

**Spring 2018**  
**PHIL 4450, Section 01**  
**Existentialism**  
**First Paper Assignment**  
**Prof. Douglas Ficek**

*Write a paper, eight-to-ten pages in length, on one of the following topics – preferably the one that you find the most interesting. Revise your work carefully, and remember to cite your sources correctly using APA, MLA, or Chicago guidelines. Your typed and stapled essay is due at the beginning of class on Wednesday, March 7th.*

1. What is existentialism, and what are the most important existential themes? Do you agree with this philosophy, broadly speaking? Why or why not? Use three additional sources in your discussion.
2. What is existential psychotherapy, and how does it differ from other forms of psychotherapy? Do you agree with this therapeutic approach, broadly speaking? Why or why not? Use three additional sources in your discussion.
3. Who was Kierkegaard, and why is he considered an existentialist? Do you find his controversial philosophy compelling? Why or why not? Use three additional sources in your discussion.
4. What does Kierkegaard argue in *Fear and Trembling*, and what exactly is a “teleological suspension of the ethical”? Do you agree with his existential analysis? Use three additional sources in your discussion.
5. Who was Dostoevsky, and why is he considered an existentialist? Do you find his controversial philosophy compelling? Why or why not? Use three additional sources in your discussion.
6. What does Dostoevsky depict in *Notes from Underground*, and how does this work illustrate existential themes? What do you make of this text? Use three additional sources in your discussion.
7. Who was Nietzsche, and why is he considered an existentialist? Do you find his controversial philosophy compelling? Why or why not? Use three additional sources in your discussion.
8. What does Nietzsche argue in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, and what exactly is the difference between the “master” and “slave” moralities? Do you agree with his existential analysis? Use three additional sources in your discussion.