

# 1000-F24;The Making of the Modern Self: Existential P hilosophy+1000-F24;The Making of the Modern Self: Existential Philosophy

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## Spring Semester 2024

[https://absalon.instructure.com/courses/%24CANVAS COURSE REFERENCE%24/file\\_ref/gc091475dddwrap=1](https://absalon.instructure.com/courses/%24CANVAS COURSE REFERENCE%24/file_ref/gc091475dddwrap=1)

### Course Content:

This course traces the development of the conception of authentic existence in the works of thinkers from the Existentialist tradition such as Simone de Beauvoir, Hannah Arendt, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Copenhagen's own Søren Kierkegaard. Among other things, we will focus on human experiences of anxiety, despair and self-deception as well as freedom and recognition. Moreover, we will observe how ethical thinking has moved from the language of duty to that of personal answerability, and how the search for meaningful personal existence has increasingly become the responsibility of the individual. The unique vocabulary of these authors appears not only in works of philosophy, theology, and psychology, but also literature and theatre, which

illustrates that we understand ourselves via the stories we tell, and that these narratives are necessarily told in dialogue with “the Other,” our fellow human beings.

**Course Instructor:**

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

**Class Meetings:**

Thursdays 12:15-14:30, room 6B.0.22 (NB. First day of class will be January 18).

**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 three 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, i.e. 8-10 pages.

## **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, i.e. 10-12 pages. 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, i.e. 15-20 pages.

*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, i.e. 15-20 pages. 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, i.e. 25-30 pages.

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

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First short paper: 15%

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Second short paper: 15%

Third short paper: 15%

Attendance and participation: 10%

## **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/>). 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:

[https://absalon.instructure.com/courses/%24CANVAS COURSE REFERENCE%24/file\\_ref/gc091475dddwrap=1](https://absalon.instructure.com/courses/%24CANVAS COURSE REFERENCE%24/file_ref/gc091475dddwrap=1)

*These books should be purchased (For KU students):*

Simone de Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (1947) ISBN 0-8065-0160-X

[https://absalon.instructure.com/courses/%24CANVAS COURSE REFERENCE%24/file\\_ref/gc091475dddwrap=1](https://absalon.instructure.com/courses/%24CANVAS COURSE REFERENCE%24/file_ref/gc091475dddwrap=1)

Søren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety* (1844) ISBN 978-1-63149-004-0

[https://absalon.instructure.com/courses/%24CANVAS COURSE REFERENCE%24/file\\_ref/gc091475dddwrap=1](https://absalon.instructure.com/courses/%24CANVAS COURSE REFERENCE%24/file_ref/gc091475dddwrap=1)

Jean-Paul Sartre, *No Exit* (1944) ISBN 978-0-67972-516-9

[https://absalon.instructure.com/courses/%24CANVAS COURSE REFERENCE%24/file\\_ref/gc091475dddwrap=1](https://absalon.instructure.com/courses/%24CANVAS COURSE REFERENCE%24/file_ref/gc091475dddwrap=1)

Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism is a Humanism* (1945) ISBN 978-0-300-11546-8

*Primary texts on Absalon* (under Moduls):

Hannah Arendt, selections from *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1963)

[https://absalon.instructure.com/courses/%24CANVAS COURSE REFERENCE%24/file\\_ref/gc091475dddwrap=1](https://absalon.instructure.com/courses/%24CANVAS COURSE REFERENCE%24/file_ref/gc091475dddwrap=1)

Hannah Arendt, "What is Existential Philosophy" (1946) & "French Existentialism" (1946) from *Essays in Understanding*

Jean-Paul Sartre, selections from *Being and Nothingness* (1943)

Skjul alle

Vis fremgang

Eksporter fagindhold

Offentliggør alle ▼

+ Modul



	<b>SESSION 1: Introduction: Rediscovering Existential Philosophy</b>		
		+	⋮
	<b>Required reading</b>		⋮
	<b>Arendt, "What is Existential Philosophy" &amp; "French Existentialism" (pp. 163-193)</b>		⋮
	<b>Reading Questions-6</b>		⋮
	<b>Optional reading</b>		⋮
	<b>Sarah Bakewell, Ten reasons to be an existentialist</b>		⋮
	<b>Power Point</b>		⋮
	<b>Session 1</b>		⋮

	<b>SESSION 2: Kierkegaard: Anxiety in Eden and Freedom's Possibility</b>		
		+	⋮
	<b>Required reading</b>		⋮
	<b>Kierkegaard, The Concept of Anxiety, chapter 1, sections 5-6, pp. 50-63 (Danish: SKS 4, 347-356)</b>		⋮
	<b>Pia Søltøft, On Spirit passage.docx</b>		⋮

 **Reading Questions**



**Optional reading**



 **Arne Grøn, "The Human Synthesis" from Thinking with Kierkegaard (pp. 37-43)**



**Power Point**



 **Session 2**



⋮  
 ▾ **SESSION 3: Kierkegaard: Anxiety for Evil and Anxiety for Goodness**



**Required reading**



**Kierkegaard, The Concept of Anxiety, pp. 134-156 (Danish: SKS 4, 413-430)**



 **Reading Questions-2**



**Optional reading**



 **Brian Söderquist, "Kierkegaard and Existentialism".pdf**



**Supplementary readings**













































**Power Point**



 **Session 3**



 <b>SESSION 4: Kierkegaard: Ethics of Vision</b>	  
<b>Required reading</b>	 
 <b>Kierkegaard, "Our Duty to Love the People We See" from Works of Love (pp. 154-174)</b>	 
 <b>Reading Questions-5</b>	  
<b>Optional reading</b>	 
 <b>Arne Grøn, "Ethics of Vision" from Thinking with Kierkegaard (pp. 405-417)</b>	 
<b>First short paper (hand out)</b>	 
<b>Power Point</b>	 
 <b>Session 4</b>	  






















 <b>SESSION 5: Sartre: Anguish (i.e., "anxiety")</b>	  
<b>Required reading</b>	 
 <b>David Detmer, "Anguish" from Sartre Explained (pp. 71-75)</b>	 
 <b>Sartre, Being and Nothingness (pp. 53-57, 59-69)</b>	 
 <b>Reading Questions-3</b>	  
<b>Optional reading</b>	 
























































**Sartre, Existentialism is a Humanism.****Power Point** **Session 5**















 ▼ **SESSION 6: Sartre: Bad Faith**
 **Sartre, Being and Nothingness (pp. 70-72, 78-85)** **David Detmer, "Bad Faith" from Sartre Explained (pp. 75-89)** **Reading Questions-4****Optional reading** **Brian Söderquist, "Kierkegaard and Existentialism".pdf****Power Point** **Session 6****Second short paper (hand out)**

 ▼ **SESSION 7: Sartre: The Look of the Other**
**Required reading**

 Sartre, Being and Nothingness (pp. 276-289)		
 Søren Overgaard, "The Look," from Key Concepts (pp.106-116)		
 Reading Questions-7		 
<b>Optional reading</b>		
 Brian Söderquist, "Is Hell the Other" (pp.501-525)		
<b>Power Point</b>		
 Session 7		 

		
▼ <b>SESSION 8: Sartre: The Other is Hell</b>		
<b>Required reading</b>		
<b>Sartre, No Exit</b>		
 Reading Questions-8		 
<b>Optional reading</b>		
 Sartre, "Interview on No Exit"		 
<b>Power Point</b>		
 Session 8		 

 <b>SESSION 9: De Beauvoir: Tragic Ambiguity</b>	  
<b>Required reading</b>	 
Sartre, Being and Nothingness (pp. 62-63) (recap)	 
Beauvoir, The Ethics of Ambiguity, chap. 1 "Ambiguity and Freedom" (pp. 5-35)	 
 <b>Reading Questions-9</b>	  
<b>Optional reading</b>	 
 <b>Beauvoir's Place in Philosophical Thought - Andrew.pdf</b>	  
<b>Third short paper (hand out)</b>	 
<b>Power Point</b>	 
 <b>Session 9</b>	  

 <b>SESSION 10: Beauvoir: Personal Freedom and Responsibility</b>	  
<b>Required reading</b>	 
Beauvoir, The Ethics of Ambiguity, chap. 2, "Personal Freedom and Others" (pp. 37-78) and chap. 3, section 2, "Freedom and Liberation" (pp. 84-90).	 
 <b>Reading Questions-10</b>	  
<b>Optional reading</b>	 



Mussett, "Simone de Beauvoirs Ethics" (pp. 63-70)



Power Point



Session 10



SESSION 11: Arendt: A Serious Man Following Orders



Required reading



Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem (pp. 21-35, 48-55, 135-138, 276-279)



Reading Questions-11



Optional reading



Arendt, "Some-Questions-of-Moral-Philosophy"



Rossatti, "Kierkegaard, Hannah Arendt and the Advent of the "Hollow Men" or towards a Kierkegaardian Reading of Eichmann in Jerusalem" (pp. 301-328)



Power Point



Session 11



Final paper






## Final paper

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### ▼ Content and resources for your course



[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>)

