

Soc 164a
Fall 2009

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Office Hours: TBA

Existential Sociology

In this course we aim to enjoy the art of learning in a relaxed mode of involvement and participation. Our collective engagement with the material influences the pace and sequence of the readings. We always, however, manage to complete all the readings without the pressure of rigid time slots. It is for this reason that your attendance and involvement are the most important component of the course.

The Course introduces the existential approach to the study of self-identity, the study of group and the wider social dynamics. Theories of self formation, self-deception and authenticity, of motivation and of social action are addressed. Because of the strong resurgence, today, of existential motifs in the area of Globalization and Racism studies, and in the area of global ethics, I have incorporated selections from the new material in the syllabus- Race after Sartre (Judaken, 2008) and Betsy Bowman on The Alter Globalization Movement and Sartre's Morality and History. (Bowman, 2005)

We integrate challenging perspectives from the existential literature and existential social-psychology with a number of basic *orientations from sociology*. No prerequisites are required.

The goal is to acquaint the student with different interdisciplinary modes of analysis in the study of self, self transformation and the power of change- on the personal and group levels; , notably the existential model which is the essential program of this course, the dialogical-dramaturgical model, and the positivistic approach.

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 (2-3 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 Dialogical-Dramaturgical Mode of Analysis** – We study the theory of Habitus and the genesis of the self in the work of Mead and Bourdieu.
2. **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, Kierkegaard, de Beauvoir, Judaken, Bowman and my own book on the topic. Main topics include the theory of *Self and the Other*, the theory of freedom, anguish and bad faith, the theory of emotions, dynamics of making choices, the concept of self-deception, 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 the *experiential uses* and applications of the *existential approach* in daily life

deBeauvoir, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Bowman, Judaken address other areas notably those of sexuality and self identity, globalization and race issues, concepts of authenticity, “leap of faith, and the **Present Age**.

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**

G. Hayim **Existentialism and Sociology**---Transaction

S de Beauvoir; **The Second Sex**

S Kierekegaard --- **The Present Age**

Short selections from notable scholars in the form of a *Reader* is offered free of charge. Reader will help you supplement and clarify the readings.

Sartre: Selections from Being and Nothingness

Mead; Genesis of Self: the *Me*, the *I*, the *Generalized other*

Stern: The Look and Being for the Other.

Farrar: Sartre's Progressive method (Theory of Motivation)

Freud: On Femininity

Linda bell; Sequestration and Love

Judaken : Sartre on Racism; from Existentialism to Globalization and the new Racism

Bowman; The Alter-Globalization Movement and Sartre's Ethics

Syllabus

Topics and readings

-Week 1

August- September

Mon. August 31st Wed. Sep 2

Introduction and overview

The Dialogical Theory of Self

Readings: Mead :The *I*, the *Me* and the *Generalized Other* (Reader)

Week 2

Mon Sep 7 No Classes

Wed. Sep 9

Discuss Mead,...

Begin Sartre

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 and Anguish pp; 13-18.

We will be analyzing these pages in class because of their introductory language and concepts.

From now on, Please always bring with you to class Hayim's Existentialism and Sociology. as well as theReader (Thanks)

Week 3

Mon. Sep.14, Wed Sep. 16

Concept of **Bad Faith,**

Facticity, Transcendence, Essence vs. Existence.

Readings:

Anguish VS. Fear in Reader B&N ((pp.65-69)

Hayim : Complete First chapter- Techniques of Bad Faith
Chapter 1

Freud: On Femininity (Reader)

First short assignment due on Sep. 21st

Week 4

Mon. Sep.21, Wed. Sep.23

Readings:

Continue Bad Faith

Sartre: Patterns of Bad Faith in B&N pp. 96-112 (Reader)

Introduce concept of The Other

Readings:

Stern :Being for the Other (Reader)

Week 5

Mon. Sep 28 **NO CLASSES**

Wed. Sep. 30

Modalities of Being for the other

The Look

Readings

Hayim --Chapter 2 Relations with the Other

Sartre B&N pp. 340-353-- The Look (Reader)

Week 6

Mon. Oct. 5 **NO CLASSES**

Wed. Oct. 7

Continue Concrete relations with the other

Readings

Hayim: chapter 2

B&N 474-497, (from 497--as far as you can handle)

Week 7

Mon Oct. 12--- Wed Oct. 14

Continue Relations with the Other

Linda Bell Sequestration and Love (Reader)

Start theory of Motivation and transformation

Concepts of Situation , Project, Life-script.

Readings

Hayim chapter 3.

Sartre : Existentialism and human Emotions.

Farrar: The Progressive Method (Reader).

Second Take-Home Assignment due on October 21st

Week 8

Mon Oct 19 Wed. Oct 21

Types of Groups and Group dynamics.

Seriality, Praxis, the Pratico inert,

Readings:

Hayim: Chapters 5 Fundamental concepts in the Critique of Dialectical

Reason:

Week 9

Mon. Oct. 26---Wed. Oct 28

The pledge group, the third person, analysis of revolt.

Readings:

Hayim: chapters 5-

Chapter 6 The Individual and the Group

Judaken : Race after Sartre (Reader)

Make sure to bring with you The Second Sex to the next class

Week 10

Mon. Nov. 2 –Wed. Nov. 4

Conclude Sartre

Readings

Hayim Chapter 8; the Recovery of Human Experience

Space to fill in gaps in the readings.

Start de Beauvoir-- the Second Sex

Experiential Work-shop- students' presentation of the Second Sex,

Readings:For next week

All students read the following two chapters (short ones)

(They introduce you to her model of Immanence and transcendence)

The chapters are: SDB book

The Nomads

Early tillers of the Soil

The following Topics (small sections in SDB book) will be divided among pairs of students for class presentations:

Topics for class presentations:

Myth and Reality

The young girl

Sexual initiation

The Lesbian

The Married Woman

Prostitutes and Hetairas

Woman's Situation and Character

The Narcissist

Women in love

The Mystic

The Independent Woman

Week 11

Mon. Nov 9 – Wed. Nov 11

Continue Class presentations --Second Sex.

And Conclusions

Week 12

Mon. Nov 16_ Wed. Nov. 18

Continue SDB if necessary

Introducing Kierkegaard

Readings

The Present Age: (small very readable book by Kierkegaard

Entire book

Week 113

Mon Nov. 23- Wed. Nov. 25

Kierkegaard

**Pursuit of ethics of Safety – complicity VS.
Ethics of authenticity-commitment**

Comparative analysis-preparing for Finals

Week 14

Mon. Nov. 30---Finals out

Wed. Dec. 2nd (last day of classes)

Modeling all authors and their key concepts.

******Please pay attention to the following:**

Final Papers are due on Friday Dec 11

Papers to be submitted in 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.

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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 and by Bowman to the new mode of Racism in the Globalization context.

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.

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