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Robin Johnson

HUMANITIES II

Existentialism:

Suggested Topics for Writing of Projects

1. Discuss the form, style and content of the Drama of the Absurd. This would require examination of the works of such authors as Beckett, Ionesco, Pinter and Genet.
2. The theme of the courage to be in the face of despair in humanistic existential literature. See the works listed in page 5 of your notes.
3. The image of contemporary man in Sartre, Camus, Unamuno and Anden. Selected works:
 1. The Age of Reason: by Jean-Paul Sartre
(or suitable substitute)
 2. Either, The Fall, or The Stranger: by Albert Camus
 3. Nothing Less Than a Man: by Miguel de Unamuno
 4. For the Time Being: by W.H. Anden (or a suitable substitute)
4. Discuss the ambiguity of Dostoevsky's position in The Legend of the Grand Inquisitor, and the absurd in Unamuno's Saint Emmanuel the Good Martyr.
5. The absurd in humanistic (Camus and Sartre) and theistic (Kierkegaard and Anden) existential thought. Make your own selection of specific works.
6. Making your own selection of works to be studied, discuss literature as a form of philosophical discourse. (The books listed in your notes should be of considerable help to you in your selection).
7. Discuss "the existential choice", Kierkegaard's "leap of faith" or the encounter with "Nothingness" and the effort to transcend the threat posed to man's existence as man. Suggested works: The Myth of Sisyphus and collected essays of Camus: Being and Nothingness from the essays of Jean-Paul Sartre; essays and selections from Soren Kierkegaard's Either/Or.
8. Here are some themes for which you can arrange your own area of study and selection of reading material.
 - a) The theme of death, and/or, Nothingness.
 - b) The theme of dread and anguish.
 - c) The theme of alienation.
 - d) The individual and the crowd.
 - e) Technology and the individual.
 - f) The I-Thou and the I-It.
 - g) The theme, and idea of freedom in humanistic and Christian existentialism. (Read Escape From Freedom by Erich Fromm, also).

9. Discuss anti-utopianism in existential literature using: The Legend of the Grand Inquisitor: by Fyodor Dostoevsky
The Massacre of the Innocents: by W.H. Auden
The Flies: by Jean-Paul Sartre
Brave New World: by Aldous Huxley
1984: By George Orwell
10. Discuss the symbolic meaning of pursuit and flight, i.e. of the Furies, from the following works:

The Death of Ivan Ilych: Leo Tolstoy
The Flies: Jean-Paul Sartre
The Family Reunion: T.S. Eliot
The Fall: Albert Camus
Cranmer of Canterbury: Charles Williams

(The latter may not be available: I am trying to find a copy at the time of writing). A recent reading knowledge of the Oresteia would be an advantage.

Here is an additional list of books which may help you in your selection for area or thematic study.

Existential Literature antecedent to contemporary works.

Drama:

The Book of Job
Wayzack: George Böhmer
Hedda Gabler: Henrik Ibsen
Ubu Roi: Alfred Jarry
Six Characters in Search of an Author: Luigi Pirandello
King Lear: William Shakespeare
The Ghost Sonata: August Strindberg
The Revenger's Tragedy: Cyril Tourneur

Novels:

The Heart of Darkness: Joseph Conrad
Great Expectations: Charles Dickens
Hard Times: Charles Dickens
Anna Karenina: Leo Tolstoy
Resurrection: Leo Tolstoy
The Death of Ivan Ilych: Tolstoy
The Diary of a Lunatic: Leo Tolstoy

Contemporary existential works.

Drama:

The American Dream: Edward Albee
Zoo Story: Edward Albee
Endgame: Samuel Beckett
Waiting for Godot: Samuel Beckett
Caligula: Albert Camus

The Visit: Friedrich Dürrenmatt
The Tunnel: Friedrich Dürrenmatt
The Family Reunion: T.S. Eliot
The Firebugs: Max Frisch
A Sleep of Prisoners: Christopher Fry
The Blacks: Jean Genet
The Maids: Jean Genet
The Balcony: Jean Genet
The Deputy: Rolf Hocchuth
The Bald Soprano: Eugene Ionesco
The Lesson: Eugene Ionesco
The Chairs: Eugene Ionesco
Rhinoceros: Eugene Ionesco
Look Back In Anger: John Osborne
The Birthday Party: Harold Pinter
The Room: Harold Pinter
The Caretaker: Harold Pinter
The Dumb Waiter etc.: Harold Pinter
The Adding Machine: Elmer Rice
The Devil and the Good Lord: Sartre
No Exit: Jean-Paul Sartre
Thomas Cranmer of Canterbury: Charles Williams
Seed of Adam: Charles Williams

Novels:

Another Country: James Baldwin
The Blood of Others: Simone DeBeauviir
The Fall: Albert Camus
The Plague: Albert Camus
The Stranger: Albert Camus
1919: John Dos Passos
The Invisible Man: Ralph Ellison
The Sound and the Fury: W. Faulkner
I'm Not Stiller: Max Frisch
Brighton Rock: Graham Greene
The Power and the Glory: Graham Greene
The End of the Affair: Graham Greene
The Sun Also Rises: Ernest Hemingway
Steppenwolf: Herman Hesse
Brave New World: Aldous Huxley
Time Must Have A Stop: Aldous Huxley
The Castle: Franz Kafka
The Trial: Franz Kafka
The Subterraneans: Jack Keranac
Arrival and Departure: Arthur Koestler
The Royal Way: Andre Malraux
The Walnut Tree of Altenburg: Andre Malraux
Under the Hat: Iris Murdoch
The Man Without Qualities: Robert Musil
1984: George Orwell
In the Labrynth: Alain Robbe-Grillet
Last Year at Marienbad: Alain Robbe-Grillet
The Voyeur: Alain Robbe-Grillet
Night Flight: Antoine De Saint-Exupery

The Age of Suspicion: Nathalie Sarraute
Nausea: Jean-Paul Sartre
The Age of Reason: Jean-Paul Sartre
The Reprieve: Jean-Paul Sartre
Troubled Sleep: Jean-Paul Sartre
The Flies: Jean-Paul Sartre
Lie Down in Darkness: William Styron
The Outsider: Richard Wright

Short Stories:

The Bound Man: Ilse Aichinger
The Bucket Rider: Franz Kafka
The Great Wall of China: Franz Kafka
The Penal Colony: Franz Kafka
Metamorphosis: Franz Kafka

Poetry:

New Year Letter: W.H. Auden
Under Which Lyre: W.H. Auden
Massacre of the Innocents: W.H. Auden
For the Time Being: W.H. Auden
The Hollow Men: T.S. Eliot
The Waste Land: T.S. Eliot
The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock: T.S. Eliot
Howl: Allen Ginsberg
The Duino Elegies: Rainer Maria Rilke

Works of Existential Philosophers:

I and Thou: Martin Buber
Translated by Ronald Gregor Smith
Published by Scribner's New York, 1958.

Being and Time: Martin Heidegger
Translated by John Macquarrie
Published by Harper & Row New York, 1963.

Existence and the Existent: An Essay on Christian Existentialism:
Jacques Maritain. Translated Lewis Galantieri and G.P. Phelan.
Published by Doubleday, Garden City, New York, 1956.

The Courage to Be: by Paul Tillich
Published by New Haven Yale University Press, 1952.

Dream and Reality: by Nicholas Berdyaev
Published by Macmillan Company, 1950.

The Tension Between Technical Mass--Order and Human Life: Karl Jaspers. An essay from: Man In the Modern Age by Karl Jaspers. Published by Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. (Translation by Eden and Cedar Paul)

Existentialism: by Jean-Paul Sartre
(first titled Existentialism Is a Humanism)
Translated by Bernard Frechtman. Published by Philosophical Library New York, 1947, and reprinted in several different collections of Sartre's essays.

The Concept of Dread: Soren Kierkegaard
In particular the essay from this source entitled: Dread As a Saving Experience by Means of Faith
Translated by Walter Lowrie
Published by Princeton University Press

Fear and Trembling: by Soren Kierkegaard
Particularly the essay Is There Such a Thing As an Absolute Duty Toward God?
Translated by Walter Lowrie
Published by Princeton University Press, 1941.

4. For the Time Being: by W.E. Axelson (or a suitable substitute)

5. Discuss the ambiguity of Dostoevsky's position in The Legend of the Grand Inquisitor, and the absurd in Husserl's Saint Paulus and the Good Warrior.

6. The absurd in humanistic (Camus and Sartre) and theistic (Kierkegaard and Anders) existential thought. Make your own selection of specific works.

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- d) The individual and the crowd.
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- f) The Leibniz and the Leibniz.
- g) The theme, and idea of freedom in humanistic and Christian existentialism. (Read Escape from Freedom by Erich Fromm, also).