PHIL3052
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
Convenor, Lecturer, and Tutor
Robert Sinnerbrink
robert.sinnerbrink@mq.edu.au
Contact via 9850 9935
Room 611, 25B Wally's Walk
By appointment

Lecturer and Tutor
Albert Atkin
albert.atkin@mq.edu.au

Lecturer and Tutor
Brigid Martin
brigid.martin@mq.edu.au

Credit points
10

Prerequisites
130cp at 1000 level or above

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://students.mq.edu.au/important-dates
Learning Outcomes

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

ULO1: explain the history and meaning of concepts in existentialist and social philosophy.
ULO2: analyse arguments in the relevant literature.
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.

General Assessment Information

Submission of Assessments

All assessment pieces are to be submitted via Turnitin portals that will be made available the unit's iLearn site. Written assessment pieces will be run through the Turnitin software which detects unoriginal work.

Extensions and Disruption to Studies

All work must be submitted on time unless an extension has been granted. Requests for extensions must be made in writing BEFORE the due date and will only be considered on serious grounds. Extensions will not be given unless good reasons and appropriate evidence (e.g., medical certificates, counsellor's letters) are presented at the earliest opportunity. Please note that work due concurrently in other subjects is NOT an exceptional circumstance and does not constitute a legitimate reason for an extension.

Late Assessment Penalty

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) a penalty for lateness will apply – two (2) marks out of 100 will be deducted per day for assignments submitted after the due date – and (b) no assignment will be accepted more than seven (7) days (incl. weekends) after the original submission deadline. No late submissions will be accepted for timed assessments – e.g. quizzes, online tests.

To obtain an extension you must submit a Disruption to Studies application. See below for details.

Disruption to Studies Policy

The University classifies a disruption as serious and unavoidable if it:

• could not have reasonably been anticipated, avoided or guarded against by the student; and
• was beyond the student's control; and • caused substantial disruption to the student's capacity for effective study and/or completion of required work; and
Assessment Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Hurdle</th>
<th>Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online quizzes</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Weeks 3, 5, 7, 9, 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophical Essay</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Week 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective tasks</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Week 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Weeks 2-12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Online quizzes

Assessment Type: Quiz/Test
Indicative Time on Task: 15 hours
Due: Weeks 3, 5, 7, 9, 11
Weighting: 20%
On successful completion you will be able to:

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

### Philosophical Essay

**Assessment Type**: Essay  
**Indicative Time on Task**: 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.

### Reflective tasks

**Assessment Type**: Reflective Writing  
**Indicative Time on Task**: 15 hours  
**Due**: Week 6  
**Weighting**: 20%

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.
Participation

Assessment Type 1: Participatory task
Indicative Time on Task 2: 15 hours
Due: Weeks 2-12
Weighting: 20%

Engagement in discussion and associated activities either in-class or online. 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.

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 Learning Skills Unit 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:
Unit Schedule

PART I - The Question of Existence

Week 1 - Introduction: What is 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).
Unit guide PHIL3052 Social and Existential Questions

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://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central). 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 (Note: The Special Consideration Policy is effective from 4 December 2017 and replaces the Disruption to Studies Policy.)

Students seeking more policy resources can visit the Student Policy Gateway (https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.
If you would like to see all the policies relevant to Learning and Teaching visit Policy Central (http://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/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/admin/other-resources/student-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/](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 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 Enquiry Service**

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

If you are a Global MBA student contact [globalmba.support@mq.edu.au](mailto:globalmba.support@mq.edu.au)

**Equity 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.

**IT Help**

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit [http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/](http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/)
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.