

Rhodes College
Topics: Existentialism and Film – 17412 – PHIL 250-02
Fall 2006

Prof. Steve Faison

Class Days/Time: TR 3:30-4:45

Location: Palmer 203

Office Hours and Location: MW 2:30-4:30 and by appointment; Clough 402

Contact: 3577 and faisons@rhodes.edu

Existentialism is a philosophy that emphasizes the uniqueness and isolation of the individual experience in a hostile or indifferent universe, regards human existence as unexplainable, and stresses individual choice and responsibility for the consequences of one's acts. Using selected films and supporting written texts, this course will examine challenges to freedom in a world governed by the randomness of existence, challenges to ethics in a world without transcendent values, barriers to identifying, obtaining and effectively using the "truth," and the consequential difficulties in discovering and making meaning.

COURSE MATERIALS:

Barrett: *Irrational Man*

Marino (ed.): *Basic Writings of Existentialism*

Part I: *The Maltese Falcon, Double Indemnity, The Asphalt Jungle, Sweet Smell of Success, Chinatown*

Part II: *The Hustler, The Graduate, Cool Hand Luke, Crimes and Misdemeanors, Memento*

GRADING:

50% philosophical film reviews (10)

30% final paper

20% presentations, homework, participation

CLASS PRESENTATIONS: Each student (in pairs) is required to make a brief presentation of assigned reading and/or viewing to the class (approximately 10 minutes) which will serve as the introduction to the material and discussion for that session. You are encouraged to select scenes and essays that you find enlightening, appealing, intriguing, frustrating or inflammatory.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION: Attendance is required. Student participation in class discussion is an essential component of learning, and your grade for the class. This is especially true in philosophy courses. In this class you are cordially invited to participate in the great intellectual conversation. If you are unusually shy about speaking in class, please see me and some reasonable accommodation can be made.

ALL WORK IN THIS COURSE IS TO BE CONDUCTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE HONOR CODE.

