'being-in-itself' and 'being-for-itself.'

Expand Sartre's notion that the human is 'that which is not what it is and is what it is not.'

Expound Sartre's notion of the self as 'projection towards a future.'

Discuss the role of freedom in Sartre's philosophy.

Compare 'the look' in Sartre and scripture.

Discuss the manner in which sex is a threat, according to Sartre.

Explore Sartre's notion of 'bad faith'.

Expound Sartre's notion of 'radical conversion.'

Discuss Sartre's understanding of emotions as modes of awareness of the world.

Compare Sartre's understanding of human hatred to God's hatred as attested in scripture.

Compare Kierkegaard's 'crowd', Nietzsche's 'herd', Heidegger's 'they', and Marcel's 'mass.'

Compare a Hebrew understanding of the body with that of the body in either Heidegger or Sartre or Merleau-Ponty.

Compare the existentialist notion of *Angst* in the face of death to the common 'fear of death.'

Compare the biblical notion of 'world' with 'world' in either Heidegger or Sartre.

Compare Simone de Beauvoir's understanding of human sexuality (*The Second Sex*) and a biblical understanding of human sexuality.

Assess Albert Camus' *The Fall* in light of a biblical understanding of the Fall.

(Any topic approved by the instructor)