

Existential Philosophy for Times of Change and Crisis

International Conference (Online)

Call for Papers

Dates:

10-11 August 2020, 10:00-17:00 Central European Time (times subject to modification once the conference programme is finalised).

Description:

The past few months have been marked by several unprecedented historical events: first the coronavirus pandemic resulting in the simultaneous confinement of over half of the world population, placing restrictions on our freedom and imposing new forms of life and conditions upon our existence and closing our doors and borders to the outside world. Second, the worldwide demonstrations against racism and discrimination, beginning with protests against the brutal murder of George Floyd in the USA which have rapidly transformed into a global struggle for the recognition of the rights and value of all individuals.

Both events have exposed deep systemic inequalities inscribed into the rules that govern our societies. Therefore they bring to light the urgency of rethinking our relationship to others and to ourselves, and questioning our human condition and what we share. What is human freedom, what limitations can we accept without 'losing' ourselves, and what responsibilities do we have with regard to the freedom of others? What are authentic relationships, in an age where we are more and more dependent upon the mediation of technology? How do our practices, acts, and institutions affect our ways of being in the world and our possibilities for understanding ourselves and others? What is our ethical responsibility for our communities and societies, do we have an obligation to be political activists? And what would be the source of such an obligation? What can be considered as a firm ground of moral 'ought'? Do we need a kind of minimal metaphysics of the human being to give acceptable answers to these questions?

The aim of this conference is to bring together international scholars to discuss these existential, ethical, and meta-ethical questions and challenges, and examine what philosophical resources can we draw upon to help us better think through our current situation. We are especially looking for contributions engaging with current issues from the perspectives of influential thinkers departing from universalist trends in philosophy in the first half twentieth century, such as Albert Camus, Simone de Beauvoir, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Ludwig Wittgenstein, and their nineteenth-century predecessors (Kierkegaard, Nietzsche...). Despite their differences, what these thinkers share is their focus of life, and the idea that the aim of philosophy, beyond being an academic discipline, is to enable us 'to live more capably' (Kierkegaard).

Modalities:

In order to ensure compliance with European regulations on data protection, this online conference will be held using Microsoft Teams (included in Microsoft Office 365). NB: Microsoft Teams can also be used without an account free of charge; please see Microsoft's website for information about how to access the application:

<https://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/microsoft-365/microsoft-teams/group-chat-software>

To propose a talk:

Scholars interested in presenting should send a 300 word abstract by 10 July 2020 to melissa.fox-muraton@esc-clermont.fr and jakub.gomulka@gmail.com. Notification of acceptance by 20 July 2020. Conference programme to follow. Presentations should be 25 minutes, followed by 25 minutes discussion time. (NB: for those outside of Europe, please note your time zone also on your proposal; we will attempt to accommodate the schedule for those situated outside of the CET time zone.)

Registration:

Register by email *by 5 August 2020* to melissa.fox-muraton@esc-clermont.fr, indicating 'Conference registration' in the subject heading. An invitation for the event and login details will be sent to you by email several days before the start of the conference.

In the body of the email, please indicate your *full name, institutional affiliation and email address* (this information is for institutional purposes only and will not be disclosed to any third party). We suggest, for those with Microsoft accounts, that you indicate the email address linked to your MS applications, as this email address will be used to send the invitation.

Conference participation open to all and *free of charge* for all speakers and participants.

Further information:

See the conference website: www.changeandcrisis.eu

Organisers:

Mélissa Fox-Muraton (ESC Clermont/PHIER, Université Clermont Auvergne, France) and Jakub Gomułka (Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Pedagogical University of Kraków, Poland)

