

PSYCHOLOGY 596A: Experimental Existential Psychology

SPRING Semester

Lecture Time: W, 9:00AM-11:50AM
Lecture Place: Psychology Bldg., Rm. 323

Instructor: Daniel Sullivan
Office: Psychology Rm. 519
Office hours: By appointment
Contact: 520-621-7431 or swolf22@email.arizona.edu (email preferred)

Course Objectives

Many topics once thought to be the domain of existential philosophy – such as fear of death, the search for meaning and authenticity in life, or the experience of guilt – are now widely studied using experimental methods. This course surveys the many theories and methodologies used by experimental existential psychologists to investigate these fundamental aspects of human experience. Topics will range from the origin of this research area in existentialism to its relevance to contemporary social and clinical psychology.

D2L

D2L (<https://d2l.arizona.edu/>) will be used for announcements as well as for other relevant materials pertaining to the course, including required readings and lecture notes. To succeed in this course, you should be checking this site, as well as your e-mail account, on a frequent basis.

If at any point you check the D2L site and do NOT find something you think you should be able to find, such as a required reading or set of lecture notes, please email me with information about what you think is missing.

Required Text(s)

There is no single required textbook for this course. All readings will be available as scanned PDF files on the course D2L website, long in advance of when they are due. Please download them and read them ahead of the class session when they are due. You will need to have the readings with you during class, but it is alright to have them open on a computer or tablet.

Attendance

You will not be directly graded for attendance in this course. However, there will be a 25% participation component of your grade. This will be earned through regular participation in class discussion. Regular attendance is crucial to succeed.

Student with disabilities or special circumstances

The staff of the Disability Resource Center (DRC), 1224 E Lowell Street, <http://drc.arizona.edu/>, coordinates accommodations and services for UA courses. If you have a disability for which you may request accommodation in UA classes and have not contacted them, please do as soon as possible. Please also see me privately so that we can discuss any accommodations necessary to facilitate your experience in this course. More generally, if you have any problems or concerns regarding this course, please contact me as soon as possible. We should strive to respect and value the diversity that exists in UA classrooms (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, national origin, disability, geographic backgrounds, political orientation, sexual orientation). While we may sometimes disagree with each other on topics discussed in class, it's important that we remember that appreciating diversity in perspectives is an important part of the learning process. If you ever feel that you are not being given the respect you deserve in class, please let me know.

Caveat

I often improvise during my lectures, have a strange sense of humor, and have been known to use uncouth language from time to time. Please let me know after class if you find any remark I make offensive.

Grading

There are a total of 100 points to earn in this course. Your final grade will be determined by (1) enhanced preparation for at least one class discussion (see below; 25 pts.); (2) general participation in class and discussions (25 pts.); & (3) a presentation given to the class at the end of the course about your idea for an empirical study based on the themes and topics we have been discussing in class (50 pts.). The presentations will be expected to be about 20 minutes in length. Details about this assignment will be given prior to the end of the semester. **You should schedule at least one office hour meeting with me to discuss your presentation, by about the mid-point of the semester.**

Preparation for a class discussion will involve carefully reading the papers assigned for that week and emailing to me, *by Monday evening before class*, the following materials for each article assigned: (1) 3 questions which you would like to see clarified; (2) 2 key points you find worthy of in-class discussion.

Schedule & Readings

Date	Topic	Reading (for before class)
W 1/9	Introduction to the Course	N/A
W 1/16	Introduction to Existentialism	May (1958), "The origins and significance of the existential movement in psychology" Guignon & Pereboom (1995), "The legacy of existentialism"
W 1/23	Introduction to Psychoanalysis	Hall & Lindzey (1957), "Freud's psychoanalytic theory" Westen (1998), "The scientific legacy of Sigmund Freud"
W 1/30	Overview of Experimental Existential Psychology	Hart (2014), "Toward an integrative theory of psychological defense" Sullivan & Palitsky (2018), "An existential psychological perspective on the human essence"
W 2/6	Kierkegaard	Cole (1971), "Kierkegaard's concept of the self" & "Kierkegaard's concept of despair" Hayes, Ward, & McGregor (2015), "Why bother? Death, failure, and fatalistic withdrawal from life"
W 2/13	Nietzsche I	Nietzsche (1874/1997), "On the uses and disadvantages of history for life" Routledge et al. (2011), "Nostalgia as an existential resource"
W 2/20	Nietzsche II	Scheler (1913/1994), "On the phenomenology and sociology of <i>ressentiment</i> " Engels (2015), <i>The politics of resentment: A genealogy</i>
W 2/27	Arendt	Arendt (1958), <i>The human condition</i> Jong & Halberstadt (2016), <i>An existential psychology of religion</i>

Date	Topic	Reading (for before class)
W 3/6	SPRING BREAK	
W 3/13	Binswanger	Binswanger (1975), <i>Being-in-the-world</i> Pyszczynski & Kesebir (2011), "Anxiety buffer disruption theory"
W 3/20	Heidegger	Elkholy (2011), "Introduction to the project and method of <i>Being and Time</i> " Helm et al. (2018), "Introducing the State Trait Existential Isolation Model (STEIM)"
W 3/27	Sartre I	Sartre (1968), "The progressive-regressive method" Ryan & Deci (2017), <i>Self-determination theory</i>
W 4/3	Sartre II	Sartre (1962), "Outline of a phenomenological theory of the emotions" Ratcliffe (2015), "Depression and the body" & "Loss of hope"
W 4/10	Diversity and Existential Psychology 1	Fanon (1952), <i>Black Skin, White Masks</i> Salzman (2018), "Cultural Trauma and Recovery"
W 4/17	Diversity and Existential Psychology 2	Jackson (2005), "The Prose of Suffering" Jackson (2013), "On Autonomy" Hoffman et al. (2016), "Existential-Humanistic Perspective on Black Lives Matter"
W 4/24	Research Presentations	N/A
W 5/1	Research Presentations	N/A