THOUGH best known for her novels and her work on women, Simone de Beauvoir is also an important existentialist philosopher. Her book, The Ethics of Ambiguity, is the only work produced by the existentialists of that period on moral philosophy. In it, she offers a lucid account of the existentialist moral view, giving both a purely philosophical and an historical account of its development. Understanding her specifically existentialist views enriches our picture of her views on women considerably, and together with a brief consideration of existentialist metaphysical and epistemological views, will allow us to see the full significance of her picture of woman as the permanent Other, the one who is always alien, and who inevitably finds herself in bad faith. On de Beauvoir's account, women are far more alienated than men and, given the assumptions of our culture, doomed to permanent alienation. In this course, I will discuss de Beauvoir both as an existentialist and as a feminist. In addition, we will be giving special attention to the problem of alienation. We will examine three fictional accounts of alienation by women and three by men; we will use these accounts, together with de Beauvoir's views, to construct an analysis of alienation that can include both women and men.

Grading Structure:

The work for this course will consist of three short papers, each worth 20%, and one term paper worth 40%. The short papers may be rewritten without penalty. There will be one tutorial.

Required Texts:

The Ethics of Ambiguity, S. de Beauvoir.
The Second Sex, S. de Beauvoir
Play It As It Lays, J. Didion
After Leaving Mr. McKenzie, J. Rhys
The Woman Destroyed, S. de Beauvoir
The Fall, A. Camus
Nausea, J. P. Sartre
The Metamorphosis, F. Kafka.

Lecture: Wed. EV 6:30 - 8:20

Tutorial: Wed. EV 8:30 - 9:20