



The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

The basics of existential therapy - 3975

Last update 09-03-2025

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 2nd degree (Master)

Responsible Department: Social Work

Academic year: 0

Semester: 2nd Semester

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Dr. Yaffa Stokar

Coordinator Email: Yaffa.Stokar@mail.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: By appointment via email

Teaching Staff:

Dr. yaffa stokar

Course/Module description:

This course will explore the theoretical, philosophical, and psychological foundations that form the basis of modern existential psychotherapy. It will integrate theoretical knowledge essential to this therapeutic approach with an in-depth examination of core existential concepts such as death, loneliness, and meaning. Additionally, the course will introduce key theorists who have shaped the development of existential psychotherapy. Alongside theoretical exploration, participants will gain hands-on experience with practical tools that demonstrate how existential ideas and techniques can be effectively integrated into the therapeutic setting. The course will also establish connections to broader existential concerns that resonate with our daily lives.

Course/Module aims:

- * To get to know the basics of Existential Psychotherapy, in such a way that it will be possible to integrate these principles in a practical manner into treatments at the clinic.*
- * To interest the students in deepening their learning in further studies, and adopting this approach in their practice.*

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

- * At the end of the course, the students will know the philosophical principles of the existential approach.*
- * The students knew how to distinguish between basic concepts in the clinical psychodynamic approach and the basic psycho-existential concepts, and recognize their novelty.*
- * The students will hear examples of how the principles learned in the course can be used in their clinic practice.*

Attendance requirements(%):

100

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Lectures
In-depth discussion of reading details
Videos
Recordings of lectures

Course/Module Content:

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1. Introduction: What is existentialism?
 2. Philosophical roots of the existential approach
 3. Logotherapy
 4. Loneliness
 5. Meaning
 6. Freedom and responsibility
 7. Death

Required Reading:

Irvin Yalom/Existential Psychotherapy: Chapters 1, 2, 8, 10

Viktor Frankel/ Man in search of Meaning, second part.

Jacob Golomb/ Introduction to Philosophies of Existence (Existentialism). Chapters 6 and 7. In Hebrew.

Irvin Yalom/Existential Psychotherapy: Chapter 5

Additional Reading Material:

Schneider, K. J., & May, R. (1995). Philosophical Roots. In: The psychology of existence: An integrative, clinical perspective. pg. 53-76. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Russo-Netzer, P. and Israel D.M. (2021). Intervention approaches and treatment techniques in logotherapy. Meaning Seeks Man: Finding Meaning in a Changing World According to Viktor Frankl's Logotherapy Theory. pp. 143- 172. Shetim Publishing House.

Israel, D.M. (January 5, 2025). The Encounter with the Terror of "Nothingness": Trauma or Opportunity for Growth?. Hebrew Psychology.

May, R. (1985). To Be and Not to Be. The Discovery of Being. pp. 79-91. Reshafim

Grading Scheme:

Essay / Project / Final Assignment / Home Exam / Referat 100 %

Additional information:

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- *Full attendance and active participation in classes.*
 - *Weekly reading: The reading will be done in advance of the class, and it forms the basis for the discussion that will take place during the class.*
 - *Clinical presentation in class: A 10-15 minute presentation in class of a clinical example related to the chosen topic (ungraded).*
 - *Submission of 2 exercises throughout the semester in the format found on the website. The exercises are ungraded and have no weight in the final grade, but they are a prerequisite for submitting the end-of-course paper and receiving a final grade in the course, and must be submitted by the end of the semester.*
 - *Summary paper: Description of the course of treatment and analysis according to a therapeutic approach or a central concept that we have learned. The analysis will be based on the mandatory articles on the chosen topic, and 3 additional articles, which relate to the topic we have learned and the chosen treatment. The scope of the work will be 7 pages, and the submission date will be one month after the end of the semester. The weight of the summary paper is 100%.*