Syllabus

Course: Psychology 3470 -- Existential Psychology
Time & Location: M/W 9:30-10:45, 1303 TLC
Texts: The Discovery of Being, R. May
Sections from The Portable Nietzsche, F. Nietzsche
Notes from the Underground, F. Dostoyevski
The Myth of Sisyphus and other Essays, A. Camus
Sections from Essays in Existentialism, J. P. Sartre
I and Thou, M. Buber (W. Kaufmann, trans.)
Dr. Dodson's summaries and material from videos (to be announced in class)

Professor: Dr. Eric Dodson
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Office Hours: M/W 7:00 a.m.-9:00 a.m., M/W 11:00-1:30
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Course Description:
This course explores existential philosophy's concepts, texts and thinkers, with an emphasis on their significance for psychological theory and praxis.

Course Objectives:
(1) This course seeks to impart a firm understanding of existentialism's central concepts, texts and thinkers.
(2) This course seeks to explore the significance of existentialism for psychology -- both theoretically and practically.
(3) This course seeks to call the student into a deeper, more powerful appropriation of his or her own existence.

Course Requirements:
There will be three non-cumulative multiple-choice tests during the semester, each worth one third of the final grade. The majority of the test questions will come from the class notes and readings. However, some of the test questions will come from the videos I show in class and/or unusual things that happen in class. So, it's a good idea to keep apprised of all of that. The dates of these tests will be announced beforehand in class -- usually a week or so before the test itself. While there is no attendance requirement as such for this course, it is imperative that you keep abreast of what’s going on. Some reasons for this are: (1) test dates are announced in class, (2) much of the material on the tests will come directly from the class notes and discussions, and (3) half of life is just showing up.

Grading:
33.3% for Test #1
33.3% for Test #2
33.3% for Test #3

Tests:
Each test will require the student to bring a blank SCANTRON form and a pencil. The SCANTRON form must be form #229629 (that’s the small reddish kind with oval answers). The SCANTRON form must be this specific type. SCANTRON forms can be purchased at several locations across campus (e.g., the bookstore, the TLC, the UCC). No cellphones, headphones or ear-buds are permitted while taking tests.
Make-up Tests:
Anyone who misses a test must make arrangements to take a make-up test within one week of the original test date. All make-up tests will be graded at a 10% penalty (to compensate for the advantage you would have in taking the test at your convenience).

Attendance and absences:
In this class there is no formal attendance policy, however I have found over the years that students who miss class frequently rarely do well on the tests, and hence rarely receive a good final grade for the course. More importantly, I find that these students rarely learn anything substantial or valuable from the course, and hence receive very little personal benefit from it.

In light of all of that, if you do need to miss class, you do not need to notify me (except for test days, as described above). Bear in mind that specific test dates are determined in class (except for the date of the last test), so you do need to keep apprised of any in-class announcements; this is YOUR responsibility. Consequently, I don’t give out test dates over the phone or via e-mail. If you miss class and are worried about the next test date, ask a friend and/or show up to class to find out (sorry, but I’ve had too many people abusing this).

Extra-credit paper: You may opt to write an extra-credit paper worth 2 to 8 percentage points added to your final average. This paper should focus on how existential psychology matters to you personally. The basic format of this paper is as follows: 6 to 8 typed, double-spaced pages of text (not including title, table of contents, space for your name, lengthy quotes, pictures, references (if any), blank filler pages, etc.). Please use 12-point print, with 1-inch margins all around (this should yield 25 lines per page). If your word-processor doesn't easily conform to this format, that's okay — just make sure that you write extra pages to compensate. The exact due-date will be toward the end of the term, and will be announced in class. All papers that are late, or that are judged by me to be short will be heavily penalized (and yes, I do know all of the tricks for expanding text to fill pages). All papers must be turned in on hard-copy. No papers will be accepted via email.

Cheating:
The following are grounds for receiving an immediate grade of F for the course:
1. Cheating on any test (this includes but is not limited to using any cell-phones, crib-sheets, notes, etc.).
2. Plagiarism on any paper (this includes but is not limited to copying text from websites and classmates).

Special Arrangements:
Any student who due to disability requires special arrangements to take this course should see me now.