

Dr. Mariana Alessandri

Office: ELABS 302 (across from elevators)

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 12-1pm, Thursdays, 3-4pm (and by appointment. Email me!)

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### Required Books (remember, philosophers bring books to class!)

1. Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling/Repetition*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983). ISBN-13 978-0691020266
2. Hong and Hong, Eds. *The Essential Kierkegaard*. (Princeton University Press, 2000). ISBN-13: 978-0691019406

(Other readings will be posted on Blackboard)

### Course Description

Ok, so we are definitely going to talk about one dead white guy throughout the entire semester. Søren Kierkegaard was a Danish Lutheran almost-pastor/almost-married, 19<sup>th</sup> Century theologian, philosopher and father of 14 pseudonyms but no babies. He was the first philosopher to deal head-on with depression; he writes about anxiety, sin, death, God, faith, hypocritical Christians, love, loneliness, passion, risk, leaps of faith into a great unknown, romance, etc. People call him the “father of Existentialism,” because he lived 100 years before the French and German Existentialists like Sartre, Camus, and Heidegger, but they copied a lot of his ideas. Unamuno thought he was Kierkegaard in a past life. Given that Kierkegaard wrote both pseudonymously and under his own name, it is difficult to get a sense of what he believes from only reading one or two entire books, so instead, we are going to read short and sweet selections from most of his really long books.

Kierkegaard is one of my favorite philosophers. I wrote my dissertation on him. One problem that I see in this small world of philosophy, is that not a lot of Hispanics/Latinx are as in love with Kierkegaard as I am. I don't know if this is a function of how people teach him, or the fact that he was a Christian, or a polemical curmudgeon, or that he died so so so long ago (but he was only 42! 1813-1855). Anyway, I need help with either 1) figuring out why minority students are not drawn to Kierkegaard, or 2) how to get them to be interested in him. I also want to 3) figure out why and how UTPA graduate Gloria Anzaldúa was influenced by him to such a degree that he made it into a very late draft of *Borderlands/la frontera*. She gave him the ax, I think, in the final draft of her book, but we don't know why or if the editor made her do it. This means that Kierkegaard still haunts *Borderlands/la frontera*, even though his name has been taken out. If you are familiar with *Borderlands/la frontera* or want to become familiar with it, you can be part of a small group that tries to figure out this puzzle. During Spring Break, I am going to the Gloria Anzaldúa archive at Bentsen library at UT Austin to look at the old drafts to find where she mentions him explicitly. If this doesn't interest you, there will be many projects you can choose from; all aim to make Kierkegaard relevant to us who live in the RGV.

**Course Requirements:** Show up to class, having read Kierkegaard and ready to talk!

### Final Grade Calculation (A=90-100 points; B=80-89.9; C=70-79.9; D=60-69.9; F=0-59.9)

Attendance	10 points
Co-leading class discussion	10 points
Weekly Response Papers (10 @ 2 points each)	20 points
SK-RGV Project	15 points
SK Influence Presentation	5 points
Conversation about Kierkegaard Project	10 points
Final SK Influence Presentation	10 points
Final SK Influence Essay	20 points
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 points</b>

**Attendance** (10 points)

A+ = no missed classes (extra credit; if you are within .5 of the higher letter, you will get bumped up)

A = 1-4 missed classes (full 10 attendance points)

A- = 5 missed classes (9 attendance points)

B+ = 6 missed classes (8 attendance points)

B = 7 missed classes (7 attendance points)

B- = 8 missed classes (6 attendance points)

C = 9 missed classes (5 attendance points)

D/F = 10 missed classes or more (0 attendance points)

**Co-Leading Class Discussion** (10 points)

Once during the semester, you will co-lead a class discussion on Kierkegaard. You should provide a paper hand-out with the main points and questions you want to ask the class. Treat us as though we have read the text, but probably not as closely as you have. You should first provide a short summary of what SK is saying, and then ask us some provocative and interesting questions to play with for the day. If you ask the right kinds of questions, it shouldn't feel like a burden to lead the class discussion. You are only responsible for 10-15 minutes of class-leading, and then I will take over.

**Weekly Response Papers** (2 points each, due on most Thursdays = 20 points)

I have found these weekly response papers to be helpful for two reasons: 1) they really help class discussion when everyone has done the reading and has something to say, and 2) they can get you comfortable in your writing voice. I am not primarily grading your grammar or correcting it. I am looking for thoughtfulness and engagement with the reading/concepts. Due almost every Thursday. See schedule of readings.

**SK Influence In-class Presentation** (5 points)

Choose your favorite philosopher, thinker, artist, writer, etc. who lived after Kierkegaard. Your job will be to figure out Kierkegaard's influence on him/her. I choose Anzaldúa, and you can also choose her if you are interested, but you can choose anyone. The presentation will consist of you talking about who you chose and why, and your preliminary suspicions about Kierkegaard's influence on him/her.

**Conversation about Kierkegaard** (10 points)

Choose the book/theme/concept that most resonated with you throughout all of Kierkegaard, and discuss it with someone not from the class. Try to explain the concept to them, or just talk about it with them for at least 10-15 minutes. Record the conversation and upload it to Blackboard.

**SK Influence Research** (15 points)

Your choice of philosopher, writer, etc. whom Kierkegaard influenced will require you to read that philosopher's main work. Reading and analyzing this main work, as well as doing research about the influence of Kierkegaard on this person is worth 15 points.

**Final Presentation** (10 points)

Talk about what you learned about the influence of Kierkegaard of your favorite author, philosopher, thinkers, etc. Make a video, PowerPoint, Prezi, Digital Testimonio, etc. It should be 3 minutes long. This presentation will take place instead of the final exam, during finals week.

**Final SK Influence Essay** (20 points)

This is an extension of your final presentation, and it's due on the day of the presentation. The idea is for you to detail Kierkegaard's influence on your favorite philosopher. "Great thinkers" are great, in part, because they have a wide influence over other thinkers throughout history. We are going to trace these influences, and, as a class, we will see what a great thinker Kierkegaard was! (~5 pages)

**Learning Objectives for Philosophy Degree:** This course may be taken to fulfill a requirement for a B.A. in Philosophy. Students who graduate with a degree in philosophy from UTRGV are expected to have attained a certain level of intellectual development which is characteristic of the intense study of philosophy. The goals for all philosophy classes that count towards the major in philosophy include, in combination with the particular goals for the course, the following objectives:

1. **CRITICAL THINKING AND READING:** Students will demonstrate well-developed critical thinking and reading skills orally and in writing.
2. **HISTORY:** Students will describe the history of Philosophy, by identifying and distinguishing between the major historical and conceptual divisions of philosophy, the positions within those divisions, and major thinkers who contributed to those periods and specializations.
3. **COMMUNICATION:** Students will exhibit well-developed oral and written communication skills; will respond effectively to questions and criticisms of presented material.
4. **ALTERNATIVE POINTS OF VIEW:** Students will demonstrate the capacity to accurately present, analyze and evaluate historically underrepresented philosophical concerns, positions and traditions.
5. **PERSONAL, CIVIC, AND/OR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:** Students will articulate and evaluate their various activities, identities, values, and goals in order to develop a flexible strategy for ongoing personal growth, community engagement, and/or professional achievement.

The UTRGV academic calendar can be found at <https://my.utrgv.edu/home> at the bottom of the screen, prior to login. Some important dates for spring 2018 include:

January 16	First day of classes
January 19	Last day to add a course or register for spring 2018
March 12 – 17	SPRING BREAK – NO classes
March 30 – 31	EASTER HOLIDAY – NO classes
April 12	Last day to drop a course; will count toward the 6-drop rule
May 2	Last day of classes
May 3	Study Day – NO class
May 4 – 10	Spring 2018 Final Exams
May 11 - 12	Commencement Ceremonies

#### **MANDATORY COURSE EVALUATION PERIOD**

Students are required to complete an ONLINE evaluation of this course, accessed through your UTRGV account (<http://my.utrgv.edu>); you will be contacted through email with further instructions. Students who complete their evaluations will have priority access to their grades. Online evaluations will be available:

Spring 2018 (full semester)      April 11 – May 2

#### **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Students with a documented disability (physical, psychological, learning, or other disability which affects academic performance) who would like to receive academic accommodations should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) as soon as possible to schedule an appointment to initiate services. Accommodations can be arranged through SAS at any time, but are not retroactive. Students who suffer a broken bone, severe injury or undergo surgery during the semester are eligible for temporary services. **Brownsville Campus:** Student Accessibility Services is located in Cortez Hall Room 129 and can be contacted by phone at (956) 882-7374 (Voice) or via email at [ability@utrgv.edu](mailto:ability@utrgv.edu). **Edinburg Campus:** Student Accessibility Services is located in 108 University Center and can be contacted by phone at (956) 665-7005 (Voice), (956) 665-3840 (Fax), or via email at [ability@utrgv.edu](mailto:ability@utrgv.edu).

#### **SCHOLASTIC INTEGRITY**

As members of a community dedicated to Honesty, Integrity and Respect, students are reminded that those who engage in scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and expulsion from the University. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarism (including self-plagiarism), and collusion; submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person; taking an examination for another person; any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student; or the attempt to commit such acts. Since scholastic dishonesty harms the individual, all students and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced (Board of Regents Rules and Regulations and UTRGV Academic Integrity Guidelines). All scholastic dishonesty incidents will be reported to the Dean of Students.

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION, and VIOLENCE**

In accordance with UT System regulations, your instructor is a “Responsible Employee” for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and so must report any instance, occurring during a student’s time in college, of sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, domestic violence, or sexual harassment about which she/he becomes aware during this course through writing, discussion, or personal disclosure. More information can be found at [www.utrgv.edu/equity](http://www.utrgv.edu/equity), including confidential resources available on campus. The faculty and staff of UTRGV actively strive to provide a learning, working, and living environment that promotes personal integrity, civility, and mutual respect that is free from sexual misconduct and discrimination.

## **COURSE DROPS**

According to UTRGV policy, students may drop any class without penalty earning a grade of DR until the official drop date. Following that date, students must be assigned a letter grade and can no longer drop the class. Students considering dropping the class should be aware of the “3-peat rule” and the “6-drop” rule so they can recognize how dropped classes may affect their academic success. The 6-drop rule refers to Texas law that dictates that undergraduate students may not drop more than six courses during their undergraduate career. Courses dropped at other Texas public higher education institutions will count toward the six-course drop limit. The 3-peat rule refers to additional fees charged to students who take the same class for the third time.

## **STUDENT SERVICES**

Students who demonstrate financial need have a variety of options when it comes to paying for college costs, such as scholarships, grants, loans and work-study. Students should visit the Students Services Center (U Central) for additional information. U Central is located in BMAIN 1.100 (Brownsville) or ESSBL 1.145 (Edinburg) or can be reached by email ([ucentral@utrgv.edu](mailto:ucentral@utrgv.edu)) or telephone: (888) 882-4026. In addition to financial aid, U Central can assist students with registration and admissions.

Students seeking academic help in their studies can use university resources in addition to an instructor’s office hours. University Resources include the Learning Center, Writing Center, Advising Center and Career Center. The centers provide services such as tutoring, writing help, critical thinking, study skills, degree planning, and student employment. Locations are:

- Learning center: BSTUN 2.10 (Brownsville) or ELCTR 100 (Edinburg)
- Writing center: BLIBR 3.206 (Brownsville) or ESTAC 3.119 (Edinburg)
- Advising center: BMAIN 1.400 (Brownsville) or ESWKH 101 (Edinburg)
- Career center: BCRTZ 129 (Brownsville) or ESSBL 2.101 (Edinburg)

## Reading Schedule

(EK = *Essential Kierkegaard*)

### **Week 1: Beginning at the End (“The Authorship”)**

Jan 16: Introduction to Kierkegaard  
Jan 18: *On My Work as an Author* (Read EK 449-454)

### **Week 2: The Authorship and the Beginning**

Jan 23: *The Point of View for my Work as an Author*  
(Read EK 455-481)  
Jan 25: *Either/Or I*, (Read EK 37-65) \*RP1

### **Week 3: The Left Hand and the Right Hand**

Jan 30: *Either/Or II* (Read EK 66-83)  
Feb 1: Four Upbuilding Discourses (Read EK 84-92)  
\*RP2

### **Week 4: Faith and Doubt I**

Feb 6: *Fear and Trembling* (Read up to problemata 2)  
Feb 8: *Fear and Trembling* (Read problemata 2) \*RP3

### **Week 5: Faith and Doubt II**

Feb 13: *Fear and Trembling* (Read problemata 3)  
Feb 15: *Repetition* (Read EK 102-115) \*RP4

### **Week 6: Anxiety and Dread**

Feb 20: The Concept of Anxiety (Read EK 138-155)  
Feb 22: The Sickness unto Death (Read EK 350-372)  
\*RP5

### **Week 7: God and Passion I**

Feb 27: *Philosophical Fragments* (Read EK 116-125)  
Mar 1: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to the Philosophical Fragments* (Read EK 187-198) \*RP6

### **Week 8: God and Passion II**

Mar 6: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to the Philosophical Fragments* (Read EK 199-215)  
Mar 8: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to the Philosophical Fragments* (Read EK 225-246)

### **Week 9: SK in the Valley**

Mar 20: In-class presentations  
Mar 22: In-class presentations

### **Week 10: A New Symposium**

Mar 27: *Stages on Life’s Way* (Read EK 170-187)  
Mar 29: *Stages on Life’s Way* (Reread EK 170-187) \*RP7

### **Week 11: The Call to Action**

Apr 3: *Two Ages: The Age of Revolution and the Present Age. A Literary Review* (Read EK 252-268)  
Apr 5: *Practice in Christianity: Admiration vs. Imitation*  
(Read EK 373-384) \*RP8

### **Week 12: Practicing Christianity**

Apr 10: *Works of Love* (Read EK 277-294)  
Apr 12: *Works of Love* (Read EK 295-311) \*RP9

### **Week 13: Soul-Searching**

Apr 17: *Two Discourses at the Communion on Fridays*  
(Read EK 385-392)  
Apr 19: *For Self-Examination* (Read EK 393-403) \*RP10

### **Week 14: Adler**

Apr 24: *The Book on Adler* (Read EK 411-423)  
Apr 26: *The Book on Adler* (Read EK 411-423)  
\*Conversation Due

### **Week 15: Back to the End**

May 1: Concluding Philosophical Postscript to the Kierkegaardian Smorgasbord

### **During Finals Week**

Final Presentations and Kierkegaardian Fiesta  
Final Essay Due