Existential Sociology

In this course we aim to enjoy the art of learning in a relaxed mode of involvement and analysis. Our collective engagement with the material influences the pace and sequence of the readings.

The existential and social-psychological models of analysis are the major areas of study in the course and no prerequisites are needed, except your attendance and willingness to learn and to contribute. . . We try to balance the analytical and the experiential.

The Course introduces the existential approach to the study of self-identity, the study of group relations, and of the wider social dynamics. Theories of self formation and self-deception, of social action, of authenticity and motivation, and of group dynamics are addressed. Because of the strong resurgence, today, of existential motifs in the area of Globalization and Racism studies, I have incorporated few selections from the new literature as well.

The goal is to acquaint you with 3 interdisciplinary modes of analysis addressing the self as an individual and as a member of a group, and their dynamics of motivation, transformation and change-on the micro and macro level. The three models are the existential model, which is the essential and the primary program of this course, as well as the dialogical-dramaturgical model, and the positivistic model.

Please see the full Conceptual Plan and Format of the course on pages 7-8 of this syllabus.

Requirements:
Attendance is required. Short Take-home writing assignments (2- pages each) to help you command key frameworks and concepts-- and a take-home final paper will be required.

Please contact me if you have any documented disability. I will attend to your needs as best I can.

1. The Existential Mode of Analysis – is the major area addressed in this course, with selected readings from primary and secondary works by J.P. Sartre, Stern, Manser, Kierkegaard, Hegel, Mead, de Beauvoir, and my own book on the topic. Main topics include theory of Self and the Other, theory of freedom, anguish and bad faith, theory of emotions, dynamics of making choices, the concept of self-deception, concept of bad faith, to be concluded with a theory of self-transformation and social change. Existential social psychology introduces us to modalities in relationships and interactive ethics, the structures of pledge, the practico-inert and their experiential uses and applications in daily life.

de Beauvoir, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, address other areas: notably those of sexuality and self identity, concepts of authenticity, “leap of faith, and the Present Age.

2. The Dialogical-Dramaturgical mode of analysis
   Study the theory of Habitus and the genesis of self in the work of Mead and Bourdieu.

3. The Positivistic Mode of Analysis – Psychological theory of gender and sexuality by Freud, which represents the model of determinism. This section is short and mainly serves the purpose of making contrast-effect with the social-existential approach.

Books required:
JP Sartre Existentialism and Human emotions
Jp. Sartre Being and nothingness
G. Hayim Existentialism and Sociology---Transaction
S de Beauvoir; The Second Sex
S Kierekegaard --- The Present Age
**Reader:** Short articles by notable scholars in the area, in the form of a *Reader* is offered free of charge. *Reader* will help you supplement and clarify the readings.

**Syllabus**

**WEEK 1**  
**Tuesday, September 4**  
Overview  
Introducing fundamental concepts in Existential analysis:  
Ontology, structure of *being: in itself and for itself*,  
Constraint and Freedom  
**Readings:**  
**Martin:** Being in itself & Being for itself. (Reader)  
**Hayim:** Existentialism and Sociology: Chapter 1 -Freedom, Anguish and Bad Faith.  
Concentrate on Freedom and Anguish pp. 13-18 (they introduce key concepts and foundational terminology.  

*From now on, Please always bring with you to class the Reader as well as my book on Existentialism and Sociology; they will guide your readings.*

**WEEK 2**  
**Tuesday, Sept. 11,**  
Concepts of Bad faith; Facticity, Transcendence,  
Techniques and Pattern of Bad Faith  
**Readings:**  
Hayim Patterns of bad Faith- chapter 1.  
Sartre Anguish vs. Fear inB&N (Reader pp.65-69)  
Concrete Examples of Bad Faith B&N pp. 96-112 (Reader)  

2 pages Short assignment due on Sep. 25

**WEEK 3**  
**Tuesday Sep 18 No classes (Rosh Hashana**
WEEK 4  
**Tuesday, Sept. 25**  
Introduce the concept of Self and Other  
Patterns of Relationships with the other  
Readings  

A Stern: Our ‘Being- For- Others’ and Their ‘Gaze’ (Reader)  

Hayim chapter 2 ‘Relationships with the Other’.  
Modalities of subordination, reciprocity, love, sadism etc,  
A Manser: Relations with Other People (Reader)  

Sartre; The Look (B&N)  
Relations with the Other PP. 340-353 (Reader)  
Concrete Relations with the Other 474-497 (Reader)  

WEEK 5  
**Tuesday October 2**  
Start theory of Motivation and transformation  
Concepts of Situation, Project, Life-script.  
Readings  
Hayim chapter 3.  

Second assignment due October 16 (mid grades due on Monday the 22nd, oct)  

WEEK 6  
**Tuesday Oct 9 NO SESSION** (Brandeis Monday, Monday classes in effect)  

WEEK 7  
**Tuesday, Oct. 16**  
Mead- Concepts of Me and I (Reader)  
Bring to Class Sartre booklet on Existentialism and Human Emotions
WEEK 8
Tuesday Oct 23
Sartre: Types of Groups and Group dynamics.
Seriality, Praxis, and the anatomy of revolt,
Readings:
Hayim: Chapters 5
Fundamental concepts in the Critique of Dialectical Reason:
The Serial and the Praxis group, Anatomy of revolt.
Pledge group,

The individual and the Group The Institution – as Objectification of Praxis.
Hayim, selections in Chapters 4, 6
The Pratico-Inert – technification of everyday life
Recovery of Human Experience Chapter 8

WEEK 9
Tuesday, Oct. 30
Breathing Space to fill in gaps in the readings.
Freud: Article on Femininity (Reader)

Start de Beauvoir-- The Second Sex
Discuss our Experiential Work-shop- students’ presentation of selected topics from the Second Sex,

WEEK 10
Tuesday Nov, 6
topics in SDB book will be divided among individual or pairs of students for short class presentations: The topics of choice are
Myth and Reality
The young girl
Sexual initiation
The Married Woman

Woman’s Situation and Character
The Narcissist
Women in love
The Mystic
The Independent Woman

WEEK 11
Tuesday Nov, 13
Continue workshop class presentations --Second Sex.
And Conclusions

WEEK 12
Tuesday, Nov. 20
Introducing Kierkegaard
Three stages in Life (handout)
Readings
The Present Age: (very readable book by Kierkegaard
Entire book

WEEK 13
Tuesday Nov. 27
‘Existence precedes Essence’ as foundation of all theories
Culture of passion and culture of Complicity
Kierkegaard
Pursuit of ethics of Safety versus
Ethics of commitment

Comparative analysis Of Models -preparing for Finals

WEEK 14
Tuesday, Dec 4
Modeling all authors and their key concepts.

WEEK 15
Tuesday Dec 11
Finals out,
Review and road map to guide you for the Finals.

*****Please pay attention to the following:
Final Papers are due on Thursday . Dec. 20,
Papers to be submitted at my office between 12-1. (Pearlman room 107)
Absolutely no Emailed papers accepted. 
All papers are to be handed to me in person. 
Earlier submissions to be coordinated with me
Thanks for your cooperation and best of luck.
I will be there to help you for any need.
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Conceptual Format

The existential and social psychological modes of analysis are the major areas of study in the course and no prerequisites are needed, except your attendance and willingness to learn and to contribute. . . We try to balance the analytical and the experiential. We read Existentialism and
Human Emotions and select readings from Being and Nothingness, all the while using my work on Existentialism and Sociology, and other selected readings to help you clarify key themes and introduce you to recent field work in the social-existential theory of the person and the group in daily action. Main topics covered include the constitution of Self, of Self and Other, of Emotions, Choice and Bad Faith, anguish and freedom, human relationships, the theory of motivation and life script, and the importance of the group in social and personal formations.

We then move to the study of the existential sociology of the group. In this context, types of personal and social identifications will be presented in selected readings taken from Sartre’s work The Critique of Dialectical Reason. Here, concepts of pledge, praxis and “serial” groups, concept of the ‘pratico inert’ and theory of revolt will be analyzed- in relationship to concrete social and political institutional settings.

In addition to Sartre, the thought of Mead on the genesis of the self, Kierkegaard on the The Present Age and that of Nietzsche (if time allows) on the origins of morality, will be given. The latter two introduce us to earlier sentiments on existentialism, and provide important historical antecedents to existential analysis and orientations.

It is impossible to study the contribution of Sartre to sociological analysis without, at the same time, introducing the work of Simone de Beauvoir. de Beauvoir, in The Second Sex and other works connects the existential mode of analysis to issues of sexual identity and historical consciousness, and offers some of the most provocative thinking on stages in identity formation and their social historical fate. We study Freud’s theory of gender and sexuality for contrast effect.

While studying the concept of “self and other,” both in Sartre and in de Beauvoir’s works, we will also be weaving in and out of Sartre’s foundational concepts as they are applied today by Judaken to the new mode of Racism in the Globalization context (time allowing).

Relax and let’s enjoy the class. I invite you to visit me during my office hours for additional help on assignments, readings, and anything else. gh.