



PHIX3052

Social and Existential Questions

Session 1, Fully online/virtual 2021

Department of Philosophy

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Notice

As part of [Phase 3 of our return to campus plan](#), most units will now run tutorials, seminars and other small group activities on campus, and most will keep an online version available to those students unable to return or those who choose to continue their studies online.

To check the availability of face-to-face activities for your unit, please go to [timetable viewer](#). To check detailed information on unit assessments visit your unit's iLearn space or consult your unit convenor.

General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

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Lecturer and Tutor

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Credit points

10

Prerequisites

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit brings a philosophical lens to some of the great social and existential challenges of our times. We examine some of the key sources of existential meaning in human life, such as: personal freedom, identity, work, and a sense of belonging. We look at some of the prevailing ways in which these sources are currently threatened in contemporary society. The unit also considers some concrete ethical and political options for dealing with these challenges. Some examples of questions that may be explored in the unit include: What is the meaning we look for in our lives? Is spiritual belief an important or even a necessary element of human life? How does work fit in our idea of a good life? How can we live well together given our different gender, cultural and ethnic identities?

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:

ULO2: analyse arguments in the relevant literature.

ULO1: explain the history and meaning of concepts in existentialist and social philosophy.

ULO3: apply existentialist and social-philosophy approaches in broader social, cultural, and political debates.

ULO4: investigate and theorise ideas clearly, cogently, and convincingly through critical analysis and philosophical discussion.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Participation	20%	No	Weeks 2-12
Philosophical Essay	40%	No	Week 13
Online quizzes	20%	No	Weeks 3, 5, 7, 9, 11
Reflective tasks	20%	No	Week 6

Participation

Assessment Type ¹: Participatory task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 15 hours

Due: **Weeks 2-12**

Weighting: **20%**

Online discussion participation and associated activities. Students should be prepared for the discussion by reading set papers in advance, and formulating questions for discussion with their fellow students.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- explain the history and meaning of concepts in existentialist and social philosophy.
- apply existentialist and social-philosophy approaches in broader social, cultural, and political debates.
- investigate and theorise ideas clearly, cogently, and convincingly through critical analysis and philosophical discussion.

Philosophical Essay

Assessment Type ¹: Essay

Indicative Time on Task ²: 30 hours

Due: **Week 13**

Weighting: **40%**

An argumentative essay analysing and responding to key problems and theories from the unit.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- explain the history and meaning of concepts in existentialist and social philosophy.
- analyse arguments in the relevant literature.
- apply existentialist and social-philosophy approaches in broader social, cultural, and political debates.
- investigate and theorise ideas clearly, cogently, and convincingly through critical analysis and philosophical discussion.

Online quizzes

Assessment Type ¹: Quiz/Test

Indicative Time on Task ²: 15 hours

Due: **Weeks 3, 5, 7, 9, 11**

Weighting: **20%**

Online quizzes

On successful completion you will be able to:

- explain the history and meaning of concepts in existentialist and social philosophy.

Reflective tasks

Assessment Type ¹: Reflective Writing

Indicative Time on Task ²: 15 hours

Due: **Week 6**

Weighting: **20%**

Short written reflective tasks

On successful completion you will be able to:

- explain the history and meaning of concepts in existentialist and social philosophy.

- analyse arguments in the relevant literature.
 - apply existentialist and social-philosophy approaches in broader social, cultural, and political debates.
 - investigate and theorise ideas clearly, cogently, and convincingly through critical analysis and philosophical discussion.
-

¹ If you need help with your assignment, please contact:

- the academic teaching staff in your unit for guidance in understanding or completing this type of assessment
- the [Writing Centre](#) for academic skills support.

² Indicative time-on-task is an estimate of the time required for completion of the assessment task and is subject to individual variation

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 the reading material, lecture notes, lecture recordings, and other learning materials such as video clips, weblinks, and images. 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. PHIL3052 will be delivered using a combination of online lectures (recorded via Echo360) and online tutorial forum discussions. Lectures are organised around key texts in which fundamental concepts and arguments are introduced and explained. The weekly quizzes are designed to practise the various skills required in philosophical writing. They will be scaffolded to help students in the preparation for tackling Assessment tasks. External students will engage in these activities online via dedicated iLearn discussion forums. For lecture times and classrooms please consult the MQ Timetable website: <http://www.timetables.mq.edu.au>. This website will display up-to-date information on your classes and classroom locations.

Lectures:

Tuesday 9am-11am (Echo360 Online Lecture Recordings will be Livestreamed and then posted on Tuesday morning after 11am)

Tutorials:

Weekly online tutorial classes will be conducted commencing from Week 2. Week 1 will be an Introductory session where students introduce themselves to each other and we discuss any issues relevant to studying this unit. Weekly Tutorial Discussion Questions will be posted after the lecture recordings have been posted. Students are required to respond to the Tutorial Discussion Questions and engage each other in discussion responding to issues raised in these responses.

N.B.: Weekly tutorials will begin in **WEEK 2** and will continue until **Week 12** (Week 13 tutorial will

be an online peer review session for the Essay).

Unit Schedule

PART I - The Question of Existence

Week 1 Introduction: What is Existentialism?

Required Reading: Stephen Crowell, 'Existentialism', Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, online entry (2015): <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/existentialism/>

Week 2 - Camus and the Question of the Absurd

Required Reading: Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, chapter 1

Week 3 - Heidegger on Anxiety and Mortality

Required Reading: extracts from Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, What is Metaphysics?

Week 4 - Sartre on Consciousness and Freedom

Required Reading: extract from Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism is a Humanism*

Part II: Ethics and Politics as Existential Tasks

Week 5 - The Problem of the Other

Required Reading: Heidegger, "The They" (from *Being and Time*); Sartre's "being-for-other" (from *Being and Nothingness* and *No Exit*).

Week 6 - De Beauvoir and Feminist Existentialism

Required Reading: Simone de Beauvoir, *Ethics of Ambiguity*, chapter 1; extracts from *The Second Sex*

Week 7 - Arendt on Freedom, Action, and Democracy

Required Reading: Hannah Arendt, extracts from *The Human Condition*

Week 8 - Black existentialism

Required Reading: Jean-Paul Sartre, *Black Orpheus*; Frantz Fanon, extracts from *Black Skin, White Masks*; Lewis Gordon, extracts from *Existence in Black*

Part III - Philosophical Approaches to Race

Week 9 - The Norms of Racist Speech

Week 10 - Race and Incarceration

Week 11 - Racial Profiling

Week 12 - Intersectionality

Policies and Procedures

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

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Grade Appeal Policy](#)
- [Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#)

Students seeking more policy resources can visit [Student Policies \(https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies\)](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

To find other policies relating to Teaching and Learning, visit [Policy Central \(https://policies.mq.edu.au\)](https://policies.mq.edu.au) and use the [search tool](#).

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/admin/other-resources/student-conduct>

Results

Results published on platform other than [eStudent](#), (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) 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 or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@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) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to help you improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Getting help with your assignment](#)
- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module](#)

The Library provides online and face to face support to help you find and use relevant information resources.

- [Subject and Research Guides](#)
- [Ask a Librarian](#)

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

If you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@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/.

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.