

COURSE PROPOSAL

PH203 TOPICS IN PHILOSOPHY

KIERKEGAARD IN COPENHAGEN: THE BIRTH(PLACE) OF EXISTENTIAL PHILOSOPHY

DATES: JUNE 15 THROUGH JULY 8, 2020

LOCATION: COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

RICK ANTHONY FURTAK, COLORADO COLLEGE

Epigraph, from John Douglas Mullen, *Kierkegaard's Philosophy* (New York: New American Library, 1981), 3: "No one, not the most ordinary person nor the most sophisticated and blasé intellectual, can even begin to understand what Kierkegaard was doing in his writing without being profoundly influenced by him. Kierkegaard challenges his reader, almost taunts him, to avoid living as a fool and as a coward."

Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855), widely acknowledged to be the founding father of existential philosophy, is a fascinating author whose inimitable books are written in a virtuosic variety of voices and literary styles. His work unfolded in close relation to his life, which was spent almost entirely in his home city of Copenhagen, Denmark – references to which populate even some of his most abstract theoretical texts. This course provides an introduction to Kierkegaard's writings, situated in the context of his life in mid-nineteenth-century Copenhagen, many features of which are still present in this city today. We will visit many sites linked with Kierkegaard's life and work.

Dr. Furtak is Past President of the Søren Kierkegaard Society (USA) and has published two books and more than fifteen essays about Kierkegaard's thought.

PROGRAM FEE: \$3,860 (BASED ON MINIMUM ENROLLMENT OF 8 STUDENTS)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Understand Søren Kierkegaard's critique of the social and religious institutions of Denmark in his time, and the relevance of this critique for us today
- Gain proficiency in using such Kierkegaardian terms as the aesthetic and the ethical, religiousness, faith, love, subjectivity, truth, the self, passion, inwardness, possibility, and happiness, and their usefulness for interpreting the human situation

- Visit some of the many sites in Copenhagen (and beyond) that are mentioned in Kierkegaard's writings and/or important in his life, to better understand the background to his work
- Gain experience in writing and revising critical, humanistic, and philosophical essays
- Explore the meaning of human existence for each of us, and come to think more clearly about what is at stake in such exploration

REQUIRED BOOKS (OTHER TEXTS WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE AS PDF'S)

The Essential Kierkegaard,* ed. by Howard & Edna Hong

Alastair Hannay, *Kierkegaard: A Biography*

* From this volume, we will read excerpts from the following works: *From the Papers of One Still Living*, *Either/Or: A Fragment of Life*, *Fear and Trembling*, *Repetition*, *Johannes Climacus*, or 'Everything Must Be Doubted', *Prefaces*, *Three Discourses on Imagined Occasions*, *Stages on Life's Way*, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, *Two Ages*, *Works of Love*, *The Lily of the Field and the Bird of the Air*, *The Sickness Unto Death*, *The Book on Adler*, and *On My Work as an Author*. We will proceed in chronological sequence, following along with Hannay's biography.

SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS, FIELD TRIPS, AND OTHER SPECIAL EVENTS

Sun 6/14 – Arrival orientation and dinner (organized and catered by DIS)

Mon 6/15 – CLASS

Reading for today – *Kierkegaard: A Biography*, 1-45.

Tue 6/16 – CLASS

The Essential Kierkegaard, 3-12; *Kierkegaard*, 46-87.

Wed 6/17 – CLASS

The Essential Kierkegaard, 13-19; *Kierkegaard*, 88-126.

Thu 6/18 – CLASS – Guest lecture by DIS faculty member Anna Strelis

The Essential Kierkegaard, 20-36; *Kierkegaard*, 127-153.

Fri 6/19 – CLASS – Guest lecture by DIS faculty member K. Brian Söderquist

The Concept of Irony, PDF excerpts.

Mon 6/22 – CLASS

The Essential Kierkegaard, 37-83; *Kierkegaard*, 154-179.

Tue 6/23 – CLASS

The Essential Kierkegaard, 93-115; *Fear and Trembling*, PDF excerpts.

Wed 6/24 – CLASS “on the road” – Field study #1 of 2, Gilleleje in North Zealand

Kierkegaard, 180-206.

Thu 6/25 – CLASS

The Essential Kierkegaard, 126-137; *Kierkegaard*, 207-233.

Fri 6/26 – CLASS

The Essential Kierkegaard, 156-169; *Kierkegaard*, 233-257.

Mon 6/29 – CLASS

The Essential Kierkegaard, 170-186; *Kierkegaard*, 258-276; *Stages on Life’s Way*, PDF excerpts.

Tue 6/30 – CLASS

The Essential Kierkegaard, 187-227 & 242-246.

Wed 7/01 – CLASS “on the road” – Field study #2 of 2, Soedding in West Jutland

Kierkegaard, 277-316.

Thu 7/02 – CLASS

The Essential Kierkegaard, 252-268; *Kierkegaard*, 317-341.

Fri 7/03 – CLASS

The Essential Kierkegaard, 277-311; *Kierkegaard*, 357-368.

Mon 7/06 – CLASS

The Essential Kierkegaard, 333-338 & 350-352; *Kierkegaard*, 369-386; *Kierkegaard’s Writings, Volume XVIII & Volume XIX*, PDF excerpts.

Tue 7/07 – CLASS

The Essential Kierkegaard, 411-423 & 449-454; *Kierkegaard*, 387-419.

Wed 7/08 – Course ends – Final papers due – Concluding dinner (organized and catered by DIS)

Numerous faculty-led walking tours, some also involving transportation by train, will be integrated into class meetings.