

Point Loma Nazarene University
EXISTENTIAL PHILOSOPHY AND LITERATURE
PHL 331
FALL 2017
MW 10:50-12:05

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Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 12:30-3:30 or by appointment

PLNU MISSION:

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service becomes an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we aspire to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. Students will engage in the disciplined practice of asking questions about God, the world, and of themselves, including questions for which there may be no easy answers. (Learning, Growing)
2. Students will differentiate among interrelated movements or figures in the history of philosophy. (Learning)
3. Students will evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of human reasoning or experience to provide an adequate account of significant issues that relates to our human condition, the world, ethics and Christian life. (Learning, Growing, Serving)

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. To develop and widen an openness toward the pursuit of wisdom, all the while living in the tension that comes with this pursuit.
2. To examine the philosophical impact of the body.
3. To examine what it means for us to be human in light of what we have our being in or for.
4. To examine significant texts in the history of philosophy.
5. To contrast essentialist assumptions with existential critiques.
6. To nurture creative and reflective thinking by reading significant primary texts within the western philosophical tradition.
7. To encounter significant and influential figures in the western philosophical tradition in order to reflect upon the nature of that tradition itself.
8. To introduce several philosophical issues found in the western philosophical tradition as they address finitude, thrownness, relationality, and the transcendent.

9. To wrestle, and I mean wrestle, with these issues as they relate to our lives as we consider how we can be ethical in light of our limitations and our dependence upon the source of ethicality itself.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS:

All students are expected to meet the minimum standards for this course as set forth by the instructor. Students with learning disabilities who may need accommodations should first discuss options and services with the Academic Support Center (ASC) during the first two weeks of the semester. The ASC, in turn, will contact professors with official notification and suggested classroom accommodations, as required by federal law. Approved documentation must be provided by the student and placed on file in the ASC prior to the beginning of the semester. If you have a diagnosed disability, please contact PLNU's Disability Resource Center (DRC) within the first two weeks of class to demonstrate need and to register for accommodation by phone at 619-849-2486 or by e-mail at DRC@pointloma.edu. See [Disability Resource Center](#) for additional information.

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE:

The School of Theology and Christian Ministries is committed to the equality of women and men. Recognizing that people often use language in ways that imply the exclusion or inferiority of women, the School strongly urges students to join faculty and staff in avoiding any sexist language in public discourse, in classroom discussions and in writing.

TEXTBOOKS:

- *Søren Kierkegaard. *Sickness Unto Death*. Princeton, ISBN# 0-691-02028-0
- * Gordon Marino (Editor). *Basic Writings of Existentialism*, ISBN-# 13: 978-0375759895
- *Albert Camus, *The Stranger*, Vintage, Matthew Ward translation, ISBN #978-0679720201
- *Jacques Derrida. *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, ISBN-#13: 978-080473275 -Optional
- *Cormack McCarthy, *The Road*, Vintage, ISBN #978-0-307-38789-9

PROCEDURE/REQUIREMENTS:

1. We will be reading from some of the most significant **texts** in the history of western thought. It is vitally important that you become acquainted with the material in order that you get a feel for not simply what the writer says, but *how* she or he makes you think. I want you to be thoughtful and critical of what each of the thinkers writes, as well as of what I say in class. A significant portion of your grade will be based upon the amount of reading you do. You will be asked to give a report each day on your reading progress (scale of 0-10). For example, an 8.5 means that you read carefully and thought about carefully 85% of the assigned reading for that day.
2. Regular and punctual **attendance** is required for the full benefit of this class. If you are late it is your responsibility to see me after class in order that your attendance may be recorded. Any three tardies will be recorded as one absence. Due to the nature of this class

in particular, dialogue will be very important. Dialogue tends to spawn new ideas and creativity, so discussion will be important. Therefore, *each* student will be expected to enter into class discussion. The extent to which this occurs (as well as the quality), along with attendance will be considered in your final grade. *You cannot pass the class* if you miss more than 6 class sessions. See the catalogue.

3. Throughout the term each of you will do one **in-class presentation**. If it is the first day discussing a figure, there should be a brief and general philosophical introduction to the figure covered during that session. Otherwise the presentation should cover the specific reading for the day. The presentation should mainly be an outline of the text. You should reference 7-8 significant portions of the text to be covered in class. You must provide a detailed outline and bibliography for each member of the class.
4. There will be 3 **Take-Home Exams/essays** due throughout the semester. Each of the exams will cover the material just prior to the reception of the exam (including the material covered on the day of the reception of the exam). I will email you an essay prompt and you will have a week to respond. You absolutely may not use outside sources for the exams. You may study together and I encourage you to do so. Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in either zero credit for the assignment and a full grade reduction for the class or (more likely) failure of the course all together (this is up to my discretion). Both will result in a letter to the Provost to be placed in your academic record.
5. There will be a **final paper** due at noon, December 13, in my box on *The Road*. It will be reflective and related to the reading from Kierkegaard's *Works of Love*. It will be 7-9 pages, typed, double spaced. Theses must be approved by me in advance. Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in either zero credit for the assignment and a full grade reduction for the class or (more likely) failure of the course all together (this is up to my discretion). Both will result in a letter to the Provost to be placed in your academic record.
6. I would like for you to watch 4 **films** this semester. I will provide a list of approved films, and you must watch films only from this list for the fulfillment of this assignment. I would like for you to watch films you have not seen before. Your typed response can be anywhere from a paragraph to a page or so. The response should include a characterization of the existentialist themes in the film and the date you watched the film.
7. The **grades** are based on all of these mentioned assignments. All outside assignments are due at the beginning of class. Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in either zero credit for the assignment and a full grade reduction for the class or (more likely) failure of the course all together (this is up to my discretion). Both will result in a letter to the Provost to be placed in your academic record.

Presentation	12%
Reading	15%
Take-Home #1	16%
Take-Home #2	16%
Take-Home #3	15%
Movie Response (I-IV)	8% (2% each)
<u>FinalPaper</u>	<u>18%</u>
Total	100%

100-94% A	79-77% C+	63-60% D-
93-90% A-	76-74% C	59-0% F
89-87% B+	73-70% C-	
86-84% B	69-67% D+	
83-80% B-	66-64% D	

PLNU POLICIES:

FINAL EXAMINATION POLICY:

Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination **on its scheduled day**. The final examination schedule is posted on the [Class Schedules](#) site. No requests for early examinations or alternative days will be approved.

PLNU COPYRIGHT POLICY:

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

PLNU ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY:

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. Faculty should follow and students may appeal using the procedure in the university Catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

PLNU ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY:

Regular and punctual attendance at all classes is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent from more than 10 percent of class meetings, the faculty member can file a written report which may result in de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university drop date or, after that date, receive the appropriate grade for their work and participation. See [Academic Policies](#) in the Undergraduate Academic Catalog.

FILMS WITH EXISTENTIAL THEMES:

- *Gattica*
- *Boyhood*
- *Inception*
- *Brazil*
- *Snowpiercer*
- *Birdman*
- *The Truman Show*
- *Midnight in Paris*
- *Moon*
- *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*
- *Melancholia*
- *Shamshank Redemption*
- *Being John Malcovich*
- *Donnie Darko*
- *American Beauty*
- *Looper*
- *Finding a Friend for the End of the World*
- *127 Hours*
- *The Matrix*
- *Garden State*
- *Wit*
- *I ♥Huckabees*
- *Crimes and Misdemeanors*
- *Pulp Fiction*
- *Before Sunrise*
- *Pan's Labyrinth*
- *Blade Runner*
- *Straight Story*
- *The Tree of Life*
- *Toy Story 3*
- *Memento*
- *Thin Red Line*
- *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*
- *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*
- *True Grit (2010 version)*
- *Donnie Darko*
- *Groundhog Day*
- *Zelig*
- *Little Miss Sunshine*
- *Adaptation*
- *eXistenZ*
- *Moana*
- *Dunkirk*
- *Inception*

- o Gravity*
- o Nightcrawler*
- o Her*
- o Black Swan*
- o The Wrestler*
- o Inherent Vice*
- o Under the Skin*
- o LaLa Land*
- o Moonlight*
- o Arrival*
- o Captain Fantastic*
- o Mad Max: Fury Road*
- o I am Not Your Negro*
- o The Lobster*
- o Live, Die, Repeat: Edge of Tomorrow*
- o The Revenant*
- o Wreck It Ralph*

SCHEDULE GUIDELINE:

- 8/29 Introduction to the course
8/30 *Examined Life* film (Amazon Prime) reflection and discussion
9/4 No Class Labor Day
9/6 *Sickness Unto Death* pp. 1-42
9/11 *SUD* pp. 42-74*
9/13 *SUD* pp. 77-100* **Film Response 1 Due**
9/18 *SUD* pp. 100-131*
9/20 Dostoyevsky selection “Rebellion” PDF*
9/25 *Basic Writings of Existentialism (BWOE)* Dostoyevsky pp. 231-254*
9/27 *BWOE* Nietzsche pp. 111-145*
10/2 *BWOE* Nietzsche pp. 145-187*
10/4 *BWOE* Heidegger pp. 299-319 **Film Response 2 Due**
10/6-8 SoTCM Retreat Camp Stevens
10/9 *BWOE* Heidegger pp. 319-336* **Exam I Due**
10/11 *The Stranger* Camus pp. 3-71*
10/16 *The Stranger* Camus pp. 72-123*
10/18 *BWOE* Sartre pp. 369-390*
10/23 *BWOE* Sartre pp. 391-409
10/25 *BWOE* DeBeauvoir pp. 413-436* **Film Response 3 Due**
10/30 *BWOE* Ellison pp. 490-505*
11/1 *Totality and Infinity* (PDF) Levinas pp. 194-204* **Exam II Due**
11/6 *T and I* (PDF) Levinas pp. 204-219*
11/8 *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas* (book or PDF) Derrida pp. 1-13, Audre Lorde (PDF) *
11/13 *Selected Writings...Sarah Kofman* (PDF) Derrida/Kofman pp. 1-34*
11/15 *Selected Writings...Sarah Kofman* (PDF) Kofman pp.237-246* **Film Response 4 Due**
11/20 *Works of Love* (PDF) pp. 34-57*
11/22 Thanksgiving Break -read *The Road*
11/27 *Works of Love* (PDF) pp. 58-72 and pp.231-246* **Exam III Due**
11/29 *The Road* McCarthy pp. 3-137*
12/4 *The Road* McCarthy pp. 138-287*
12/6 Flex day
12/13 **Final paper Due**