

Jessica Lin, Humanities/Philosophy

Course: Philosophy: Ideas and Culture – *The Existential View*

Task: Dialogue (first “paper”)

Objective: To have students clearly express and justify their interpretation of the assigned philosophical texts. In this assignment, students use excerpts from Soren Kierkegaard’s *The Unscientific Postscript* and *Fear and Trembling*, Plato’s *Apology*, and Franz Kafka’s *A Hunger Artist*. The dialogue is set between the hunger artist, Socrates (as cast by Kierkegaard to represent the ethical person), and a knight of faith (created by the student). The main goal for students is to demonstrate their understanding of the concerns of the aesthete, the ethical person, and the knight of faith, and to support their understanding with evidence from the texts.

Format and Process:

Step 1: Socrates

- In class short writing assignment done in groups on quotes from the *Apology*: students must explain what the quotes *says* and *does*.
- Quiz on quotes from the *Apology*

Step 2: Kierkegaard

- In class short writing assignment done in groups on specific passages from the text (*says* and *does* format). **See *Informal Writing Assignments: Example 1***
- In class short writing assignment done in groups on Kierkegaard’s view of Socrates: students must provide evidence from the text for their interpretation.
- Free individual writing assignment where students reflect on how they relate to Kierkegaard’s 3 spheres. **See *Informal Writing Assignments: Example 2***
- Quiz on Kierkegaard: questions are based on the in class writing assignments

Step 3: A *Hunger Artist*

- In class short writing assignment in groups where students are given one of Kierkegaard’s 3 spheres and must argue that the hunger artists represents the given sphere. They must provide proof from the texts. Last part of the class the students present their ideas to the rest of the class.

Step 4: Refining the Research

- In groups, students created questions and responses corresponding to a designated part of the dialogue (for example, one group was assigned the interaction between Socrates and the hunger artist). Groups were asked to prepare their portion of the dialogue, to justify their questions and responses with evidence from the texts, and to be prepared to present their ideas orally. Groups presented their ideas the following class.

Step 5: Writing the assignment

Evaluation:

With the exception of the free writing assignments (which are graded for completion and not content), the in class assignments are evaluated on (what I consider is) a lenient short assignment rubric. Students are given marks for completing all the parts of the assignment as well as the clarity and fullness of their ideas. The dialogue, report and letter are evaluated on a rubric, which predominantly considers the accuracy of ideas and textual support for the argument.