

Existentialism (Spring 2022)  
Gregg Lambert, Dean's Professor of Humanities  
Humanities Center, 3rd Floor Tolley Humanities Building  
Office: 306 Tolley, 3-7192 (emergencies only)  
TTH 2:00-3:20 LS 300  
Office hour: T 3:30-5:00

### Course Description

#### PHI 325 — Existentialism

Foregoing its 19<sup>th</sup> century predecessors (e.g., Kierkegaard, Nietzsche), existential philosophy arose primarily in response to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century phenomenological writings of Martin Heidegger and the post-war French intellectual Jean-Paul Sartre, whose *Being and Nothingness* inspired a French intellectual movement immediately after WWII. It also became associated with the literary and political views of writers and artists of the “Left Bank,” including Albert Camus and Simone de Beauvoir, Sartre’s companion and co-provocateur, which quickly spread to New York where the term “Existentialism” took root and became a popular definition of modern post-war philosophy.

In this course, we will study basically a fifteen period between 1945 and 1960 (the year of Camus’ death in a car accident) during which the philosophical and political views of these figures captivated a younger generation of French intelligentsia, and influenced literary and cultural movements globally. During the first half of the semester, we will explore this genealogy through a close reading of key chapters from Heidegger’s *Being and Time* and Sartre’s *Being and Nothingness*, followed, in the second half of the semester, by the ethical and feminist writings of Simone de Beauvoir and the fiction and public lectures of Albert Camus.

The weekly schedule will be comprised of lecture on the assigned reading for the week on Tuesdays, and close reading and class discussion on Thursdays. Each week, students must complete a “two minute paper” in response to the lecture on Tuesday, which I will use to guide our class discussion on Thursdays. Minute papers are due by email by midnight on Tuesday; single spaced, Helvetica 10.5 pt. font, sent by Word doc. attachment [gregglambert23@gmail.com](mailto:gregglambert23@gmail.com) Two Minute papers are not graded, but students must submit a two-minute paper each week and 200 points will be deducted from final grade for missing assignments. It is course policy that attendance and active participation are expected and required. Students will have 3 excused absences to use for any reason during the semester, without having to be excused for non-medical reasons, after which 300 points will be deducted for each absence on the 4,000 point scale used by SU in determining letter grades.

<http://coursecatalog.syr.edu/content.php?catoid=13&navoid=1748#8-4-grades>

As a rule, I do not excuse additional absences, unless for serious medical condition or in accordance with SU policy on attendance.

<http://coursecatalog.syr.edu/content.php?catoid=13&navoid=1748#2-0-attendance-in-classes>

The formal components that are graded include a mid-term examination on Heidegger and Sartre, and an assigned topical article for a class wiki on “Existentialism,” which will be constructed in place of a final exam or paper.

Readings—I do not use Blackboard and students can register for a free dropbox account to receive course folder with readings. I will also communicate through SU Success throughout the semester.

Heidegger, *Being and Time*  
Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, *Existentialism is a Humanism*  
De Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity*  
Camus, *The Stranger*, *The Rebel*

Additional University Policies: please consult your page on My Slice for current SU policies