



## PHIL\*2170 Existentialism

Fall 2019

Section(s): C01

Department of Philosophy

Credit Weight: 0.50

Version 2.00 - September 06, 2019

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### 1 Course Details

#### 1.1 Calendar Description

Existentialism is a philosophy built around the experience of human freedom. This course focuses on the character of the subject who makes choices, and on the personal and political responsibilities that attach to the making of decisions. The course will examine this and other themes associated with Existentialism through nineteenth and twentieth century representatives, which may include Kierkegaard, Sartre, de Beauvoir, Camus and others.

**Pre-Requisites:** 2.00 credits or (1 of PHIL\*1000, PHIL\*1010, PHIL\*1050)

#### 1.2 Course Description

In the 19th and 20th Centuries, a tradition of philosophy grew up in Europe that emphasized the creative role people play in determining the terms in which their lives are meaningful. Their works ranged from provocative discussions of the importance of taking responsibility for one's life choices to rigorous and complicated analyses of the mechanisms by which any experience—from simple sensation to romantic life to political involvement—functions. We will study writings from Sartre, Heidegger and Fanon, supplemented by reflection on two novels and various works of visual and poetic art. We will investigate such themes as the relation between lived experience and self-conscious reflection, the relation between choice and commitment, the status of morality, the experience of race, forms of oppression (especially European colonialism), the character of modern technology and the nature and role of artistic expression in human life. In all of our studies, we will be especially interested in the nature of the past and future in the context of freedom.

#### 1.3 Timetable

Mondays and Wednesday, 1:00-2:20, Mackinnon 232

Timetable is subject to change. Please see WebAdvisor for the latest information.

## 1.4 Final Exam

Monday December 2, 07:00PM - 09:00PM

Exam time and location is subject to change. Please see WebAdvisor for the latest information.

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## 2 Instructional Support

### 2.1 Instructional Support Team

<b>Instructor:</b>	John Russon
<b>Email:</b>	jrusson@uoguelph.ca
<b>Telephone:</b>	+1-519-824-4120 x53553
<b>Office:</b>	MCKN 338

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## 3 Learning Resources

There are 5 required texts.

There will also be a small number of shorter readings that will be made available on Courselink in pdf format.

### 3.1 Required Resources

**Sartre, Being and Nothingness (Textbook)**  
trans. Hazel Barnes, (Washington Square Press)

**Fanon, Black Skin White Masks (Textbook)**  
trans. Richard Philcox, (Grove Press)

**Heidegger, Basic Writings (Textbook)**  
trans. David Farrell Krell, (Harper)

**Faulkner, The Sound and the Fury (Textbook)**  
(Vintage)

**Achebe, Things Fall Apart (Textbook)**  
(Penguin)

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## 4 Learning Outcomes

### 4.1 Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Understand, explain and assess major historical and/or conceptual developments in continental philosophy, and their implications for issues in moral philosophy, epistemology and metaphysics.
  2. Identify and critically evaluate the practical significance of central issues in existentialism.
  3. Read and comprehend original source materials in the history and problems of philosophy.
  4. Write clearly and cogently on basic problems in philosophy.
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## 5 Teaching and Learning Activities

### 5.1 Lecture

**Topics:**

**Schedule of Readings:**

**Week:            Reading:**

**I. Sartre and Faulkner: Subjectivity, Authenticity and Being with Others.**

**Sept 9            Introduction: Subjectivity**

**Sartre, Being and Nothingness: Being-for-itself, Negation and Freedom**

"Introduction," pp 11-17 and "The Origin of Negation," pp 34-44

--Supplementary reading: Russon, Sites of Exposure, Lesson 1, and selection from Lesson 2

**Sept 16**      **Sartre, Being and Nothingness: Anxiety and Bad Faith**

"The Origin of Negation," pp 54-78

"Bad Faith," pp 96-100

**Sept 23**      **Sartre, Being and Nothingness: Other People**

"The Look," pp 301-303, and 340-362

**Sept 30**      **Faulkner, The Sound and the Fury**

**Oct 7**      **Faulkner, The Sound and the Fury**

**I. Fanon and Achebe: Culture and Exclusion**

**Oct [14] 16**      **Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks**

"The Lived Experience of the Black Man" (pp 89-119)

**--1st 6 pp essay due**

**Oct 21**      **Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks**

"The Lived Experience of the Black Man" (pp 89-119)

**Oct 28**      **Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks**

"The So-Called Dependency Complex of the Colonized" (pp 64-88)

**Nov 4**            **Achebe, Things Fall Apart**

**III. Heidegger: Being, Home, Art**

**Nov 11**            **Heidegger, Basic Writings**

“The Origin of the Work of Art” (pp 165-82)

--2nd 6 pp essay due

**Nov 18**            **Heidegger, Basic Writings**

“The Origin of the Work of Art” (pp 165-82)

**Nov 25**            **Heidegger, Basic Writings**

“The Question Concerning Technology” (pp 320-28)

[Dec 2: Final Examination, 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm]

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## **6 Assessments**

### **6.1 Marking Schemes & Distributions**

Critical Essay on Sartre and Faulkner            35%

--6 pp, due in class Oct 9

Critical Essay on Fanon and Achebe            35%

--6 pp, due in class Nov 13

Final Examination on Heidegger 30 %

--2 questions, handed out in advance; Examination is scheduled for December 2.

## 6.2 Assessment Details

### **Critical Essay on Sartre and Faulkner (35%)**

**Due:** Wed, Oct 9

You are required to write a critical essay, 6 double-spaced pages in length (with standard margins and standard font), to be submitted in class, Wednesday October 9. The essay will use a character from *The Sound and the Fury* as a case-study for explaining and assessing one of Sartre's central ideas.

### **Critical Essay on Fanon and Achebe (35%)**

**Due:** Wed, Nov 13

You are required to write a critical essay, 6 double-spaced pages in length (with standard margins and standard font), to be submitted in class, Wednesday November 13. The essay will use *Things Fall Apart* as a lens for explaining and assessing Fanon's central ideas.

### **Final Examination on Heidegger (30%)**

**Due:** Mon, Dec 2, 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

This course has a final examination, scheduled by the university in the normal examination period. The examination will have two questions on Heidegger that you must answer in essay format. You will be given the questions in advance. You will be allowed to bring a point-form outline of each essay to the examination, but you are not allowed to copy out a pre-written answer.

## 7 University Statements

### 7.1 Email Communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

### 7.2 When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. The grounds for Academic Consideration are detailed in the Undergraduate and Graduate Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Consideration and Appeals

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-ac.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Grounds for Academic Consideration

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

Associate Diploma Calendar - Academic Consideration, Appeals and Petitions

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/diploma/current/index.shtml>

### **7.3 Drop Date**

Students will have until the last day of classes to drop courses without academic penalty. The deadline to drop two-semester courses will be the last day of classes in the second semester. This applies to all students (undergraduate, graduate and diploma) except for Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and Associate Diploma in Veterinary Technology (conventional and alternative delivery) students. The regulations and procedures for course registration are available in their respective Academic Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Dropping Courses

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Registration Changes

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/genreg-reg-regchg.shtml>

Associate Diploma Calendar - Dropping Courses

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/diploma/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

### **7.4 Copies of Out-of-class Assignments**

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

### **7.5 Accessibility**

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required; however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability.

Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to book their exams at least 7 days in advance and not later than the 40th Class Day.

For Guelph students, information can be found on the SAS website  
<https://www.uoguelph.ca/sas>

For Ridgetown students, information can be found on the Ridgetown SAS website  
<https://www.ridgetownc.com/services/accessibilityservices.cfm>

## 7.6 Academic Integrity

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity, and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community-faculty, staff, and students-to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff, and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that encourages academic integrity. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct  
<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct  
<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

## 7.7 Recording of Materials

Presentations that are made in relation to course work - including lectures - cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a student, or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

## 7.8 Resources

The Academic Calendars are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies, and regulations that apply to undergraduate, graduate, and diploma programs.

Academic Calendars  
<https://www.uoguelph.ca/academics/calendars>