

RHODES COLLEGE  
COURSE SYLLABUS  
PHILOSOPHY 360:01  
“EXISTENTIALISM”

SPRING 2007  
Buckman 330  
T-TH 12:30-1:45 P.M.

**Instructor: Dr. Ross Reed, Department of Philosophy**  
**Office: 403 Halliburton Tower, 843-3517, 680-9350 (H).**  
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**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

1. To provide a broad overview of various “existential” texts, including plays, short stories, a novel, and discursive philosophical writings.
2. To situate these writings within the broader context of Western philosophical traditions, including ancient philosophy, scholastic/medieval philosophy, rationalism, empiricism and phenomenology, among others.
3. To assist you in being able to express - both verbally and in written form – the abstract thought brought forth through the use of critical thinking skills involved in addressing these texts and issues.
4. To give you some specific intellectual material to help you grapple with the ambiguity, anxiety, and freedom that are indelible aspects of the human condition.
5. To engage in philosophizing in a way that allows you to maintain/achieve/regain a childlike wonder and sense of play in the face of the vast and mysterious universe.

**COURSE TEXTS:**

1. de Sade, Marquis. *The 120 Days of Sodom and Other Writings*. Trans. Wainhouse and Seaver. New York: Grove Press, 1987.
2. Sartre, Jean-Paul. *No Exit and Three Other Plays*. Trans. Gilbert and Abel. New York: Vintage, 1989.

3. Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Beyond Good and Evil*. Trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage, 1989.
4. Kaufmann, Walter, ed. *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*. Revised edition. New York: Meridian, 1975.
5. Camus, Albert. *The Fall*. New York: Vintage, 1991.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

Five components:

1. **CRITICAL PAPER ONE (1000-1250 WORDS).**  
Topic and outline due Tuesday, 6 February.  
Paper due Thursday, 15 February 2007. Critical philosophical papers include explication and analysis of a thinker who has already been discussed in class. Papers must develop, analyze, and defend a stated thesis or explore a question stated at the beginning of the paper. If an outline is not submitted on or before the outline due date, the paper grade will drop by 5%.
2. **CRITICAL PAPER TWO (1000-1250 WORDS).**  
This paper should deal with an issue found in the philosophy of Sartre or Nietzsche.  
Topic and outline due Thursday, 12 April.  
Paper due Tuesday, 24 April 2007.
3. **BOOK GLOSSING: Camus' The Fall.**  
Due Thursday, 22 March 2007. Glossing consists of marginal notes, written in the book, commenting on, expanding, analyzing, criticizing or otherwise reacting to passages in the book. Any comment is fair game except for mere restatement of the text. The entire book is then handed in.
4. **CLASS PARTICIPATION**
  - A. Students are expected to attend classes, to have read the assigned material, and to be prepared to discuss it.
  - B. Each student should prepare a **typed** outline of the day's reading. Outlines should be **100-200 words** in length, should refer specifically to the text (**with page citations**), and should conclude with a question based on the reading.
  - C. Each student should prepare to give a five to ten minute introduction to one class discussion during the semester. The presentation should be handed in to the instructor on the date of the presentation. The

presentation should consist **only** of your summary (and analysis if you are feeling brave) of a selected part of the assigned reading for that day. This means that you should not use outside source materials of any kind, nor should you restate the editor's introduction to the reading, if one is present. For the presentation, you are the expert!

## 5. FINAL EXAMINATION

The final examination will be an essay style exam based upon selected readings and class discussions.

The final exam is on Saturday, 5 May 2007 at 1:00p.m.

All assignments must be turned in on the due date to receive full credit. Late assignments will be marked down 5% per class unless accompanied by a valid medical excuse.

All five of the above components are of equal weight. That is to say, each is 20% of the total final grade. Grading will follow the Rhodes College scale. It goes without saying that the meaning, function, and intent of the Rhodes Honor Code should be kept in mind throughout this course.

I am a sick man...I am a spiteful man. I am an unattractive man. I believe my liver is diseased.

Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes From Underground* (1864)

He [Man] is given the abstract possibility of existing, but not the reality. This he has to conquer hour after hour. Man must earn his life, not only economically but metaphysically.

Jose Ortega y Gasset, *History as a System* (1941)

One may liken dread to dizziness. He whose eye chances to look down into the yawning abyss becomes dizzy. But the reason for it is just as much his eye as it is the precipice. For suppose he had not looked down.

Soren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Dread (Anxiety)* (1844)

...[Philosophy] opens up a refuge for man [sic] where no tyranny can reach...

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Schopenhauer As Educator* (1874).

“And now, friend-reader, you must prepare your heart and your mind for the most impure tale that has ever been told since our world began, the book the likes of which are met with neither amongst the ancients nor amongst us moderns.”

The Marquis de Sade, *The 120 Days of Sodom* (1785), p.253.

“A single sentence will suffice for modern man: he fornicated and read the papers. After that vigorous definition, the subject will be, if I may say so, exhausted.”

Albert Camus, *The Fall* (1956), pp. 6-7).

#### COURSE SCHEDULE:

All date are subject to change. Unless notified, please read the assigned material and be prepared to discuss it on the date specified, as follows:

1. Thursday, 11 January  
Introduction
2. Tuesday, 16 January  
*Existentialism: The Myth of Sisyphus*: Camus (pp. 375-378),  
Kaufmann (pp. 11-22, 40-51).
3. Thursday, 18 January  
*Existentialism: Notes From the Underground*: Dostoevsky (pp. 52-82).
4. Tuesday, 23 January  
*120 Days of Sodom*: Sade (pp. 181-241).
5. Thursday, 25 January  
*Existentialism: The Wall*: Sartre (pp. 280-299).
6. Tuesday, 30 January  
*Existentialism: Existentialism is a Humanism*: Sartre (pp. 345-369).
7. Thursday, 1 February  
*Existentialism: Man Has No Nature*: Ortega (pp. 152-157).
8. Tuesday, 6 February  
*Existentialism*: Kafka (pp. 142-151), Sade (pp. 241-260).  
**Topic/Outline due for Critical Paper One**

9. Thursday, 8 February  
*Existentialism: Concluding Unscientific Postscript, The Point of View:*  
Kierkegaard (pp. 83-101).
10. Tuesday, 13 February  
*Existentialism: The Concept of Dread, Concluding Unscientific Postscript:* Kierkegaard (pp. 101-120).
11. Thursday, 15 February  
**CRITICAL PAPER ONE DUE**  
*Existentialism:* Kierkegaard (continued), Sade (pp. 352-365, 388-402).
12. Tuesday, 20 February  
*No Exit and Three Other Plays: No Exit,* Sartre (pp. 1-46).
13. Thursday, 22 February  
*Existentialism: Schopenhauer as Educator, The Dawn, The Gay Science, Thus Spake Zarathustra, The Will To Power, Ecce Homo:* Nietzsche (pp. 121-133).
14. Tuesday, 27 February  
*Beyond Good and Evil:* Nietzsche (pp. ix-xvii, 1-32), Sade (pp. 412-418).
15. Thursday, 1 March  
*Beyond Good and Evil:* Nietzsche (pp. 33-56), Sade (pp. 419-431).
16. Tuesday, 6 March  
*Beyond Good and Evil:* Nietzsche (pp. 57-94), Sade (pp. 455-460, 466-472).
17. Thursday, 8 March  
*Beyond Good and Evil:* Nietzsche (pp. 95-118), Sade (pp. 489-508).
18. Tuesday, 20 March  
*The Fall:* Camus (pp. 1-71).
19. Thursday, 22 March  
*The Fall:* Camus (pp. 72-147).  
**BOOK GLOSSING DUE**
20. Tuesday, 27 March  
*Beyond Good and Evil:* Nietzsche (pp. 119-141), Sade (pp. 526-536)
21. Thursday, 29 March  
*Beyond Good and Evil:* Nietzsche (pp. 143-170), Sade (pp. 571-595).
22. Tuesday, 3 April  
*Beyond Good and Evil:* Nietzsche (pp. 171-198), Sade (pp. 597-623).

23. Tuesday, 10 April  
*Beyond Good and Evil*: Nietzsche (pp. 199-245), Sade (pp. 625-646).
24. Thursday, 12 April  
*Existentialism: Anti-Semite and Jew*: Sartre (pp. 329-345).  
**Topic/Outline for Critical Paper Two due**
25. Tuesday, 17 April  
*Existentialism: Being and Nothingness*: Sartre (pp. 299-328).
26. Thursday, 19 April  
*Existentialism: Critique of Dialectical Reason*: Sartre (pp. 369-374),  
Sade (pp. 646-674).
27. Tuesday, 24 April  
**CRITICAL PAPER TWO DUE**  
*No Exit and Three Other Plays: Dirty Hands*: Sartre (pp. 125-177).
28. Thursday, 26 April  
*No Exit and Three Other Plays: Dirty Hands*: Sartre (pp. 177- 241).  
**FINAL EXAMINATION – Saturday, 5 May 2007 at 1:00p.m.**