

FALL 2015

# PHIL 117: EXISTENTIALISM

## COURSE INFORMATION

Class Meetings:	TR 1:30-2:45pm, MND 3009
Instructor:	Prof. Christina Bellon
Office Hours:	TR 12:00-1:00pm in MND 3000; and by appointment.
Contact:	MND 3000, 278-4759, <a href="http://www.csus.edu/indiv/b/bellon">www.csus.edu/indiv/b/bellon</a> and via SacCT messaging.
Availability:	Every effort is made to communicate with you quickly, effectively, and accurately. I take this as an important element of my responsibility to you. However, after 5pm M-F or on the weekend, please do not expect a response until the next business day. If the concern regards a due date problem or an assignment submission problem, please check frequently for a response from me with a solution, since the best solution is one implemented quickly.
Turnitin Component:	Login to <a href="http://www.turnitin.com/en_us/home">http://www.turnitin.com/en_us/home</a> to create a student account. Enroll in Course ID# 10546006, Enrollment Password: beans.
Special Note:	This faculty member is considered a 'mandated reporter' for suspected child abuse or neglect under the <i>California Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act</i> and is bound by the requirements set forth in <i>CSU Executive Order 1083</i> (available here <a href="http://www.calstate.edu/eo/EO-1083.html">http://www.calstate.edu/eo/EO-1083.html</a> ).

## CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION

A study of the problems of the existing individual, or inner-most self, especially the problem of choice in the context of radical freedom and finitude. Particular attention will be paid to the philosophical writings of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Sartre, and de Beauvoir. Some themes will be examined through the literary works of these and other philosophers, such as Camus, and Dostoevsky. (3 units.)

***Pre-requisite (absolutely no exceptions.): You must have GWAR certification before Fall 2009; or WPJ score of 80 or above; or 3-unit placement in ENGL 109M/W; or 4-unit placement in ENGL 109M/W + co-enrollment in ENGL 109X.***

***Co-Requisite (absolutely no exceptions): WPJ score 70/71 + co-enrollment in ENGL 109X.***

## GENERAL EDUCATION CRITERIA

This course satisfies General Education Requirements for Advanced Study Writing Intensive. *Students are required to write not less than 5,000 words of clear and logical prose.*

This course also satisfies General Education Requirements Area C2: Humanities. Students completing C2 requirements should be able to:

- A. *Demonstrate* knowledge of the conventions and methods of the study of the humanities.
- B. *Investigate, describe, and analyze* the roles and effects of human culture and understanding in the development of human societies.
- C. *Compare* and *analyze* various conceptions of humankind.
- D. *Demonstrate* knowledge and understanding of the historical development of cultures and civilizations, including their animating ideas and values.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

Robert Solomon (ed), *Existentialism, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* (Oxford University Press, 2005). ISBN: 9780195174632  
<http://www.oup.com/us/catalog/he/?queryField=keyword&query=9780195174632+&&viewVeritySearchResults=true&ss=relevancy>

Supplemental Readings in PDF format. Available in SacCT.

## COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

ASPIRATION/OBJECTIVE	PRACTICAL SKILLS	ASSESSMENT TOOLS
Develop competence in existential, analysis, language and literature, including the historical origins and transformations of Existentialist philosophy.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Accurately <i>describe</i> and <i>distinguish</i> between a variety of key concepts, including: existence, being, authenticity, inauthenticity, bad faith, freedom;</li> <li>2. <i>Apply</i> processes of critical analysis to key existential texts.</li> <li>3. <i>Explicate</i> and <i>evaluate</i> the positions of major existentialist philosophers.</li> <li>4. <i>Identify</i> and <i>analyze</i> the cultural values and historical developments which contribute to the development of existentialism.</li> <li>5. <i>Develop</i> and <i>express</i> one's own critical judgements regarding existence and the human condition;</li> <li>6. <i>Apply</i> existential conceptual tools to <i>analyze</i> specific social problems, both historical and contemporary.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Content in each of:                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Interpretive Exercises</li> <li>b. In-class Discussion</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Short written essays</li> <li>3. Semester Team Project</li> </ol>
Develop written communication skills, especially as those are associated with expository and argumentative writing.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Write</i> competently, concisely, precisely, logically;</li> <li>2. <i>Develop</i> and <i>express</i> a point of view through the formulation of a coherent and consistent argument;</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Quality of the form (essay structure, logic) and mechanics (syntax, grammar) of each of the short written essays and the semester Essay Project.</li> </ol>

ASPIRATION/OBJECTIVE	PRACTICAL SKILLS	ASSESSMENT TOOLS
	3. <i>Explain and interpret</i> text in a coherent manner to an audience of peers.	

## EVALUATION

Students will be evaluated on their attainment of these learning outcomes by several means. These will include a series of short in-class interpretive essays, a series of reflective assignments, a two analytic essays, and the Team Existential Project. The course is graded on the basis of 100pts (1pt = 1%).

***ALL assignments, except in-class analyses, are administered within Blackboard. Print or hand submitted copies will only be accepted for work assigned and completed in class. All assignments must be completed in the appropriate assignment area in Blackboard. Improperly submitted assignments will not be evaluated.***

## GRADING SCALE

Proficient (A)	Competent (B)	Satisfactory (C)	Poor (D)	Unacceptable (F)
A (96-100)	B+ (87-89)	C+ (77-79)	D+ (67-69)	F (59-0)
A- (90-95)	B (84-86)	C (74-76)	D (64-66)	
	B- (80-83)	C- (70-73)	D- (60-63)	

This course is based on 100 points, where 1pt = 1%.

## TECHNOLOGY COMPONENT

Please note, this course includes a significant Blackboard/SacCT component. Course assignments will be provided via SacCT. SacCT will also be used for team collaboration, course calendars, announcements, and class notification options. It is your responsibility to ensure you have regular and reliable access to computing facilities sufficient to the needs of this course.

Additionally, we will conduct work in class on specific dates which requires access to SacCT. It is your responsibility to ensure you have computing capability adequate to complete these in-class activities on the dates specified.

Technical problems must be reported to me at your earliest encounter of the problem. If the problem is more complex than instructor skills allow, you must address your problem to the SacLink Help Line @ 916-278-7337 or the SacCT Student Help function.

## THE STUDENT TECH CENTER

The Student Tech Center (STC), located in AIRC 3007, teaches students to use software needed to complete course assignments, provides group collaboration space and prints posters for free. The STC

workshops include Microsoft Office, Adobe Creative Suite, SPSS, multimedia, and more. In the workshops you will learn how to format documents for APA, MLA, etc.; create charts and graphs; manipulate and analyze data; run statistical procedures; design posters; create webpages, and more! The STC Group Lab accommodates student groups up to 8 people. Group tables are equipped with laptops and large monitors which can be shared among multiple laptops. Group tables are available on a first come, first serve basis.

The STC is open Mon-Thu from 10am to 7pm and Friday from 10am to 3pm. Noon workshops are held at 12 noon, Mon – Fri and Happy Hour workshops are held at 5:30, Mon – Thu. We are located in AIRC 3007. Go to [www.csus.edu/stc](http://www.csus.edu/stc) to learn about all the services provided for students. You Need the STC!

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#### TURNITIN ORIGINALITY VERIFICATION

Consistent with Sacramento State’s efforts to enhance student learning, foster honesty, and maintain integrity in our academic processes, this course will use a tool called Turnitin to compare a student’s work with an extensive database of prior publications and papers, providing links to possible matches and a ‘similarity score’. All submissions to this course will be checked using this tool. ***Students should submit papers to Turnitin without identifying information included in the paper (e.g. name or student number)***, the system will automatically show this information to faculty in your course when viewing the submission, but the information will not be retained by Turnitin.

Originality scores from Turnitin submissions will be definitive of a student’s compliance with University Academic Honesty requirements. If there is any variation between the essay submitted to Turnitin and that submitted to the instructor for grading, the Turnitin score is definitive. Be sure not to revise your essay after submission to Turnitin.

Login to [http://www.turnitin.com/en\\_us/home](http://www.turnitin.com/en_us/home) to create a student account. Enroll in Course ID# 10546006, Enrollment Password: beans.

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#### “GETTING TO KNOW YOU” BLOG POSTING

This is a fun assignment – you just have to tell us a bit about yourself, why you’re here, what your hopes and dreams are, what you do for fun or relaxation – anything really, to give us all a sense of who you are and where you’re coming from. We’ll be doing some collaborative work in this course, and it will be so much more enjoyable if we knew a bit about who we are – so go ahead, tell us about yourself!

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#### ACADEMIC HONESTY ASSIGNMENT

This is the first assignment for the course and must be completed before any written assignments are submitted – by the end of the second week of semester. ***This assignment has no specific point value, but failure to complete it means I will not accept any of your required coursework.***

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### REFLECTIVE HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT (40PTS; 5PTS EACH X 8)

This homework assignment consists of four parts, your formal response to two questions, a discussion question you create with an attempted answer, a team collaborative discussion question with answer (in class), and a revised response to your original discussion question. This assignment will be submitted in SacCT prior to the class period assigned.

In first class meeting of each module, you will assemble with your team for 15min to select one of your questions or craft a new one, and provide an attempted answer. Your team's question and attempted answer will be read to the class and will serve to guide lecture/discussion through the rest of the module. At the end of the module, you will individually submit a follow-up answer to your original question. The grade for each homework assignment will be based on the following:

1. Responses to question prompt (1pt)
2. Your discussion question and attempted answer (2pts)
3. Your revised answer to your original question (2pts)

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### SHORT ESSAYS (30PTS, 15PTS EACH X 2)

You will be required to write and submit two formal essays, each of which consists of a 1500-1600 word (double spaced, normal font & margins) explication and analysis of the issue identified in the essay prompt. Both essays will be subjected to the Peer Revision Process and Turnitin Originality Verification.

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### PEER REVISION PROCESS (10PTS, 5PTS EACH X 2)

During designated class periods leading up to the due date for each essay, you will work with a class partner to review each other's essays, indicate areas which need editing, and help each other to ensure compliance with the minimum writing standards expected in the Philosophy Department. You will be using the Essay Criteria and the Department Writing Guide, found here <http://www.csus.edu/phil/Guidance/WritingGuidelines.html>. Peer evaluation will be completed on a formal rubric provided by the instructor, on which you will enter your editorial comments about your colleague's essay. This will be submitted to your colleague at the end of the class period (via SacCT Messaging as a file attachment). Bring a laptop or other device to facilitate your peer review collaboration.

Peer Editorial Comments will also be submitted to the instructor for evaluation. The grade for Peer Editorial Comments will be determined by the quality of the review, *clarity* of instructions for revision, and *thoroughness* and *accuracy* of the feedback provided.

The Peer Editorial Comments will be attached to the final version of your essay when submitting it for grading. Submission of your essay in SacCT will consist of your revised final essay and your peer's evaluation form. Failure to submit your Peer Editorial Comments and your draft essay with your final essay submission will result in an automatic deduction of 5pts. No make-up.

*You must submit both essays for grading to complete the course. Failure to do so will result in a grade of F for the course.*

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### TEAM PROJECT: SELF, SOCIETY, AND MEANING (20PTS)

This component of the course consists of a substantive philosophical response to an identified social problem using the conceptual tools and methods of existentialism. The project product will be a 5 minute video with a written 250 word abstract, produced by the group, featuring:

1. a *complete analysis* of the identified social problem
2. a *proposed solution* to that problem
3. an *evaluation of the plausibility and validity* of the solution
4. a *complete bibliography* of all material used.

Video projects must be properly captioned or transcribed and edited for quality (privacy and copyright must be respected).

This is a team project. It should be a product of your collective reflection and deliberation on this issue over the course of the whole semester and in light of the breadth and complexity of the course material. Individual grades will be based upon the grade for the team project and the following two assessments: a self-assessment of your contribution to the project and a peer assessment of the group's overall collaborative efficacy. See grading rubric for guidance.

See project guide in Blackboard for further information and guidance.

*Failure to complete and submit this project will be considered as a failure to complete the requirements of the course and a grade of F will be issued.*

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### BONUS OPPORTUNITIES

Throughout the semester, students will have the opportunity to earn bonus points by attending specified events and writing an analyses. Students can earn up to a maximum of 5 bonus points in this way (1pt/analysis). Bonus points are contingent upon completing all the required coursework with a passing grade (D- or better).

## COURSE POLICIES AND ETIQUETTE

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### ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is expected from all class participants. Disruptions, rudeness and private discussions, including cell phone disruptions, will not be tolerated. This means while in class, you should be focused on classroom activities and material. Sleeping, using a cell phone, reading a newspaper, doing assignments for other classes, or otherwise engaging in disruptive or disrespectful behavior will be met

with a loss of ½pt (per incidence) from the final course grade. **All cellular devices and iPods/music players must be turned off during class unless being used explicitly for class activities.**

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#### DIVERSITY AND RESPECT

CSUS attracts a diverse population of students, faculty and staff with a wide range of cultural norms, lifestyles, beliefs and backgrounds. Opinions may vary on many issues, but students and faculty in this class will be expected to converse and debate in a respectful and tolerant manner.

This class will only be rich if everyone feels free to express her/his views and personal understanding of the course material. Because this is a philosophy class, and philosophy prompts us to think in ways that may be unfamiliar, let us all be mindful and respectful of each other's opinions. Everyone has a responsibility to make the classroom environment a place where we can respectfully agree to disagree, and perhaps even settle some long unsettled questions.

**RECORDING CLASS PERIOD IS PROHIBITED EXCEPT WITH PERMISSION OF THE INSTRUCTOR AND CONSENT OF THE CLASS.**

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#### LATE ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments are due at the date and time specified in the assignment. Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 10% per calendar day (not merely class period) beginning with the due date. After three late days, acceptance of the assignment is at the instructor's discretion. If you know you will not be able to meet a due date, it is your responsibility to consult with the instructor before the assignment is due. ***When submitting any assignment in Blackboard, ALWAYS check its status to ensure it was submitted. Do not merely hit "submit" and leave. It is your responsibility to ensure your assignment was submitted accurately and timely. Do not wait for the instructor to ask you about it or for a "0" to appear in your grade column!***

**No extensions, no exceptions.** It is your responsibility to know the due dates and to plan accordingly. Leaving an assignment until the day or two prior is risky and makes you more vulnerable than you already are to factors and events in the universe beyond your control!

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#### PLAGIARISM/CHEATING

Plagiarism and cheating are serious academic offences which will not be tolerated in this class. Assignments in which plagiarism or other forms of cheating are found will at the least be graded at 0 (not just an F). ALL incidents of cheating and plagiarism will be reported both to the Department Chair and to the Judicial Officer in the Office of Student Affairs for possible further administrative sanction.

***It is your responsibility to know and comply with the University's Academic Honesty Policy***  
<http://www.csus.edu/umannual/student/STU-0100.htm>

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## UNIVERSAL ACCESSABILITY

This course and all material have been designed for universal access. If you have difficulty accessing any of the material, please let me know at your earliest experience of difficulty. Also, this course has been designed to facilitate accommodation for specific disability needs. If you have a documented disability (visible or invisible) and require accommodation for assignments, tests, course material, etc., please let me know the ***end of the THIRD week of semester*** so that arrangements can be made. Failure to notify and consult with me by this date may impede my ability to offer you the necessary accommodation and assistance in a timely fashion. Also be sure to consult with the Services to Students with Disabilities (Lassen Hall) to see what other campus services and accommodation options are available for you, <http://www.csus.edu/sswd/ApplicationProcess-Forms.html>.



## WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Learning Modules and assignments can be accessed anytime during the course. See the course calendar in SacCT for due date and time details.

All assigned readings should be read prior to the first class period indicated.

### **Module 0: Introduction**

Se 1 Introduction to Philosophical Methods and Existential Philosophy  
**Read:** Solomon, "Introduction," pp xi-xx. Also available as PDF in Bb.  
**In Class Assignment, Due in class.**

Se 3 Sampling of Ideas  
**Read:** Solomon: Kierkegaard, "The Present Age," 3-6, and "Concerning the Dedication to the Individual," 32-3; Rilke, "Notebooks," 154-5; Unamuno, "The Tragic Sense of Life," 156-60; Merleau-Ponty, "Freedom," 284-5; Roth, "The Human Stain," 374-5.

**Se 2 Homework #1 Due in SacCT 11:59pm Wednesday Se 2.**

**Se 3 Revised Answer to Original Discussion Questions for HW0, Due 11:59pm.**

### **Module 1: The Ontological Turn**

Se 8-10 Hegel **Read:** Hegel, On the Other, Master and Slave; PDF in Blackboard.

**Se 7 Homework #2 Due in SacCT 11:59pm Monday Se 7.**

**Se 10 Revised Answer to Original Discussion Questions for HW2, Due 11:59pm.**

**Se 13 Academic Honesty Assignment, due by 11:59pm. Submit to SacCT.**

Se 15-17 Young **Read:** Young, "Throwing Like a Girl"; PDF in Blackboard

**Se 14 Homework #3 due in SacCT, 11:59pm Monday Se 14.**

**Se 17 Revised Answer to Original Discussion Questions for HW3, Due 11:59pm.**

### **Module 2: Kierkegaard: Between Me and God**

Se 22-Oc 1 Kierkegaard **Read:** Solomon, pp 6-33.

**Se 21 Homework #4 due in SacCT, 11:59pm Monday Se 21.**

**Oc 1 Revised Answer to Original Discussion Questions for HW4, Due 11:59pm.**

### **Module 3: Nietzsche: I Am All I Need**

Oc 6-15 Nietzsche **Read:** Solomon, pp 65-101.

**Oc 5 Homework #5 due in SacCT, 11:59pm Monday Oc 5.**

**Oc 15 Revised Answer to Original Discussion Questions for HW5, Due 11:59pm.**

Oc 20 Review Class for Modules 1-3

- Oc 21**            **Essay #1 is due, by 11:59pm on Wednesday Oc 21. Submit to SacCT.**
- Oc 22            Peer Review of Essay #1 in class. Bring laptops and hard copy of essay, if desired.  
**Peer Review is due by end of class, submitted to Instructor and Essay Author in SacCT.**
- Oc 25**            **Final Revised Essay #1 due, 11:59pm Sunday evening. Submit to Turnitin and to SacCT.**

***Module 4: Heidegger: On Being, Freedom, and Death***

- Oc 27-No 5      Heidegger      **Read:** Solomon, pp 116-152
- Oc 26**            **Homework #6 due in SacCT, 11:59pm Monday Oc 26.**
- No 5**            **Revised Answer to Original Discussion Questions for HW6, Due 11:59pm.**

***Module 5: Sartre: Nausea, Radical Freedom, and the Trouble with Others***

- No 10-19      Sartre            **Read:** Solomon, pp 203-270
- No 9**            **Homework #7 due in SacCT, 11:59pm Monday No 9.**
- No 19**          **Revised Answer to Original Discussion Questions for HW7, Due 11:59pm.**

***Module 6: DeBeauvoir: Women, Freedom and Society***

- No 24-De 3      DeBeauvoir    **Read:** Solomon, pp 291-306

***No 26-29 Thanksgiving Break – Campus Closed***

- No 23**            **Homework #8 due in SacCT, 11:59pm Monday No 23.**
- Dec 3**            **Revised Answer to Original Discussion Questions for HW8, Due 11:59pm.**

- De 8            Review Class for Modules 4-6
- Dec 9**            **Essay #2 is due, by 11:59pm on Wednesday De 9. Submit to SacCT.**
- De 10            Peer Review of Essay #2 in class. Bring laptops and hard copy of essay, if desired.  
**Peer Review is due by end of class, submitted to Instructor and Essay Author in SacCT.**
- De 13**            **Final Revised Essay #2 due, 11:59pm Sunday evening. Submit to Turnitin and to SacCT.**

De 14-18 Exam Week – No classes.

- De 17**            **Team Project due Thursday, De 17 at 11:59, no late submissions, no exceptions.**  
**Submit to SacCT: Project Abstract, Link to Video Project, Self-Assessment Form, Team Assessment Form.**