This course explores the rise of existentialist philosophy and the philosophies of the absurd in some of the most provocative novels, plays, short stories and mass media from around the world. Our global survey of existentialism and the absurd will interrogate the nature of existence and the responsibilities we bear in shaping our lives into something meaningful—particularly in relation to free will, action, faith, technology, politics, love, and finally, death. Our readings and viewings will tentatively include Mozart’s opera Don Giovanni; the novellas The Death of Ivan Ilyich by Leo Tolstoy, The Metamorphosis by Franz Kafka, and Notes from the Underground by Fyodor Dostoevsky; Albert Camus’ classic novel The Stranger; the plays Waiting for Godot by Samuel Beckett, A Tempest by Aimé Césaire, and No Exit by Jean-Paul Sartre; the films The Exterminating Angel by Luis Buñuel, Taxi Driver by Martin Scorsese, and Cléo from 5 to 7 by Agnès Varda; a selection of European paintings and sculptures; and selected episodes of the AMC original TV series Mad Men. We will also draw from philosophical works by Friedrich Nietzsche, Søren Kierkegaard, Miguel de Unamuno, Martin Heidegger, Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, and Frantz Fanon.