

PHI 325 Fall
Prof. Ed Mooney -- T-Th- 11:00-12:15
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EXISTENTIALISM : AFFLICTION AND MEANING

Assignments by week:

1. 26 August [**no class August 28**]
 Birth of Tragedy
1. 2 & 4 Sept. **Birth of Tragedy**
1. 9 & 11 Sept **Bk of Job**
Practice paper due
1. 16 & 18 Sept **Ecce Homo**
1. 23 - 25 Sept **Fear and Trembling**
1. **Sept. 30 *Eid Ul-Fitr* – 2 Oct**
1st Papers Due
1. 7 Oct.; **Oct. 9 *Yom Kippur***
 Fear & Trembling
1. 14 and 16 October **F & T**
1. 21 & 23 October **Dostoevsky**
1. 28 and 30 October **Dostoevsky**
2nd Papers Due
1. 4 and 6 November **Sartre**
1. 11 and 13 November **Sartre**
- 1. 18, 20, and 25 Nov – Flynn &**
 Critchley *Free Days*
1. 2 and 4 December **Flynn-Critchley**

Last Paper Due December 11- HL 501

Total grade: three papers plus final paper;
30%, 30%, 40%

Points deducted for poor attendance

Points added for raising your hand

First papers (practice, 1, & 2):

Look for 2-3 passages-sentences to unpack and reflect on; put these in bold-face at the start of each section that concerns them. Write 3-4 pages, not on “the book” or “the philosophy of . . .” but on the passages you select. Reading one or two paragraphs six times is better than writing on the basis of skimming for ‘the general drift’ – though the latter can help you get into the spirit of the local passages you pick.

3RD (LAST) PAPER

- A) Take a position on some aspect or argument of one of the primary texts;
- B) Develop a critique or contrast with another primary text;
- C) Evaluate some aspect or argument of Flynn-or-Critchley in light of A) and B) and Class discussion

Books

Nietzsche, *Birth of Tragedy*, (Oxford)
Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, (Oxford)
The Book of Job tr., Scheindlin (Norton)
Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground and*
Grant Inquisitor (Penguin)
Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, tr.
Hannay, (Penguin [Great Ideas])
Sartre: *Existentialism is a Humanism*,
(Yale)
Thomas Flynn *Existentialism A very*
short Introduction (Oxford)
Simon Critchley, *Infinitely Demanding*,
(Verso, paper edition)

afflict us. They bring us meaning and knowledge. The texts we read in this class evoke struggles between meaning and its loss. We can think of the age-old quest for Religion, Meaning, and Knowledge as humanity's effort, individually and collectively, to shore up our capacities for confidence and conviction against inevitable encroachments.

Reflection (meditation) Papers:

In your reading and writing, be alert for moments that strike you in some fashion, and make marginal notes of these moments. Why do they ring a bell or jump out at you (for good or ill)? What triggers your imagination -- heart and mind. The papers will be three-page (double spaced) and specially formatted. Before your first paragraph begins, **set out in bold the sentences from the text** that contain the images, descriptions, phrases, actions, or situations that grab you. That's the focus. The paper then becomes an elaboration, exploration, and clarification of that focus; a reflective meditation on the ideas or themes.

You'll find yourself drawing on your own memories and experiences in this elaboration, exploration, and clarification. And you'll find yourself remembering other passages or moments in the text that work in tandem with whatever you put in focus in your opening sentences. Don't forget, if nothing grabs you, *you'll have nothing to say*. You can, of course, use the first person. And please, avoid anything that reads like a book report. The paper shows *you* -- your *response*. I should learn something about how your mind and imagination work as I read it. Let your voice and personality come out.

Art, religion, philosophy, and literature offer resources for celebration of life, and hence offer ways to stave off at least part of the suffering that can