

Kierkegaard & Religious Existentialism



**Spring Term 2015
REL 29 (2A)
Dist: TMV; WCult: W
Open to all classes**

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Kierkegaard and Religious Existentialism

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Office Hours: by appointment (Haldeman 370)

Course Description

In the rubble of war-torn Europe, existentialism emphasized the existence of the individual person as a free and responsible agent who can determine their own authentic development. Existentialism was primarily a European cultural movement that flourished after World War II in film, literature, and philosophy. Both religious and non-religious thinkers gravitated toward this way of thinking in the twentieth century, and the inspiration for many of them was attributed to the nineteenth century Danish thinker, Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855). In this class, students will be introduced to important aspects of Kierkegaard's most influential writings through close readings of the text, personal response writing assignments, class discussion, class presentations, and a research paper. We will examine the development of Kierkegaard's philosophical and religious thinking by exploring key existential themes, such as: authenticity, anxiety, boredom, despair, faith, freedom, and self-deception. As a result, students will be able to trace—in class discussion sessions, writing assignments, student papers and presentations—Kierkegaard's influence on existentialism, which includes both religious and non-religious thinkers alike, such as: Martin Buber, Franz Kafka, Lev Shestov, Gabriel Marcel, Paul Tillich, Jean Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Frantz Fanon, James Baldwin, Ingmar Bergman, Woody Allen, and Billy Wilder. **Open to all classes.** Dist: TMV; WCult: W.

Mandatory Texts

- Hongs (ed), *The Essential Kierkegaard Anthology* (Princeton) pb. [ISBN 9780691019406]
- C. Stephen Evans, *Kierkegaard: An Introduction* (Cambridge) pb. [ISBN 9780521700412]
- Paul Tillich, *The Dynamics of Faith* (HarperOne) pb. [ISBN 9780060937133]
- All other mandatory readings will be made available in the Library or electronically on Canvas.