Syllabus
The University of New Orleans
Dept. of Philosophy

ENGL 4391/PHIL 3511: The Existentialists: Irrationalism in Literature (3 credits)

Contact Information
Instructor: Dr. Clarence Mark Phillips
Office Hours: By Appointment
Email: cmphilli@uno.edu
Course Webpages: Moodle login page

Required Texts
Other writings and excerpts for the course will be made available on Moodle.

Catalog Description: A survey of contemporary critical approaches to literature through the in-depth study of a single author, literary theme, or topic: a careful examination of the views of Kierkegaard, Kafka, Sartre, Camus, and other thinkers associated with one of the 20th Century's most widely influential philosophies.

Course Overview: While the word “existentialism” is familiar to most people, not many of us have a clear idea about just what it means. However, unlike most other philosophical terms, the concept of existentialism is as often derived from literary works as it is from those considered “philosophical” - that is, it comes primarily from people who use language in a way that is expressive and evocative, rather than strictly denotative. For existentialists aren’t concerned with the universal truths of philosophy, but with the unique truths of individuals, with all that is involved in living *this one particular life*. This course, then, consists of a survey of some of the key figures in movement (e.g. Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Rilke, and Nietzsche), those concerned with how to live an “authentic” life despite the uncertainty of God's existence, struggling to find meaning in a post-war world that left them questioning their faith in their fellow man, and learning to cope with the “dread and anxiety” involved in facing an existence that is uniquely one's own. For while some of the topics they address may sound grim, these writers were not simply dwelling on the most depressing aspects of life. Rather, through their own novel terminology – such as *nihilism, the absurd, nothingness*, and “a leap of faith” – each was searching for a way to confront those aspects of life (often overlooked, denied, or repressed) in order to find the strength necessary to deal with them, to forge meaning for themselves.
Upon successfully completing this course, students will be able to do the following:

- to better recognize existential issues in philosophical and literary texts.
- to know how to form arguments.
- to know the views of the various existentialists.
- to understand the philosophical issues associated with existentialism.
- to identify key figures in the history of modern Western Thought.
- to understand the nature of philosophical argumentation.
- to present and to defend your own views regarding the above issues.
- to better read philosophical and literary texts.
- to recognize philosophical questions in literary works.
- to define key concepts in philosophical thought.
- to write an analytical text-based argumentative essay.
- to understand the significance of existentialism in the context of the history of Western Philosophy & Literature.

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<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>(40%)</td>
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<td>Exam 2</td>
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<td>Participation</td>
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Rubric for Grades: UNO Students

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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100 to 90</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>89.9 to 80</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>79.9 to 70</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>69.9 to 60</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>59.9 and below</td>
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READINGS:

Students will be expected to keep up on the weekly reading assignments for the course, to have read the material prior to class, and to come to class with relevant questions about, and/or criticisms of, those readings.

EXAMS & PAPERS:

Students will write a short paper on the readings, and take a midterm and final exam.

GRADING:

Each test will count for 40% of the overall score, and class participation the remaining 10% = 100%.
Withdrawal Policy – Undergraduate only
Students are responsible for initiating action to resign from the University (withdraw from all courses) or from a course on or before dates indicated in the current Important dates calendar. Students who fail to resign by the published final date for such action will be retained on the class rolls even though they may be absent for the remainder of the semester and be graded as if they were in attendance. Failure to attend classes does not constitute a resignation. Check the dates on the Registrar’s website, http://www.registrar.uno.edu. Consult The Bulletin for charges associated w/dropping & adding courses.

Incomplete Policy – Undergraduate only
The grade of I means incomplete and is given for work of passing quality but which, because of circumstances beyond the student’s control, is not complete. The issuance of the grade of I is at the discretion of the faculty member teaching the course. For all graduate and undergraduate students, a grade of I becomes a grade of F if it is not converted before the deadline for adding courses for credit (as printed in the Important Dates Calendar) of the next regular semester including summer semester.

Repeat Policy
When a student is permitted to repeat a course for credit, the last grade earned shall be the one which determines course acceptability for degree credit. A student who has earned a C or better in a course may not repeat that course unless, (1) the catalog description indicates that the course may be repeated for credit, or (2) the student’s Dean gives prior approval for documented extenuating circumstances.

Graduate Policies
Graduate policies often vary from undergraduate policies. To view the applicable policies for graduate students, see the Graduate Student Handbook: http://www.uno.edu/grad/documents/GraduateStudentHandbook2014.pdf

Academic Dishonesty Policy

Safety Awareness Facts and Education
Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender is a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources here: http://www.uno.edu/student-affairs-enrollment-management/

UNO Counseling Services and UNO Cares
UNO offers care and support for students in any type of distress. Counseling Services assist students in addressing mental health concerns through assessment, short-term counseling, and career testing and counseling. Find out more at http://www.uno.edu/counseling-services/. First-year students often have unique concerns, and UNO Cares is designed to address those students succeed. Contact UNO Cares through http://www.uno.edu/fye/uno-cares.aspx.

Emergency Procedures
Sign up for emergency notifications via text and/or email at E2Campus Notification: http://www.uno.edu/ehso/emergency-communications/index.aspx. All emergency and safety procedures are explained at the Emergency Health and Safety Office: http://www.uno.edu/ehso/.

Diversity at UNO
As the most diverse public university in the state, UNO maintains a Diversity Affairs division to support the university’s efforts towards creating an environment of healthy respect, tolerance, and appreciation for the people from all walks of life, and the expression of intellectual point of view and personal lifestyle. The Office of Diversity Affairs promotes these values through a wide range of programming and activities. http://diversity.uno.edu/index.cfm

Learning and Support Services
Help is within reach in the form of learning support services, including tutoring in writing and math and other supplemental instruction. Visit the Learning Resource Center, LA 334 – or: http://www.uno.edu/lrc/.

Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity
UNO is an equal opportunity employer. The Human Resource Management department has more information on UNO’s compliance with federal and state regulations regarding EEOC in its Policies and Resources website: http://www.uno.edu/human-resource-management/policies.aspx