

Syllabus
EXISTENCE AND ANXIETY
PHIL 3520-061
Professor Elvira Basevich
10-Week Accelerated Course

GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION:

Instructor: Elvira Basevich, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Philosophy
University of Massachusetts, Lowell
Weekly Chat: Mondays 6-7pm (Eastern Time)
Please use Blackboard's Mail (My Messages) to Contact Me
For emergencies only: elvira_basevich@uml.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

We are living in an unprecedented crisis that has disrupted our lives and left us uneasy and anxious, like a faint black cloud pervading our collective consciousness. We have no idea what the future will bring or when life will return to “normal”—or even what will be left of our old ideas of the “normal.” To be sure, the human condition is uncertain, but in periods of extreme uncertainty we can no longer hold on to our ordinary expectations about the nature of human existence, the future, and the meaning of our lives. Thankfully, philosophy can help us salvage the feeling of hope during this period, which is also an opportune time to reflect on our lives and our values. This course invites us to reflect together on our lives and our values in a time of crisis, and hopefully we can shore up the spiritual strength to become resilient enough to not only survive, but to flourish.

Week	Dates	Notes
1	5/18 - 5/24	WHAT IS EXISTENCE? On Existentialism <ul style="list-style-type: none">• J.P. Sartre, “Freedom and Responsibility”• Jack Reynolds, <i>Understanding Existentialism</i><ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Chp. 3: “Condemned to freedom: Sartre’s phenomenological ontology”• Unamuno, <i>The Tragic Sense of Life</i>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chp 1: “Man of Flesh and Bone”
2	5/25 - 5/31	<p>On our Collective Embodied Situations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simone Beauvoir, <i>Second Sex</i> • Franz Fanon, <i>Black Skin/White Masks</i>, “The Fact of Blackness” • Watch short interview with the daughter of Eric Garner, Emerald Garner here. • Parker, “Homeless in a City Buffeted by Plague,” <i>The Atlantic</i>
3	6/1 - 6/7	<p>WHAT IS ANXIETY?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soren Kierkegaard, “The Concept of Anxiety.” • Paul Tillich, <i>The Courage to Be</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chp 2: “Being, Non-Being, and Anxiety” • Crocq, “A history of anxiety: from Hippocrates to DSM,” <i>Dialogues in Clinical Neuroscience</i> 17.3(2015): 319–25.
4	6/8 - 6/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J.P. Sartre, “Bad Faith” & “No Exit” • Rainer Rilke, <i>The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge</i> • Achebe, “The Sacrificial Egg” <i>The Atlantic</i>
5	6/15 - 6/21	<p>WHAT IS SADNESS AND MENTAL ILLNESS?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dostoevsky, “Notes from the Underground” • Listen here to the BBC interview with historian Vivian Nutton on the ancient theory of the “Four Humors” • <i>Recommended</i>: Burton, <i>On the Anatomy of Melancholy</i> (1621), pp. 17-72.
6	6/22 - 6/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Massimo Pigliucci, <i>How to Be a Stoic</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chp. 3: “Some Things Are in Our Power, Others Are Not” ○ Chp 12: “How to Deal with Anger, Anxiety, and Loneliness”

7	6/29 - 7/5	<p>WHAT IS HEALING IN SPITE OF UNCERTAINTY AND LOSS?</p> <p>On Simply Being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simone Beauvoir, <i>Ethics of Ambiguity</i> • Paul Tillich, <i>The Courage to Be</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chp. 5: “Courage and Individualization (The Courage to Be as Oneself),” pp. 123-47, 150-54.
8	7/6 - 7/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agnes Collard, <i>Aspiration: The Agency of Becoming</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chp 5. “The Problem of Self-Creation” ○ Chp 6. “Implications of the Aspirational Account of Self-Creation” • Watch documentary on the AIDS crisis: How to Survive a Plague • Nietzsche, “Eternal Recurrence of the Same” • <i>Recommended.</i> Alice Walker, “Hard Times Require Furious Dancing”
9	7/13 - 7/19	<p>On Narration, Confrontation, Truth-Telling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch videos from “Life after Hate,” an advocacy group committed to helping Americans leave hate groups. • Susan Brison. <i>Aftermath</i>, “Retelling” • Toni Morrison. “The Self”
10	7/20 - 7/26	<p>On Finding Meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Albert Camus, “Myth of Sisyphus” • Gillian Rose, <i>Love’s Work: A Reckoning with Life</i> • Viktor Frankl, “The Case for a Tragic Optimism” • <i>Recommended.</i> Gabriel Garcia Marquez, “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings”

Chat:

Each week, we will have a live chat session. Chats are voluntary, thus failure to attend will not affect your grade. However, your attendance is strongly encouraged. Our weekly chats will be held on Mondays from 6:00-7:00pm (Eastern Time). Chat room guidelines:

- Please keep subject matter related to course material.

- When you are chatting with someone in particular, please begin your statement with that person's name, followed by a colon. For example, if you wanted to ask Jane Doe a question, your statement would look something like: "Jane: what do you think about..."
- Profanity and harassment will not be tolerated.

Course Materials Release Day:

Each week of this course begins on a Monday and ends on a Sunday. On Monday mornings (12:00am EST), new online material for each week will become accessible to you. The course calendar at the end of this syllabus provides additional details about the course schedule. Your final exam will be assigned during Week 10; you may submit the exam at any point during that week.

Extra Credit policy:

There will be no extra credit assignments given.

Academic Integrity Policy:

UMass Lowell Online students are expected to be honest and to respect ethical standards in meeting academic assignments and requirements. A student who cheats on an examination or assignment is subject to administrative dismissal. Please visit the [Academic Integrity](#) Web site for specific details regarding this policy.

Students with Disabilities:

Any student requiring accommodations due to a documented learning, psychological, or physical disability should contact me privately via Blackboard's internal Mail system to discuss their needs. The Office of Student Disability Services is available to coordinate accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Office of Student Disability Services Contact Information:

978-934-4574

Disability@uml.edu

UMass Lowell Online students requiring academic accommodations should contact Student Disability Services for assistance.

UML Library Off-Campus Access:

Off-Campus library access requires users to login to the proxy server. Information can be found at this link: [Off-Campus Access to UML Library](#)