



Dartmouth College

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Spring Term 2014  
2A Hour

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(Rel-Phil off.)  
Office Hours: Wed, 1-3 PM  
(or by appt.)

## RELIGION 29 Kierkegaard and Existentialism

### Texts to Buy at Wheelock Books:

Robert Bretall, ed., *A Kierkegaard Anthology* (Princeton PB)

Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling and Repetition*, Kierkegaard's Writings, Vol. 6 (Princeton PB)

Søren Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments/Johannes Climacus*, Kierkegaard's Writings, Vol. 7 (Princeton PB)

Søren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness unto Death*, Kierkegaard's Writings, Vol 19 (Princeton PB)

Jean-Paul Sartre, *No Exit and Three Other Plays* (Vintage Paperback)

Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (Yale PB)

(All other required readings are available electronically on the Blackboard<sup>B</sup> site in the "Assigned Readings" folder where they are listed in the order they are assigned in the syllabus. Additional materials for papers are either on Blackboard<sup>B</sup> in the "Additional Readings" folder or on Reserve<sup>R</sup>.)

### Course Objectives:

This course aims primarily at introducing you to the writings of Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855), the Danish philosopher-theologian who has been called "the founder of existentialism." Most of this course will involve an exploration of Kierkegaard's major writings. Towards the end of the

course, in class sessions and through student papers and presentations, we will examine Kierkegaard's impact on religious and non-religious thinkers who are identified as existentialists.

### Course Requirements:

1. A brief (*no more than 2-page*; 12-point, double spaced Palatino type; ~ 650 words maximum) essay responding to a question about specific passages or statements in the Kierkegaard text under discussion for *each* class meeting. One or more questions (you should choose only one) are available in the folder "DISC QUES & DROP BOX" on Blackboard). Your brief essay is to be submitted electronically in that same folder *no later than* 5 p.m. the day before the relevant class meeting. There are 16 possible essay assignments. Each student must submit 8 (5 points apiece; 40% of the total course grade). The essays will be evaluated for their *comprehension* of the assigned text and their insight.
2. Informed participation in class discussion. This participation, based on the questions distributed in advance, will form the participation grade (20% of course grade). This will include one or more brief class presentations of one's discussion paper or an assigned response to *another student's* discussion paper. Papers for response will be posted on Blackboard by 9 p.m. on the evening before class in the folder "PAPERS FOR RESPONSE," and one or more respondents for each paper will be named there. The content of the discussion paper *and* the response should be delivered briefly by the writer and respondent in class. The response should *briefly* summarize the essay's argument and offer critical (positive and/or negative) comments. *Note: if you do not write an essay or a response for a specific class or topic, you are still held responsible for reading the assignment and being prepared to discuss it.*
3. A research paper (12 pages maximum, not including bibliography 12-point, double spaced Palatino type) and possible class presentation on a topic proposed by you or suggested by the instructor (40% of the course grade). Selected papers will form the basis of class discussion and presentations at the end of the course. Suggested topics (with bibliography) are available in the Blackboard folder "Course Materials: "Research Paper Topics"), or students can propose their own topic of interest. A one-page paper proposal (with sample bibliography) is due at the start of class on May 1. The paper itself is due in the "RES PAP DROP BOX" folder (on Blackboard) **as a PDF not a Word document** by 5 p.m. on Sunday, May 25.

Note: Circumstances may require changes in this syllabus and revision of requirements and assignments.

**Honor principle**

You should be aware of and conform to the Dartmouth Honor Code as expressed in the ORC. This means that all research and writing should be done by you and that all references and ideas are appropriately cited [If in doubt, see <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~sources/>]. **Note: there should be no prior consultation among students on the essays that form the basis of class discussion.**

**Accommodations for disabilities**

I encourage students with disabilities, including “invisible” disabilities such as chronic diseases, learning disabilities, and psychiatric disabilities to discuss with me after class or during my office hours appropriate accommodations that might be helpful to them.

**Late Policy**

Discussion essays must be submitted by 5 p.m. the evening before class. Blackboard will not accept assignments after that time. If you experience problems uploading your discussion essay, please email it to be before 5 p.m. at [ronald.m.green@dartmouth.edu](mailto:ronald.m.green@dartmouth.edu).

The research paper is due in the “RES PAP DROP BOX” folder on Blackboard **as a PDF not a Word document** by 5 p.m. on Sunday, March 25. Extensions without late penalty will be granted only in exceptional circumstances (e.g. documented illness). A full letter grade will be deducted for each 24 hours of lateness.

**X-Hours**

The course X-hour (designated additional course meeting/discussion time) is from 4:15-5:05 PM on Wednesdays. With advance announcement, we may use one or more of these X-hour time slots for discussions, films or visiting speakers, so please keep this hour free.

**Topics and Reading Assignments:**

March 25 Introduction. (Begin viewing in class of selected portions of Mozart’s opera *Don Giovanni*)

**Reading:** Stephen Crites, “Pseudonymous Authorship as Art and Act” **B** (Please read in advance of first class).

March 27

April 1 The Aesthetic Sphere of Existence. Introduction. (Continue viewing in class of selected portions of Mozart’s opera *Don Giovanni*)

**Reading:** Bretall, *A Kierkegaard Anthology*, pp. xvii-xxvi, 1-80; added item from *Diapsalmata*, p. 27, "Never Lose Courage" **B**; *Either/Or I*, "The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic," pp. 47-75, 84-91, 107, 118-119, 125-135 **B**; "A Cursory Observation Concerning a Detail in Mozart's Don Giovanni." **B**

April 3      The Ethical Existence Sphere

**Reading:** Bretall, "The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage," pp. 80-108; and "Equilibrium between the Aesthetical and the Ethical in the Composition of Personality," and "Choosing Oneself," pp. 176-180 and 214-217 in *Either/Or II*. **B**

April 8      Suspending the Ethical?

**Reading:** "Ultimatum," in *Either/Or II*, pp. 335-354 **B**; George Pattison, "Remaining True to the Ethical? A New letter from Assessor Vilhelm, with Commentary" **B**; "Two Edifying Discourses," Bretall, pp. 108-116.

April 10     Suspending the Ethical?

**Reading:** *Fear and Trembling*, pp. ix-81. Handouts: "Fear & Trembling Reading Guide" **B** and "Fear & Trembling Questions" **B** [This guide and these questions are in the "Handouts" folder of **BB**. They are to assist to your reading and are not the essay questions. which are also on **BB**.]

April 15     Suspending the Ethical? (Cont'd.)

**Reading:** *Fear and Trembling*, pp. 82-123

April 17     Anxiety

**Reading:** *The Concept of Anxiety*, 16-35, 41-51, 60-73 **B**

April 22,  
24

"Inventing" Christianity

**Reading:** *Philosophical Fragments*, pp. 1-3, (title page & epigraph), 9-48, 55-111; R. M. Green, "Kierkegaard's *Philosophical Fragments*: A Kantian Commentary" **B**

April 29     Truth as Subjectivity

**Reading:** Bretall, pp. 190-194; *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, pp. 28-31, 51-53<sup>B</sup>[Note all *Postscript* **BB** readings are in a single file, which includes notes]; Bretall, pp. 195-210; *Postscript*, pp. 133-138<sup>B</sup>; Bretall, pp. 210-222; *Postscript*, pp. 213-216, 224<sup>B</sup>; Bretall, pp. 222-226; *Postscript*, pp. 251-262, 266-271, 294, 315-316<sup>B</sup>; Bretall, pp. 226 to 231.

May 1 The Religious Existence Sphere

**Reading:** *Postscript*, pp. 342-343, 387-411, 420-421<sup>B</sup>; Bretall, pp. 231 to 252; *Postscript*, pp. 528-529, 533-534, 542, 555-561<sup>B</sup>; Bretall, pp. 252-258.

**\*\*\*Research Paper proposals (1 page including bibliography) due at start of class May 1\*\*\***

May 6 Despair and Its Remedy(ies)

**Reading:** *The Sickness unto Death*, pp. 1-74.

May 8 Despair and Its Remedy(ies) (Cont'd.)

**Reading:** *The Sickness unto Death*, pp. 77-82, 87-96, 126-131.

May 13 Kierkegaard and "Christendom"  
(X-hour)

**Reading:** "Was Bishop Mynster a 'Witness to the Truth'?"<sup>B</sup>; Bretall, 426-482.

May 15 Kierkegaard's Legacy: Christian Religious Existentialism

**Reading:** Tillich: *Anxiety and the Courage to Be*

**Reading:** Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, pp. 1-74; 77-82; 87-96; 155-190

May 20, 22 Kierkegaard's Legacy: Atheistic Existentialism

**Reading:** Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, pp. 123-154; Jean-Paul Sartre, "Existentialism is a Humanism"<sup>B</sup>; "No Exit" and "The Flies" in Sartre, *No Exit and Three Other Plays*

**\*\*\*Sunday, May 25, Research Papers due in the "RES PAP DRP BOX" (on Blackboard) as a PDF not a Word document by 5:00 p.m.\*\*\***

May 27, 28    Selected student Research Paper Presentations  
(X-hour)