



# PHL 238

## Existential Questions

S2 External 2016

*Dept of Philosophy*

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## General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Lecturer

Michael Olson

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W6A, room 723

Wednesdays 9-11 and 2-4.

Adam Hochman

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Credit points

3

Prerequisites

12cp or admission to GDipArts

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit studies key philosophical questions (the meaning of life and death, freedom and responsibility, politics and history) from the perspective of existentialist philosophy. The unit is organised around the most important texts in this tradition. In particular, we investigate the way in which existentialist thinkers explored philosophical questions through literature.

## Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

## Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

An ability to understand and analyze arguments and concepts in phenomenology and existentialism.

A good understanding of the history and significance of phenomenology and existentialism within the history of philosophy.

A good understanding of the relevance of phenomenological and existentialist approaches in broader social, cultural, and political problems.

An ability to apply philosophical theories and concepts to other areas of social and cultural practice.

To articulate ideas clearly, cogently, and convincingly through critical analysis, interpretation, and appropriate forms for written expression.

## Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
<a href="#"><u>Key Passage Papers</u></a>	40%	Weeks 2-11
<a href="#"><u>Peer Review</u></a>	10%	Week 13
<a href="#"><u>Final essay</u></a>	40%	Monday, 21 November
<a href="#"><u>Participation</u></a>	10%	Throughout the course

### Key Passage Papers

Due: **Weeks 2-11**

Weighting: **40%**

From Week 2 through Week 11, students will write a short paper on the material discussed that week. These papers will identify a short passage (i.e. less than a paragraph) from the assigned reading and offer a brief (500 word) explanation of how that passage illustrates a central theme or argument from the reading as a whole. Hard copies of these papers will be due at the beginning of tutorial each week; no late assignments or electronic submissions will be accepted. I will drop the lowest two marks out of the ten total papers you submit.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- An ability to understand and analyze arguments and concepts in phenomenology and existentialism.
- A good understanding of the history and significance of phenomenology and existentialism within the history of philosophy.
- A good understanding of the relevance of phenomenological and existentialist approaches in broader social, cultural, and political problems.

### Peer Review

Due: **Week 13**

Weighting: **10%**

Complete drafts of final papers will be completed in Week 13, which will give students a chance to read and comment on two classmates' papers and to receive feedback in return. Earnest and timely participation in this peer reviewing process will determine a small portion of the final mark.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- To articulate ideas clearly, cogently, and convincingly through critical analysis, interpretation, and appropriate forms for written expression.

## Final essay

Due: **Monday, 21 November**

Weighting: **40%**

In the final essay, students have the opportunity to explore a topic related to the course content and to develop a personal response to a complex issue. Some set questions will be suggested, but students will also be able to devise their own essay question. This major assignment is designed to test students' abilities to engage with a topic in depth, to express, analyse, and organize key ideas clearly and systematically, and to develop an argument or point of view in a sustained and coherent manner. These papers should be approximately 3000 words.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- A good understanding of the history and significance of phenomenology and existentialism within the history of philosophy.
- A good understanding of the relevance of phenomenological and existentialist approaches in broader social, cultural, and political problems.
- An ability to apply philosophical theories and concepts to other areas of social and cultural practice.
- To articulate ideas clearly, cogently, and convincingly through critical analysis, interpretation, and appropriate forms for written expression.

## Participation

Due: **Throughout the course**

Weighting: **10%**

The participation mark reflects the amount of productive involvement in the weekly online discussion forums, in terms of preparation and active participation.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- An ability to understand and analyze arguments and concepts in phenomenology and existentialism.
- A good understanding of the history and significance of phenomenology and existentialism within the history of philosophy.
- A good understanding of the relevance of phenomenological and existentialist

approaches in broader social, cultural, and political problems.

- An ability to apply philosophical theories and concepts to other areas of social and cultural practice.
- To articulate ideas clearly, cogently, and convincingly through critical analysis, interpretation, and appropriate forms for written expression.

## Delivery and Resources

This unit uses an ilearn website and Echo360 lecture recordings (<https://ilearn.mq.edu.au/login/MQ/>). The website contains links to iletecture recordings and other learning materials. Students will therefore require access to a computer and a good internet connection in order to access all the material and participate in the unit effectively.

## Unit Schedule

### Provisional Reading Schedule

**Week 1** Soren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety* (1844)

**Week 2** Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety*

**Week 3** Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols* (1889)

**Week 4** Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880)

**Week 5** Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (1927)

**Week 6** Heidegger, "What is Metaphysics?" (1929)

**Week 7** Jean-Paul Sartre, "Existentialism is a Humanism" (1946)

**Week 8** Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942)

**Week 9** Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*

**Week 10** Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (1949) and Iris Marion Young, "Throwing Like a Girl" (1980)

**Week 11** Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952)

**Week 12** Michael Jackson, *Existential Anthropology* (2005)

**Week 13** Final Paper Peer Review

## Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy [http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic\\_honesty/policy.html](http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html)

**New Assessment Policy in effect from Session 2 2016** [http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy\\_2016.html](http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy_2016.html). For more information visit [http://students.mq.edu.au/events/2016/07/19/new\\_assessment\\_policy\\_in\\_place\\_from\\_session\\_2/](http://students.mq.edu.au/events/2016/07/19/new_assessment_policy_in_place_from_session_2/)

Assessment Policy prior to Session 2 2016 <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html>

Grading Policy prior to Session 2 2016 <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

Grade Appeal Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public [http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/complaint\\_management/procedure.html](http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/complaint_management/procedure.html)

Disruption to Studies Policy [http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption\\_studies/policy.html](http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html) *The Disruption to Studies Policy is effective from March 3 2014 and replaces the Special Consideration Policy.*

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](#) of Policy Central.

## Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: [https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student\\_conduct/](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/)

## Results

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit [ask.mq.edu.au](http://ask.mq.edu.au).

## Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

## Learning Skills

Learning Skills ([mq.edu.au/learningskills](http://mq.edu.au/learningskills)) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

## Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

## Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at [ask.mq.edu.au](http://ask.mq.edu.au)

## IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit [http://www.mq.edu.au/about\\_us/offices\\_and\\_units/information\\_technology/help/](http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/).

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

## Graduate Capabilities

### Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

### Learning outcomes

- An ability to apply philosophical theories and concepts to other areas of social and cultural practice.
- To articulate ideas clearly, cogently, and convincingly through critical analysis, interpretation, and appropriate forms for written expression.

### Assessment tasks

- Final essay
- Participation

### Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

### Learning outcome

- An ability to apply philosophical theories and concepts to other areas of social and cultural practice.

## Assessment tasks

- Final essay
- Participation

## Commitment to Continuous Learning

Our graduates will have enquiring minds and a literate curiosity which will lead them to pursue knowledge for its own sake. They will continue to pursue learning in their careers and as they participate in the world. They will be capable of reflecting on their experiences and relationships with others and the environment, learning from them, and growing - personally, professionally and socially.

This graduate capability is supported by:

### Learning outcome

- A good understanding of the history and significance of phenomenology and existentialism within the history of philosophy.

## Assessment tasks

- Key Passage Papers
- Peer Review
- Final essay
- Participation

## Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

### Learning outcomes

- An ability to understand and analyze arguments and concepts in phenomenology and existentialism.
- A good understanding of the history and significance of phenomenology and existentialism within the history of philosophy.

## Assessment tasks

- Key Passage Papers



- Final essay
- Participation

## Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

### Learning outcomes

- An ability to understand and analyze arguments and concepts in phenomenology and existentialism.
- A good understanding of the history and significance of phenomenology and existentialism within the history of philosophy.
- A good understanding of the relevance of phenomenological and existentialist approaches in broader social, cultural, and political problems.
- To articulate ideas clearly, cogently, and convincingly through critical analysis, interpretation, and appropriate forms for written expression.

### Assessment tasks

- Key Passage Papers
- Peer Review
- Final essay
- Participation

## Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

### Learning outcomes

- An ability to understand and analyze arguments and concepts in phenomenology and existentialism.
- A good understanding of the history and significance of phenomenology and

existentialism within the history of philosophy.

- A good understanding of the relevance of phenomenological and existentialist approaches in broader social, cultural, and political problems.
- An ability to apply philosophical theories and concepts to other areas of social and cultural practice.
- To articulate ideas clearly, cogently, and convincingly through critical analysis, interpretation, and appropriate forms for written expression.

## **Assessment tasks**

- Final essay
- Participation

## **Effective Communication**

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## **Learning outcomes**

- An ability to apply philosophical theories and concepts to other areas of social and cultural practice.
- To articulate ideas clearly, cogently, and convincingly through critical analysis, interpretation, and appropriate forms for written expression.

## **Assessment tasks**

- Peer Review
- Final essay
- Participation

## **Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens**

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## Learning outcomes

- An ability to understand and analyze arguments and concepts in phenomenology and existentialism.
- A good understanding of the history and significance of phenomenology and existentialism within the history of philosophy.
- An ability to apply philosophical theories and concepts to other areas of social and cultural practice.

## Assessment tasks

- Key Passage Papers
- Final essay
- Participation

## Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible

We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active participants in moving society towards sustainability.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## Learning outcomes

- A good understanding of the history and significance of phenomenology and existentialism within the history of philosophy.
- An ability to apply philosophical theories and concepts to other areas of social and cultural practice.

## Assessment tasks

- Final essay
- Participation