

EI⁸HT

Discover Philosophical Wellness at
Illinois State

EXISTENTIAL WELLNESS means taking hold of your individual existence by exercising radical human freedom. Existential wellness is supported by recognizing the limits of rationalist and universalizing thought while not falling prey to the abyss of nihilism:

Oppose Hegelian idealism. Existentialists oppose G.W.F. Hegel, who argues that reality is the product of universal Reason, inevitably achieving the ideal State via synthesis of contradictions. Existentialists also object to naïve positivism and unrestrained rationalism.

Assert the primacy of the individual. Søren Kierkegaard asserts that being a single individual is “the most terrifying thing . . . [and] the greatest.” Discover the centrality of the existing individual and see truth as subjectivity.

Create values to avoid nihilism. “God is dead! And we have killed him!” cries Nietzsche. In the face of declining Western values, create new values to prepare the way for a higher humanity.

Question the meaning of Being. It is everywhere, Heidegger says, yet Being is elusive. Via phenomenology and the hermeneutic circle, discover the primordial horizon of Being disclosed in human Dasein.

Exercise radical freedom. Sartre argues that consciousness is a nothingness, and thus radically free. Acknowledge the anguish of responsibility and cease fleeing freedom in bad faith.



Existential Wellness can be explored by enrolling in PHI 270. Registration = Philosophical investigation = Wellness! To register, enroll in PHI 270: Existentialism in the Spring 2019 semester.

Instructor: Derek O'Connell

Time: TR 2:00-3:15

This course meets the Group A requirement for the major.