PHIL3052

Social and Existential Questions

Session 1, In person-scheduled-weekday, North Ryde 2022

Department of Philosophy

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff
Convenor, Lecturer, and Tutor
Robert Sinnerbrink
robert.sinnerbrink@mq.edu.au
Contact via 9850 9935
W6B 611
TBC

Lecturer and Tutor
Adam Hochman
adam.hochman@mq.edu.au
Contact via 9850 8859

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://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-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 system which detects unoriginal work.

Special Consideration Extensions and Penalties

All work must be submitted on time unless an extension has been granted. Requests for extensions must be made in writing 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 – 10 marks out of 100 credit will be deducted per day for assignments submitted after the due date – and (b) no assignment will be accepted seven days (including weekends) after the original submission deadline.

Special Consideration Policy

The University classifies a disruption warranting special consideration 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

• occurred during an event critical study period and was at least three (3) consecutive days duration, and / or

• prevented completion of a final examination. Students with a pre-existing disability/health condition or prolonged adverse circumstances may be eligible for ongoing assistance and

support. Such support is governed by other policies and may be sought and coordinated through Campus Wellbeing and Support Services.

How to submit a Special Consideration Notification

A Special Consideration Notification must be completed and submitted online through www.ask.mq.edu.au within five (5) working days of the commencement of the disruption. Applying for Special Consideration: 1. Log in at ask.mq 2. Click 'Special Consideration' from the 'Submit' menu on the left 3. Fill in the required fields as prompted. Once you have completed filling out the information, please click on 'Submit'.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Philosophical Essay	40%	No	23:59 05/06/2022 Week 13
Online quizzes	20%	No	23:59 Sundays fortnightly from Week 3
Reflective tasks	20%	No	23: 59 08/04/2022 Week 7
Participation	20%	No	Ongoing

Philosophical Essay

Assessment Type [1]: Essay
Indicative Time on Task [2]: 30 hours
Due: **23:59 05/06/2022 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: **23:59 Sundays fortnightly from Week 3**
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: **23: 59 08/04/2022 Week 7**
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: **Ongoing**
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.

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[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 live lectures (recorded via Echo360) and online tutorial forum discussions (both in-class and online). Lectures are organised around key texts in which fundamental concepts and arguments are introduced and explained. The fortnightly 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

Lectures will take place on Mondays 11am-12noon (23 Wally's Walk, Tutorial Room 105) and Wednesdays 11am to 12noon (Wally's Walk, Tutorial Room 205) will be recorded and made available via Echo360 Online Lecture Recordings shortly afterwards.

Tutorials

Weekly tutorial classes (both in-class and online) 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 before the Monday lectures. 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 13 (Week 13 tutorial will be a discussion week focusing on the film *Get Out*).

Required and Recommended Texts and/or Materials

PHIL3052 Social and Existential Questions will be using electronically available readings available via Leganto on the iLearn website.

Unit Schedule

PART I - The Question of Existence [RS]

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 - Heidegger on Anxiety and Mortality

Required Reading:

Extracts from Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time,* trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), §41 'The Being of Da-sein as Care', pp. 179-183; §53 'Existential Project of an Authentic Being-toward-Death', pp. 240-246.

Recommended:

Stephen Mulhall, *The Routledge Guidebook to Heidegger's* Being and Time, (London and New York: Routledge, 2020), Chapter 5, 'Theology Secularized: Mortality, Guilt, and Conscience, §§45-60', pp. 12-134.

Oren Magid, 'The Ontological Import of Heidegger's Analysis of Anxiety in Being and Time', *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 54(4) (2016): 440-462.

Background Reading:

Martin Wheeler, 'Martin Heidegger', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*:: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/heidegger/

Dorothea Frede, 'The Question of Being: Heidegger's Project', *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, edited Charles Guignon (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2006), pp. 42-69.

Week 3 - Sartre on Consciousness and Freedom

Required Reading:

Extract from Sartre's *Existentialism and Humanism*, trans. Philip Mairet (London: Methuen, 1948), pp. 26-34.

Extract from Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*, 'V. The Origin of Nothingness', pp. 56-64; and 'The For-Itself and the Being of Value', pp. 133-139; pp. 623-629.

Recommended:

Jack Reynolds, 'Condemned to Freedom: Sartre's Phenomenological Ontology, in J. Reynolds, Understanding Existentialism (Acumen, 2006), 51-88.

Background reading: Thomas Flynn, 'Jean-Paul Sartre,' *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy:* https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/sartre/

Part II: Ethics and Politics as Existential Tasks [RS]

Week 4 - The Problem of the Other

Required Reading:

Martin Heidegger, 'The Mit-Dasein of Others and Everyday Being-with', *Being and Time*, pp. 110-118; 'Everyday Being-oneself and the They', *Being and Time*, pp. 118-122.

Jean-Paul Sartre, 'The Look', *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 252-264.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 'Others and the Human World', *Phenomenology of Perception*, pp. 361-383.

Background reading:

Shaun Gallagher, 'Intersubjectivity and Second-Person Perspective', *Phenomenology,* pp. 182-204.

Week 5 - Feminist Existentialism

Required Reading:

Simone de Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, 'Ambiguity and Freedom', pp. 5-30.

Simone de Beauvoir, The Ethics of Ambiguity, 'The Positive Aspect of Ambiguity', pp. 68-87.

Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex, 'Introduction', pp. 13-30.

Recommended:

Megan Burke, 'Simone de Beauvoir', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy:* https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/beauvoir/

Tina Chanter, 'The Complexity of Women's Complicity' and 'Beyond Beauvoir', from *Ethics of Eros: Irigaray's Rewriting of the Philosophers*, pp. 68-79.

Week 6 - Black existentialism

Required Reading:

Frantz Fanon, 'The Fact of Blackness', from *White Skin, Black Masks* (1948), pp. 82-108 [121-147].

Lewis R. Gordon, 'Fanon as Critique of European Man' and 'Existential Phenomenology and History', from *Fanon and the Crisis of European Man: An Essay on Philosophy and the Human Sciences*, pp. 6-19.

Supplementary Texts:

John Drabinski, 'Frantz Fanon', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/frantz-fanon/

Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Black Orpheus', pp. 13-52.

Part III - Philosophical Approaches to Race [AH]

Week 7 - Social Constructionism about Race, Deconstructed

Required Reading:

Esa Diaz-Leon, ‘What is Social Construction?’, *European Journal of Philosophy* 23(4) (2015): 1137–52.

Week 8 - Is Race a Social Kind?

Required Reading:

Ronald Sundstrom, ‘Race as a Human Kind’. *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 28 (1) (2002): 91–115.

Week 9 - Is Race a Social Status? Or, is it Phenomenological?

Required Reading:

Extract from Ásta’s *Categories We Live By: The Construction of Sex, Gender, Race, and Other Social Categories* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 93-108.

Sara Ahmed, ‘A Phenomenology of Whiteness’. *Feminist Theory* 8(2) (2007): 149–68.

Week 10 - Is Race Cultural? Or, is it Technological?

Chike Jeffers. 'Cultural Constructionism'. In *What Is Race? Four Philosophical Views* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).

Introduction of Alana Lentin’s *Why Race Still Matters* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2020).

Supplementary Text:

Chike Jeffers. ‘Jeffers’s Reply to Glasgow, Haslanger, and Spencer’. In *What Is Race? Four Philosophical Views* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).

Week 11 - Replacing Race: Racialisation and Racialised Groups

Required Reading:

Lawrence Blum, 'Racialized Groups: The Sociohistorical Consensus'. The Monist 93(2) (2010): 298–320.

Week 12 - Racial Identity and Transrace

Required Reading:

Ann Morning, 'Race and Rachel Doležal'. Contexts 16(2) (2017): 8–11.

Recommended reading:

Tina Fernandes Botts, 'In Black and White: A Hermeneutic Argument Against Transracialism.' Res Philosophica 95(2) (2018): 303–29.

Rebecca Tuvel, 'Racial Transitions and Controversial Positions: Reply to Taylor, Gordon, Sealey, Hom, and Botts'. Philosophy Today 62(1) (2018): 73–88.

Week 13 - Film: Get Out (Peele, 2017) [AH and RS]

Recommended Reading: Mary K. Bloodsworth Lugo, "Race, Bodies and Lived Realities in *Get Out* and *Black Panther,* in Christina Rawls, Diana Neiva, and Steven S. Gouveia (eds), Philosophy and Film: Bridging Divides (New York and Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), pp. 281-297.

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from Policy Central (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
- Assessment Procedure
- Complaints Resolution 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). 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) 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

Academic Integrity

At Macquarie, we believe academic integrity – honesty, respect, trust, responsibility, fairness and courage – is at the core of learning, teaching and research. We recognise that meeting the expectations required to complete your assessments can be challenging. So, we offer you a range of resources and services to help you reach your potential, including free online writing and maths support, academic skills development and wellbeing consultations.

Student Support

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

The Writing Centre

The Writing Centre provides resources to develop your English language proficiency, academic writing, and communication skills.

- Workshops
- Chat with a WriteWISE peer writing leader
- Access StudyWISE
- Upload an assignment to Studiosity
- Complete the 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

Macquarie University offers a range of Student Support Services including:

- IT Support
- Accessibility and disability support with study
- Mental health support
- Safety support to respond to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and sexual assault
- Social support including information about finances, tenancy and legal issues

Student Enquiries

Got a question? Ask us via AskMQ, or contact Service Connect.

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.

Changes from Previous Offering

- Revision of Content for Parts I & II
- New Content for Part III
- Addition of Film Discussion topic for Week 13 on Get Out