

1000-E25;Kierkegaards Authorship: On the Loss and Recovery of  
Meaning+1000-E25;Kierkegaards Authorship: On the Loss and Recovery of  
Meaning+1000-E25;Kierkegaard's Authorship: On the Loss and Recovery



Rediger



Autumn Semester 2025

**Course Content:**

This English language course offered by the Søren Kierkegaard Research Centre at the University of Copenhagen is open to Danish students as well as international students interested in contemplative reading and discussion of the works of Copenhagen's most radical author, Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855).

Kierkegaard's entire authorship is centered around the existential project that every human being is confronted with: to become oneself and none other than oneself. And as he sees it, becoming oneself does not happen passively and is never achieved once and for all, but requires constant effort. He thus often describes this project as one of taking responsibility for "choosing," "gaining," or "becoming oneself."

This course examines his witty, humorous, but also deeply earnest exploration of the psychology of self-identity. Kierkegaard's thoughts about the struggle for personhood take us through perhaps unexpected territories: beginning with the breakdown of culture-specific ethnic and religious that have traditionally defined the self, he explores the culturally destructive power of Socrates' irony, the art of seduction, theories of beauty and boredom, a scathing critique of religious culture and politics, religious demands that conflict with ethical duty, the joy of being embodied here and now, and finally, love.

We will remain especially attentive to the ways in which Kierkegaard's thought is critical of inherited ethnic and cultural definitions of self, and why he nonetheless considers human relationships to be absolutely essential to understanding oneself and one's obligations to other human beings.

## **Learning objectives**

To be able to:

- Read and understand a variety of texts from Kierkegaard's authorship.
- Account for the key concepts from Kierkegaard's authorship presented in the course.
- Reflect on how these concepts could be of relevance for our self-understanding and our relation to contemporary society.
- Identify and consider philosophical key problems in Kierkegaard's authorship.

## **Course Instructor:**

Mads Peter Karlsen, PhD, Associate Professor of Ethics and Philosophy of Religion, University of Copenhagen. Email: [mpk@teol.ku.dk](mailto:mpk@teol.ku.dk)

### **Class Meetings:**

Mondays, 12:15-14.30, room 7C.1.05 (NB. First day of class will be August 25).

### **Language of instruction and discussion:**

English. (Final papers, however, may also be written in Danish, Swedish, or Norwegian).

### **Credit:**

15 ECTS credits

### **Streaming:**

We plan on physical participation this semester, but the course will also be livestreamed, though the requirements for the research paper are changed significantly if you follow the course online.

Zoom link: <https://ucph-ku.zoom.us/j/4288458378?pwd=VktBT0JTLzB5czNoZkpoYTc5aUM5QT09> ➞ <https://ucph-ku.zoom.us/j/4288458378?pwd=VktBT0JTLzB5czNoZkpoYTc5aUM5QT09>

### **Expectations of the students:**

The students are expected to have prepared themselves carefully for each class, that is, to have done the required reading and to think about issues, problems, and questions to be discussed in class. Moreover, the students are expected to engage in the discussions as well as the group work.

## **Requirements for DIS-students:**

*For undergraduate students (bachelor students):*

Active attendance (at least attendance in 75% of the sessions documented by protocol). The syllabus volume and content are determined by the teacher, and two papers are to be submitted to the teacher of each 4-5 pages, as well as a final major assignment, which has a size of 19,200-24,000 characters.

## **Requirements for KU-students (both Danish students and Exchange students):**

*For undergraduate students (bachelor students):*

Active attendance (at least attendance in 75% of the sessions documented by protocol). A final major assignment, which has a size of 24.000-28.800 characters. The assignments is assessed by the teacher and a grade is given in accordance with the 7-point grading scale. If participation takes place via streaming for more than 25% of the sessions, the following is required to pass the course: A final assignment assignment that has a scope of 36,000-48,000 characters.

*For graduate students (kandidat/master students):*

Active attendance (at least attendance in 75% of the sessions documented by protocol). A final paper of 36.000-48-000 characters. The assignment is assessed by the teacher, and a grade is given in accordance with the 7-point grading scale. If participation takes place via streaming for more than 25% of the sessions, the following is required to pass the course: An assignment of 60,000-72,000 characters.

## **Course Evaluation for DIS students:**

[https://absalon.instructure.com/courses/%24CANVAS COURSE REFERENCE%24/file\\_ref/gc091475ddd3b63cfd84728da2742c21f/download?wrap=1](https://absalon.instructure.com/courses/%24CANVAS COURSE REFERENCE%24/file_ref/gc091475ddd3b63cfd84728da2742c21f/download?wrap=1)

Final paper: 45%

First short paper: 20%

([https://absalon.instructure.com/courses/%24CANVAS COURSE REFERENCE%24/file\\_ref/gc091475ddd3b63cfd84728da2742c21f/download?wrap=1](https://absalon.instructure.com/courses/%24CANVAS%20COURSE%20REFERENCE%24/file_ref/gc091475ddd3b63cfd84728da2742c21f/download?wrap=1))

Second short paper: 20%

Attendance and participation: 15%

### **Course Evaluation for KU-students (both Danish students and Exchange students):**

Final paper: 100%

### **Plagiarism Policy:**

In accordance with UCPH rules for academic ethics, there will be a no tolerance policy towards cheating and plagiarism. The submission of any paper which is not your own work will result in an automatic fail and may have severe consequences for your future studies

### **Readings:**

Completion of reading assignments as scheduled is required and is a prerequisite for participating in class discussions.

For students who read Danish: Kierkegaards samlede værker, *Søren Kierkegaards Skrifter* (SKS), is available online at [www.sks.dk](http://www.sks.dk)  (<http://www.sks.dk>) . (<http://www.sks.dk/>) I have provided references to SKS for the Kierkegaard readings (e.g., Danish: SKS 4, 148-151) in this reading plan. (Note: To see page breaks, place a checkmark in the middle box, next to SKS, on the top left-hand side of the screen).

### **Course texts to be purchased before the beginning of class (for KU students):**

Søren Kierkegaard, *Either/Or*, trans. Alastair Hannay, London: Penguin Books, 2004. ISBN 978-0-140-44577-0

Søren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness unto Death*, trans. Alastair Hannay, London: Penguin Books, 1989. ISBN 978-0-140-44533-6

*Primary texts on Absalon* (under Moduls)

Søren Kierkegaard, "The Conception Made Necessary" and "Irony after Fichte" in *On the Concept of Irony*

Søren Kierkegaard, "Strengthening in the Inner Being" in *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses*

Søren Kierkegaard, "Love Seeks Not Its Own" in *Works of Love*

Søren Kierkegaard, "My Task" in *The Moment 10*

*Background material* (optional and additional reading)

Joakim Garff, *Søren Kierkegaard: a biography*, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013. (<https://doi-org.ep.fjernadgang.kb.dk/10.1515/9781400849604>   
(<https://doi-org.ep.fjernadgang.kb.dk/10.1515/9781400849604>.)

George Pattison, *The Philosophy of Kierkegaard*, London: Routledge, 2005. (<https://doi-org.ep.fjernadgang.kb.dk/10.4324/9781315712208>  
 (<https://doi-org.ep.fjernadgang.kb.dk/10.4324/9781315712208>.)

## **Recommended Secondary Literature:**

Johannes Sløk, *Kierkegaard's Universe, A New Guide to the Genius*, Copenhagen: Danish Cultural Institute, 1994 (155 pages) (also available in the original Danish as *Kierkegaards Univers*).

Skjul alle

Vis fremgang

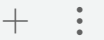
↵ Eksporter fagindhold

✓ Offentliggør alle ▼

+ Modul



▼ SESSION 1: On the Loss and Recovery of Meaning



Required reading



Brian Söderquist, "Kierkegaard in 10 minutes"



Kierkegaard: Journal AA:12 (read pp. 13-25, entry 12)



Chronology of Kierkegaard's Works, exact dates, 2020.doc



Biographical overview small format, 2020.doc



Reading Questions-1



## Optional reading



Bruce Kirmmse, "Kierkegaard and the End of the Danish Golden Age".pdf



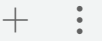
## Power Point



Session 1 (KA) ES 2025.pptx



## ▼ SESSION 2: On the Concept of Irony: Irony as Truth and Untruth



## Required reading



On the Concept of Irony: "The Conception Made Necessary" and "Irony after Fichte", pp. 222-240, 293-302  
(Danish: SKS 1, 244-262, 308-321)



Brian Söderquist, "Irony", Oxford Handbook of Kierkegaard, chap. 18.



Reading Questions-2

|                                                               |   |   |   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|
|                                                               | ✓ | S | ⋮ |
| Optional reading                                              | ✓ |   | ⋮ |
| 📎 Jon Stewart, Kierkegaard and Romantic Subjectivism.pdf      | ✓ | S | ⋮ |
| Power Point                                                   | ✓ |   | ⋮ |
| 📎 Session 2 (KA) ES 2025.pptx                                 | ✓ | S | ⋮ |
| 📄 Hong & Hong Translation (Kierkegaard, The Concept of Irony) | ✓ | S | ⋮ |

|                                                       |   |   |   |
|-------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| ⋮                                                     | ✓ | ▼ |   |
| ▼ SESSION 3: Either/Or I: On Aesthetics and Actuality | + |   | ⋮ |
| First short paper (Hand out)                          | ⊘ |   | ⋮ |
| Required reading                                      | ✓ |   | ⋮ |

|                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>“Preface” to Either/Or, authored by Victor Eremita, pp. 27-37 (Danish: SKS 2, 11-22)</p>                                                            |                                                                                             |
| <p>“The Unhappiest One” in Either/Or, authored by A, pp. 209-221 (Danish: SKS 2, 211-223)</p>                                                          |                                                                                             |
| <p> Reading Questions-3</p>                                           |          |
| <p>Optional reading</p>                                                                                                                                |                                                                                             |
| <p> The Unhappiest One and the Structure of EO - Hare.pdf</p>         |          |
| <p>Alastair Hannay, Introduction (E/O), p.1-21</p>                                                                                                     |                                                                                             |
| <p>Power Point</p>                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                         |
| <p> Session 3 (KA) FS 2025.pptx</p>                                 |    |
| <p> Hong &amp; Hong Translation (Kierkegaard, Either/Or Part 1)</p> |    |



▼ SESSION 4: Either/Or I: Boredom and Nothingness



Required reading



“Diapsalmata” by “A,” in Either/Or, pp. 39-57 (Danish: SKS 2, 25-52)



“Crop Rotation” by “A,” in Either/Or, pp. 223-241 (Danish: SKS 2, 271-289)



Reading Questions-4



Optional reading



On Diapsalmata - Harries.pdf



The rotation of Crops - Harries.pdf



Power Point





Session 4 (KA) FS 2025.pptx



Hong & Hong Translation (Kierkegaard, Either/Or Part 1)



▼ SESSION 5: Either/Or II: On Taking Ownership of Choice



Required reading



“The Equilibrium Between the Aesthetic and the Ethical” by Wilhelm, in Either/Or, pp. 475-487 (Danish: SKS 3, 155-166)



Reading Questions-5



Optional reading



Power Point





Session 5 (KA) FS 2025.pptx



Hong & Hong Translation (Kierkegaard, Either/Or Part 2)



▼ SESSION 6: Either/Or II: On Taking Ownership of Oneself



Second short paper (Hand out)



Required reading



“The Equilibrium Between the Aesthetic and the Ethical” by Wilhelm, in Either/Or, pp. 509-513; 540-556, (Danish: SKS 3, 198-202; 236-253)



Reading Questions-6



Optional reading



## Power Point



Session 6 (KA) FS 2025.pptx



Hong & Hong Translation (Kierkegaard, Either/Or Part 2)



## ▼ SESSION 7: Religious Crisis and Existential Concern



## Required reading



“Strengthening in the Inner Being” by Søren Kierkegaard, in *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses* pp. 79-101, (Danish: SKS 5, 87-106)



Reading Questions-7



## Optional reading



Brian Söderquist, Kierkegaard and Strengthening in the inner being.pdf

|                                                                                                                           |   |   |   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|
|                                                                                                                           | ✓ | S | ⋮ |
|  The Concept of The Edifying - Bruun.pdf | ✓ | S | ⋮ |
| Power Point                                                                                                               | ✓ |   | ⋮ |
|  Session 7 (KA) FS 2025.pptx             | ⊘ | S | ⋮ |

|                                                                                                         |   |   |   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| ⋮                                                                                                       | ✓ | ▼ |   |
| ▼ SESSION 8: The Sickness unto Death: Quiet Despair at the Heart of Existence                           | + |   | ⋮ |
| Required reading                                                                                        | ✓ |   | ⋮ |
| Sickness Unto Death, pp. 43-72, (Danish: SKS 11, 129-157)                                               | ✓ |   | ⋮ |
|  Reading Questions-8 | ✓ | S | ⋮ |
| Optional reading                                                                                        | ✓ |   | ⋮ |

|                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alastair Hannay, Introduction (SUD), p.1-32                                                                                                      | ✓ ⋮                                                                                     |
| Power Point                                                                                                                                      | ✓ ⋮                                                                                     |
|  Session 8 (KA) FS 2025.pptx                                    |  S ⋮ |
|  Hong & Hong Translation (Kierkegaard, The Sickness Unto Death) | ✓ S ⋮                                                                                   |

|                                                                                                         |                                          |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <div>⋮</div> <div>▼ SESSION 9: The Sickness unto Death: Defiant Despair</div>                           | <div>✓ ▼</div> <div>+</div> <div>⋮</div> |
| Required reading                                                                                        | ✓ ⋮                                      |
| Sickness Unto Death, pp. 72-105, (Danish: SKS 11, 157-187).                                             | ✓ ⋮                                      |
|  Reading Questions-9 | ✓ S ⋮                                    |

## Optional reading



Anna Söderquist, Images of the closed self in SUD.pdf



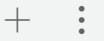
## Power Point



Session 9 (KA) FS 2025.pptx



## ▼ SESSION 10: The Sickness unto Death: Sin is Despair



## Required reading



Sickness Unto Death, pp. 109-120 (Danish: SKS 11, 189-201).



Reading Questions-10



## Optional reading



Arne Grøn, The relation between part one and Two in SUD.pdf



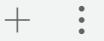
## Power Point



Session 10 (KA) FS 2025.pptx



## ▼ SESSION 11: Works of Love and The Moment: A Return to Socrates



## Required reading



"Love Seeks Not Its Own" in Works of Love (Danish: SKS 9, 263-277)



Kierkegaard, "My Task" in Moment 10 (Danish: SKS 13, 404-411)



Reading Questions-11



## Optional reading



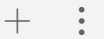
Kierkegaards Socratic Task and the Second Half of the Authorship - Stewart.pdf



## Power Point



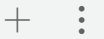
### ▼ Background Material



Optional and Additional Readings



### ▼ Final paper



Final paper

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▼ Electronic Ressources about Absalon and CUL



[Absalon help for students - see your Study Page at KUnet](https://intranet.ku.dk/)  (https://intranet.ku.dk/)



[Books and journals for your study from Copenhagen University Library](http://kub.kb.dk/c.php?g=514341&p=3514066&preview=8882aa68f366075fe92c490f6da2733c)  (http://kub.kb.dk/c.php?g=514341&p=3514066&preview=8882aa68f366075fe92c490f6da2733c)

