

Tel Aviv University
Semester B / 2020
Social science faculty
Course number: 1009.1103.01

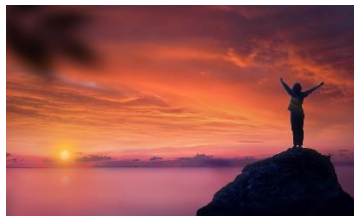
Hope: Human Odyssey to Political Existentialism- Course Syllabus

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Is the person we become a matter of our choices? Why have we chose to study what we do? Was it our own choice or the society choice?

What are we fear from? What do we hope for...? What makes us human and what set us apart? How can we find ourselves and recreate ourselves in the age of technology?

In this course, we go on a journey into our inner selves in order to try to find the answers to all these questions and more. The course concentrate with the issues of love, politics, god, meaning, life, death and hope – from existentialist point of view. It will include theoretical aspects as well as discussions about how to apply these theoretical issues to our daily life?



The course divided into two part:

1. Online course- Princeton University and Tel Aviv University, led by Dr. Uriel Abulof, have collaborated to develop Hope. Students will be asked to register the online course and watch the relevant talk, which are given by Dr. Abulof. (2 hours weekly-30%).

Explanation about the online course will be given at the first class.

2. Classroom discussions: the lessons will be thought by me, Michal, a PhD student. They will be thought in English. **It is a great opportunity for Israeli student to talk and to improve your English.**

Classrooms discussions will follow the online talks, discussing their main ideas and the impact they have on our daily life. They will be dedicated to talk about the connection between the discussion, the academy, the field you chose to study- and your own life.

Discussion will take place every other week. An "out of the box task" (30%) will be given at the end of each meeting.

Final exam will be at the end of the course (40%).

Course Grade Breakdown

Online course (30%):

Watching all the discussions and upload the relevant material to the Gallery

Classroom discussion (30):

15%- "out of the box task"

15%- Active participation

Exam-(40%)

Classroom Dates:

17/3/20

31/3/20

21/4/20

5/5/20

19/5/20

2/6/20

16/6/20

Themed Bibliography

I. Human/Nature

Are we truly different, let alone better, than non-humans? Are our notions of politics distinctly human, or ought political scientists just as well study packs of wolves? What can Darwin and Maslow teach us about human nature and its resonance in society and politics?

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- Barash, David P. (2012) *Homo Mysterious: Evolutionary Puzzles of Human Nature*. New York: Oxford University Press.
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- Stevenson, Leslie Forster (1987) *Seven Theories of Human Nature*. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press.
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II. Identity & Authenticity:

What is the Self, and does it emerge, or is it made? How did Freud see its layers? What are identity politics? What is the ancient and modern imperative of authenticity? How has the call for authenticity informed tribal and ethnic conflicts? Is there a way out?

- Abdelal, Rawi, Yoshiko M. Herrera, Alastair Iain Johnston, and Rose Mcdermott, eds. (2009). *Measuring Identity: A Guide for Social Scientists*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
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III. Freedom

What separates freedom from liberty? Are we always free? Why and how do we forget our freedom? What are the roles of reasoning and responsibility in freedom? What can Sartre and Fromm teach us about the politics of freedom and bad faith? What are the implications for liberalism?

- Baum, Bruce David, and Robert Nichols, eds. (2013). *Isaiah Berlin and the Politics of Freedom: "Two Concepts of Liberty" 50 Years Later*. New York: Routledge.
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IV. Reflection

What is thinking? Does freedom require reflection? What motivates us to think?
 What drives us to suspend thinking? How does reflection affect nihilism and

compliance? Can thinking prevent evil, personal and political? What did Arendt see as “the banality of evil”?

Arendt, Hannah. 1971. "Thinking and Moral Considerations: A Lecture." *Social Research* 38 (3):417-446.

Chalmers, David John. 1996. *The Conscious Mind: In Search of a Fundamental Theory*. New York: Oxford University Press.

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V. Happiness

What is happiness, and what can Aristotle and Freud teach us about the types of happiness? What makes us happy? Why and how has the “pursuit of happiness” become a socio-political goal, and have we approached its attainment? What are the key paradoxes of happiness?

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VI. Dread & Death

What is the evolutionary role of fear, and how does fear differ from anxiety and angst? How do we develop our sense of death, and how does it motivate us, privately and publicly? How do death awareness, fear of murder, willingness to kill, and suicide, figure in politics?

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VII. Meaning

Why, when and how do we search for meaning in, and for, our lives? What can Camus and Frankl teach us about meaning-making? How does it turn, in politics, to legitimation? What are the relations between happiness, death, and the pursuit of meaning? Why breathe, breed and bleed?

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VIII. Truth & Trust

What's between fact, fiction and fantasy? What are the key theories on the nature of truth? How does truth relate to trust? Why do politicians lie, and why do we accept this? What can Orwell and Havel teach us about the power of truth in politics? What is post-truth politics?

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IX. Morality

What are the evolutionary roles of morality? What can Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Kohlberg teach us about the emergence, evolution and types

of morality? How do conscience and moral dilemmas affect our private and public lives? What are the key modes of political legitimation?

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X. God & Religion

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XI. Alienation & Love

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XII. Hope

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