

Phil 3142 Existentialism

Section MW11

Class Number 16190

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Rare is the philosophical doctrine that straddles literature and philosophy as effortlessly as existentialism. Sometimes thought to be a purely French twentieth-century phenomenon, existentialism is both a philosophical position with a long pedigree and a literary movement with global presence and presence. In this class, we will examine some classic works—philosophical essays, short stories, and novels--in the existentialist tradition, looking at both literary and philosophical works in an effort to unpack existentialism's central theses, understand their significance, and evaluate the works from a moral, political and metaphysical perspective. Among other things, we will explore why existentialism is held to be an atheist philosophy, why it resonates with Buddhism, and how it avoids charges of quietism and nihilism.