I. Camus’ Life.

A. The point of philosophy is life: “The preceding merely defines a way of thinking. But the point is to live.” (The Myth of Sisyphus)

B. Camus’ life and work were dominated by the juxtaposition of an indomitable will towards happiness and justice on one hand and the indifference and hostility of the world on the other hand. This juxtaposition constitutes the absurd.

II. Camus’ Work. Most of Camus’ work is a development of the themes dealt with in The Myth of Sisyphus and the problems that arose from them.

III. The Absurd. The absurd is a disproportion or conflict between our expectations or ideals and reality. In particular it is the confrontation between our longing or nostalgia for order, meaning, and clarity on the one hand with the chaos, confusion, and irrationality of the world on the other hand; between the human longing for happiness and the evil in the world. The absurd is not in man alone nor in the world alone, but only in the juxtaposition of the two: “The world in itself is not reasonable, that is all that can be said. But what is absurd is the confrontation of this irrational and the wild longing for clarity whose call echoes in the human heart.” (The Myth of Sisyphus)

IV. Suicide. Suicide is not a logical consequence of the absurd. It attempts to escape the absurd by removing one of its elements: the human longing for order (philosophical) or the unbearable, unintelligible world (physical). One must live with the absurd, not try to escape it. A. Philosophical Suicide. The existential leap of faith to believe in an ultimate order and intelligibility, but one inaccessible to man, is philosophical suicide. It kills the human longing for an order and clarity it can understand. B. Physical Suicide. Killing oneself is an attempt to escape the absurd rather than facing it. One cannot accept the world, so one ends their existence in it. This is not a consequence of the absurd, but an escape from it.

V. Consequences of the Absurd A. Revolt. This is a refusal to accept the absurd without trying to escape it and without renouncing either the world or our desire for happiness and order.

B. Freedom. In a world devoid of external significance and meaning, man is free to create his own happiness. The loss of external values is also a liberation from our dependence on them.

C. Passion. Recognizing and living with the absurd entails a passionate consciousness of each moment of experience. What we lose in quality of experience derived from external values we gain in quantity of consciousness and passion derived from our awareness and rejection of the absurd.

VI. Sisyphus and Absurd Happiness. The absurd man must find himself happy. The human will to happiness is frustrated by the world as long as we make our happiness dependent on the world by seeking to escape the absurd. Once we revolt and freely create our own happiness, we find the only real happiness appropriate to the human condition. We find a human happiness.