COURSE OVERVIEW
Nineteenth and twentieth-century developments in philosophical method, biblical exegesis, theology, and fiction, as influenced by the “existentialist” framing of questions traditionally raised about the meaning of life. Focus, in turn, upon:

1. Soren Kierkegaard’s exploration of his personal courtship experience as a resource for theological reflection on Abraham and Isaac;

2. Fyodor Dostoevsky’s dramatization of bottomless, spiteful self-consciousness to which Jesus’s kiss of the Inquisitor is the only positive answer?

3. Rudolf Otto’s “phenomenology” of religious experience as preparation for subsequent religious existentialisms;

4. Paul Tillich’s reconceptualization of faith as “ultimate concern” expressed through metaphor and myth guarded against idolatry; and

5. Jean-Paul Sartre’s fictionalized vision of redemption through art from sceptical existentialist sickening.

Emphasis on independent, critical evaluation of the texts discussed and the preparation of five well-argued short reflection-reports on each.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:
Students who successfully complete this course should be able to:
(1) Discuss the ideas of the five writers in these five texts as demonstrated in each of the five required short essays and in participation in class discussion; and (2) Demonstrate an unquantifiably enriched imagination of the human condition and increased appreciation of the choices of terms in which to reflect upon the “otherness” immanent in and transcending our common humanity.

REQUIRED READING:

Fear and Trembling, Soren Kierkegaard
Notes from Underground and “The Grand Inquisitor,” Fyodor Dostoevsky
The Idea of the Holy, Rudolf Otto
The Dynamics of Faith, Paul Tillich
Nausea, Jean-Paul Sartre
**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

Attendance expected. Contribute to class discussion: 5%.

No Mid-terms, no Final Exam.

**Five** “reflective” book-report Papers, each 3-4 pages (or more) – graduate students: 5 pages. Due on the dates indicated below. Choices of topics and formats to be discussed in class. Each worth 19% of the course grade. Grade penalty for a late paper--as circumstances warrant. **Need I worry about plagiarism?** (Even liberal Calvinists worry about "total depravity.")

**COURSE SCHEDULE:**

Reading to be completed for class discussion on the days specified. Keep up with it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>August</th>
<th>22</th>
<th>Introduction, time-line, religion vs. science and &quot;enlightenment,&quot; the ambiguous good of individualism and self-consciousness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Fear and Trembling</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td>“</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>“</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>“</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rosh Hashana (Sept. 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>“</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>Video: Dostoevsky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Paper due Yom Kippur, Day of Repentance (Sept. 14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td>“The Grand Inquisitor”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Notes from Underground</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sukkot/Tabernacles (Sept. 19-25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Notes from Underground</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td>“</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Martin Heidegger, b. 1889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>1</td>
<td><em>The Idea of the Holy</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>“</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
October 15  The Idea of the Holy  
Friedrich Nietsche, b. 1844  
The Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca (Oct. 15-18)  
Eid-al-Adha: lamb/goat sacrifice honoring Abraham (15th)

17  FALL Break

22  The Dynamics of Faith  
Paper Due

24  “

29  “

31  “
All Hallows Eve  
All Souls Day, November 2

November 5  The Dynamics of Faith  
Guy Fawkes Day

7  “
Albert Camus, b, 1913

12  Nausea  
Paper Due

14  “

19  “

21  “

26  Class cancelled  
28  THANKSGIVING Break

December 3  Nausea  
Paper Due

5  “

Note: The course has an online site at Blackboard, reachable through the login screen:  
http://blackboard.sc.edu. To log in and proceed to your "My USC" screen you will need a  
userid and password. At the "My USC" screen click on the number: title of this course.  
Initially, I have put this syllabus up (under "course documents"), along with a link to my  
personal pages, and the site will develop if interest and need dictate.