

19th Century Philosophy: Søren Kierkegaard
PHIL 108 – Winter 2024
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:30pm-1:50pm
Ridgewalk Academic Complex (RWAC) 0426 (4th floor)

INSTRUCTOR

Professor: Clinton Tolley
Email: ctolley@ucsd.edu
Office: online zoom room
<https://ucsd.zoom.us/my/clinton.tolley>
Hours: Weds 12:30-2pm; canvas sign-up

CANVAS SITE

<https://canvas.ucsd.edu/courses/53404>

COURSE READINGS (AVAILABLE AT PRICE CENTER BOOKSTORE)

S. Kierkegaard, *Johannes Climacus / Philosophical Fragments* (Princeton UP)
S. Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety* (Princeton UP)
S. Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (Princeton UP)
[all readings are also available electronically via jstor / links on our Canvas site]

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course we will explore some of the key philosophical writings by the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) and analyze and assess their significance, both in relation to their historical context in the first half of the 19th century, and also in relation to perennial problems in philosophy.

We will focus on four texts: (1) *Johannes Climacus, or: de omnibus dubitandum est* (written 1842-43), (2) *Philosophical Fragments, or a Fragment of Philosophy* (1844), (3) *The Concept of Anxiety: A Simple Psychologically Orienting Deliberation on the Dogmatic Issue of Hereditary Sin* (1844), and (4) *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments* (1846). As all of these texts were officially presented (published) as if by authors whose names are not 'Søren Kierkegaard', one initial set of questions we need to confront will concern the nature of the communication, authorship, styles, and methods involved in philosophical writing. And as much of the contents of these four works are concerned with the nature and value of philosophy itself (over and against other human activities or ways or stages of life, including: the aesthetic, the ethical, the scientific, the religious), we will be occupied throughout with a philosophical exploration of philosophy itself by way of the words from these 'pseudonyms'. Along the way, we will take up and try to sort out Kierkegaard's views on philosophical topics which lie on the border between psychology, philosophy of mind, epistemology, ethics, social political philosophy, and the philosophy of religion, such as: the nature of belief, knowledge, doubt, faith; the relation of thinking to willing and feeling (passion); the nature of being a self; the nature of being human; the relation between the individual human and the collective (the species, the 'race', humanity); the relation between nature, human being, and the super-natural and super-human.

REQUIREMENTS

1. *Weekly questionnaires* (40%)

On Monday of each week, there will be a questionnaire posted on the course's Canvas page (under 'Quizzes'), to be completed on Canvas by the **end of Friday** (midnight) of the same week. The form of these questions will be multiple-choice, true/false, matching, and fill-in-the-blank. The topics of the questions will be drawn from both the assigned readings and the lectures from the current week, and answering them will be a straightforward affair for anyone who attends lectures and completes all the readings.

* Extra credit: During finals week there will be an optional extra-credit questionnaire, due Friday, March 22nd, 5pm.

2. Weekly online commentary posts (15%) & comments (5%)

(A) Posts: By **end of Thursday** (midnight) of each week, you will need to contribute a 200-word post to our Canvas discussion forum. Your post should include:

- (1) page- and/or section-number references to a 1-2 page stretch of our readings that is most of interest to you;
- (2) a quote of one sentence (or two) of particular interest to you from this stretch of text,
- (3) an explanation in your own words of the main idea of the sentence, and how you think it fits into the particular stretch of text, and the reading more generally,
- (4) some of your thoughts and opinions about the subject-matter in question, and
- (5) at least one question about the sentence you've chosen.

(B) Comments: Before the **end of Friday** (midnight), you will also need to post one 100-word (minimum) comment on someone else's post.

* Extra credit: Each week you can earn another 0.25% toward your grade by responding a second time to posts and comments made by others (50-word minimum; once per week; up to an additional 2.5%).

3. *Weekly in-class worksheets* (20%)

Each week during one of the meetings there will be one short closed-book hand-written assignment distributed, completed, and discussed in class.

4. *Final essay* (15%)

By the end of our scheduled exam period (**Thurs March 21st, 2:30pm**), you will need to turn in a 2500-word essay in which you articulate and defend a philosophical position concerning one of the topics covered in our course, and which engages with the views on this topic put forward by at least two of our texts (and at most three). (Your essay must be submitted by this time both via email to me and electronically at Turnitin.com (see note C below). The word-count for your essay should be placed at the end.

5. *Two office hours 'check-in' meetings* (2 x 2.5% = 5%)

Each student is required to have two virtual meetings (via zoom) with me during the term, once during the first half (weeks 1-5), a second during the second half (weeks 6-11). The canonical scheduling time for these meetings will be during the weekly office hours (Weds 1230-2pm); if these office hour slots don't work with your schedule, please be in touch (sooner than later!) to make alternate arrangement for a meeting. The duration of each of the meetings will be 5 minutes.

NOTE: participating in at least one of the one-on-one meetings is required in order to pass the class.

NOTES ABOUT REQUIREMENTS

A. No extensions will be granted for any assignment or exam, except in cases of genuine emergency (e.g., earthquake, flood, fire, death in the family, illness certified by a doctor). No extensions can be granted for the weekly questionnaires *at all*, due to the distribution of the correct answers shortly after the due date.

B. The UCSD Policy on Integrity of Scholarship must be observed in this course. This includes observance of the following six principles:

As a student,

1. I will not receive or provide unauthorized assistance in examinations.
2. I will not use unauthorized materials during an examination.
3. I will not use materials from sources without proper quotation, acknowledgement or citations.
4. I will not alter examinations, essays, or other assignments for regrading.
5. I will not fabricate data or references.
6. I will not use false excuses to obtain extensions of time for examinations or writing assignments.

C. Maintaining academic integrity: Though students are strongly encouraged to discuss the assignments with one another, each student must submit answers to the assignments independently of one another, written in her or his own words. Additionally, students agree that by taking this course, their mid-term examinations and final papers will be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted exams and papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the terms of use agreement posted on the Turnitin.com site.

D. Any student caught cheating or plagiarizing (i) will be reported to the Academic Integrity Office, (ii) will receive a failing grade on the assignment at issue, and (iii) will be in jeopardy of failing the entire course, depending on the nature of the breach of academic integrity.

E. The use of technology (phones, tablets, computers, etc.) is to be limited to engagement with course material; all technology is prohibited during any closed-book assignment.

F. If any accommodations are needed due to a disability or for religious reasons, please notify me during the first class period or as soon as possible. Students requesting accommodations for the course due to a disability must provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) which is located in University Center 202 behind Center Hall. Students are required to present their AFA letters to Faculty (please make arrangements to contact me privately) and also to the OSD Liaison in the Philosophy Department in advance so that accommodations may be arranged.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS

{subject to change}

week	Tues	Thurs
1 Intro, 'de omnibus...'	intro: kierkegaard and early 19th century philosophy [de omnibus, pp113-56]	'de omnibus...': pp157-72
2 Philosophical Fragments	intro, ch 1: pp1-22	chs 2-3 & appendix: pp23-54
3 Philosophical Fragments	ch 4 and (end of) interlude (sel): pp55-71, pp82-88	ch 5 & moral: pp89-111
4 The Concept of Anxiety	preface, intro: pp1-24	ch 1: pp25-51
5 The Concept of Anxiety	ch 2: pp52-80	ch 3: ch 4, 1, pp81-117
6 The Concept of Anxiety	ch 4, 2: pp118-154	ch 5: pp155-62
7 Concluding Unscientific Postscript	preface, intro, part 1: pp1-22	part 1, chs 1-2: pp23-58
8 Concluding Unscientific Postscript	part 2, sect 1, ch 2, 1-2: pp72-92	part 2, sect 1, ch 2, 4: pp106-25
9 Concluding Unscientific Postscript	part 2, sect 2, ch 1 (sel): pp129-61	part 2, sect 2, ch 2 (sel): pp189-216
10 Concluding Unscientific Postscript	part 2, sect 2, ch 3, 4, and part 2, sect 2, ch 4, 1-3: pp349-60 and pp360-84	part 2, sect 2, ch 4, div 2 (sel), and part 2, sect 2, ch 5 and appendix: pp385-87; pp555-61; and pp587-623
exam week		final paper due Thurs March 21 2:30pm

Note: Students are very much encouraged to read all of the texts carefully twice over (e.g., once before class, once after), to aid comprehension.