Course Description: This course is a thematic and historical introduction to existentialism. “Existentialism” is a term often used to describe a diverse philosophical and literary movement that flourished through mid-twentieth century Europe. Of the figures we’ll be studying in this course, only Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir were a part of this movement. Two of the figures we’ll look at, Soren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche, preceded the existentialist movement by roughly a century, and another figure, Martin Heidegger, rejected attempts to classify his philosophy as existentialist. We will, nevertheless, see that Sartre and de Beauvoir inherit a great deal of their philosophical views and vocabulary from Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and especially Heidegger, and, more importantly, that each of these philosophers is connected by a common interest in a related themes: authenticity/inauthenticity, the self, and autonomy, to list just a few. While we will touch on each of these themes throughout the course, as well as various others, it is the first on this list, authenticity/inauthenticity, that we will use to focus our inquiry. Our main question will be “what does it mean to live authentically/inauthentically?”

Course Requirements/Grading:
- Midterm paper – 37%
  Paper prompts will be distributed Thursday, August 22, and papers will be due Thursday, August 29.
- Final paper – 50%
  Paper Prompts will be distributed Monday, September 10, and papers will be due Monday, September 17.
- Participation – 3%
- Reading/Lecture Quizzes XOR Book/Film Analysis – 10%
  • Reading/Lecture Quizzes: Your TA will administer two reading/lecture quizzes in sections during the quarter. Each will have one or two short-answer questions based on material covered in previous lectures. If you’ve come to lecture, done the readings, and thought about the material, it’s likely you’ll receive full marks on your reading/lecture quizzes.
  • Students have the option of substituting the reading/lecture quizzes for a book or film analysis. For more information regarding the book/film analysis, please see the assignment instructions posted on CCLE.

Conduct Code: In accord with the UCLA Student Conduct Code (available in full at http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Code_choice.php), take care to submit only work that is your own.
**Lecture Attendance**: It will be difficult to succeed in this course without attending lecture regularly. Some of what we cover in lecture will not be included in the required readings, and it will be difficult for you to learn this material by, for example, borrowing a friend’s lecture notes.

**Section Attendance**: The sections for this course will give you an opportunity to ask questions, make points, and clarify issues regarding the material from lecture and the readings. Your time in this course will be more fruitful and enjoyable, if you come to section prepared to engage in open-minded and spirited dialogue with your classmates and TA about the week’s readings.

Sections are not mandatory, but there is a small participation grade for the course, which will be a function of your contributions in sections, lectures, and office hours. Additionally, your TA will administer two reading/lecture quizzes in sections at some point during the quarter. In order to complete these quizzes, you must attend section.

**Readings**: All required readings will be available on the CCLE page for this course. If you would like to purchase copies of the texts for this course (optional), consult the following list for the editions we’ll be using:


Many of the readings are difficult, both because they deal with difficult topics and because they employ unfamiliar technical language. I will provide recommended and optional readings on the course website that should help with these issues. But your best bet, if you’re having difficulty understanding the material, is still to come to lecture, or see me or your TA in office hours, where we will do our best to demystify things.

**Schedule of Readings**: A reading schedule for each week will be posted to CCLE. Please consult the schedule for required, recommended, and optional readings.
Accommodations: Students who require accommodations with any aspect of the course are encouraged to consult with UCLA’s Center for Accessible Education (CAE). Details of the services CAE provides, including the protocol for letters of accommodation, can be found on their website: https://www.cae.ucla.edu. Please do not hesitate to contact me, if there is something you think I personally can do to make the class more accessible.