**Philosophy 177A: Existentialism (draft, subject to revision)**

**Summer 2019**

**Instructor:** John Kardosh  
**Email:** jkardosh@humnet.ucla.edu  
**Office:** Dodd Hall 317  
**Office Hours:** TBD

**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. Most of the figures we’ll be studying in this course either preceded this movement, e.g., Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, or did not consider themselves a part of it, e.g., Heidegger. They are, nevertheless, often grouped under this label because much of their work concerns a set of related themes, such as nothingness, death, freedom, individuality, and authenticity/inauthenticity. While we will touch on each of these themes throughout the course, as well as various others, it is the last on the list, authenticity, that we will use to focus our inquiry. Our main question will be ‘how does one live authentically/inauthentically?’

We will start by examining the conflict between the individual and the public and the challenge to ‘universal morality’ in Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. We will then turn out attention to Division I of Heidegger’s *Being and Time*. By unpacking the structure of what Heidegger calls “care,” we will gain insight into how he conceives the distinction between the authentic and inauthentic self. Jean Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir’s discussion of “bad faith” offers the most direct answer to our main question, and for this reason they present a natural stopping point for our inquiry.

**Course Requirements/Grading:**
- Midterm paper, 4-5 pages – 40%
- Final paper, 5-6 pages – 50%
- Writing Responses (2 total) – 10% (5% each)

**Conduct Code:** In accord with the UCLA Student Conduct Code (available in full at [http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Code_choice.php](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. Moreover, a small, though not insignificant, portion of your grade for the course will come from two writing responses, which will be based on lecture material and administered in section.

**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.
Your TA will administer two writing responses during the quarter. Each will have one or two straightforward short-answer questions based on material covered in previous lectures. If you’ve come to lecture, and thought about the material, it’s likely you’ll receive full marks on your writing responses.

**Readings:** All required readings for the course will be made available on our class website. Many of the readings are difficult, both because they deal with difficult topics and because they employ unfamiliar technical language. I will provide supplementary/optional readings on our 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 in office hours, where I will do our best to demystify things.

**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](https://www.cae.ucla.edu). Please do not hesitate to contact me, if there is something you think I can do to make the class more accessible.

**Schedule of Readings:**

**Week 1: Introduction / Kierkegaard**
  - Tuesday, August 6\(^{th}\)
    - No assigned reading
  - Course Introduction
  - Thursday, August 8\(^{th}\)
    - Kierkegaard, selections from *Fear and Trembling*

**Week 2: Kierkegaard/ Nietzsche**
  - Tuesday, August 13\(^{th}\)
    - Kierkegaard, selections from *Fear and Trembling* and *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*
  - Thursday, August 15\(^{th}\)
    - Kierkegaard continued
    - Introduction to Nietzsche

**Week 3: Nietzsche**
  - Tuesday, August 20\(^{th}\)
    - Nietzsche, selections from *On the Genealogy of Morals*
  - Thursday, August 22\(^{nd}\)
    - Nietzsche, selections from *On the Genealogy of Morals* and *The Gay Science*
    - Midterm paper topics distributed

**Week 4: Heidegger**
  - Tuesday, August 27\(^{th}\)
    - Heidegger, selections from *Being and Time*
  - Thursday, August 29\(^{th}\)
    - Heidegger, selections from *Being and Time*

**Week 5: Heidegger Continued/Sartre and Beauvoir**
Tuesday, September 3rd
  Heidegger, selections from Being and Time
  Midterm papers due
Thursday, September 5th
  Sartre, selections from Being and Nothingness
  Beauvoir, selections from The Ethics of Ambiguity

**Week 6: Sartre and Beauvoir/ Student selection**
Tuesday, September 10th
  Sartre, selections from Being and Nothingness
  Beauvoir, selections from The Ethics of Ambiguity
  Final paper topics distributed
Thursday, September 12th
  Topic to be determined in consultation with the class

  Final paper due Tuesday, September 17th