

# *Dying and Killing*

PHIL0008

Philosophical Study Skills: Reading, Understanding and Essay Writing (aka Tutorials)

Winter Term 2018-19

Showkat Ali

([showkat.ali.09@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:showkat.ali.09@ucl.ac.uk))

About the module:

This is a ten-week module for first-year undergraduates, designed to develop students' philosophical study skills, namely, *reading*, *understanding* and *writing about* philosophical texts and debates. In each of weeks 2-9, a student from each group will write a 1,500-word formative essay on a question of their own design but which pertains to that week's primary reading. This essay will be shared with the rest of the group before the tutorial (no later than the night before) and it will be the focus of the discussion during the tutorial. Each student is required to write at least two formative essays during the module. The meeting in week 1 is for organisational purposes and in week 10, each student will present their ideas for the summative essay for the module.

About the summative essay:

Summative assessment for this module is via a 2,000-word essay. For this essay, students must select a question from the list of questions that will be provided in week 9. The summative essay is due on the first day of the Spring Term.

About the reading:

The texts and debates chosen for this module focus on metaphysical and ethical topics concerning dying and killing. Many of the texts are seminal contributions to the literature, thus students should expect to find them challenging but that they repay being read multiple times. Re-reading is advised especially in the case of the primary readings, *which are the only compulsory readings for students on this module*. Though not compulsory, students are encouraged to engage with the secondary reading suggestions and to listen to the recommended podcasts. The following books are excellent resources for general reading:

- Feldman, Fred (1992) *Confrontations with the Reaper: A Philosophical Study of the Nature and Value of Death* (Oxford University Press)
- Fischer, John M. (ed.) (1993) *The Metaphysics of Death* (Stanford University Press)
- Kagan, Shelly (2012) *Death* (Yale University Press)
- Kamm, Frances M. (2013) *Bioethical Prescriptions: To Create, End, Choose, and Improve Lives* (Oxford University Press)
- Luper, Stephen (2009) *The Philosophy of Death* (Cambridge University Press)
- McMahan, Jeff (2002) *The Ethics of Killing: Problems at the Margins of Life* (Oxford University Press)

WEEK 2: THE BADNESS OF DEATH

Primary reading: Nagel, Thomas (1970) "Death" *Noûs*, Vol. 4, No. 1: 73-80. Reprinted in his (1979) *Mortal Questions* (Cambridge University Press).

Secondary reading: Feldman, Fred (1991) "Some Puzzles About the Evil of Death" *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 100, No. 2: 205-227.  
Bradley, Ben (2004) "When Is Death Bad for the One Who Dies?" *Noûs*, Vol. 38, No. 1: 1-28.  
Kamm, Frances M. (1988) "Why is Death Bad and Worse than Pre-Natal Non-Existence?" *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* Vol. 69: 161-164.  
McMahan, Jeff (1988) "Death and the Value of Life" *Ethics* Vol. 99, No. 1: 32-61.  
Luper, Stephen (2014) "Death" in Edward N. Zalta (ed.) *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2016 Edition)  
<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2016/entries/death/>

Listening: Edmonds, David and Warburton, Nigel (2017) *Shelly Kagan on Death and Deprivation* [podcast] Philosophy Bites. Available at: <http://philosophybites.com/2017/04/shelly-kagan-on-death-and-deprivati.html>

WEEK 3: IMMORTALITY

Primary reading: Williams, Bernard (1973) "The Makropolis Case: Reflections on the tedium of immortality", in his *Problems of the Self: Philosophical Papers 1956-1972* (Cambridge University Press).

Secondary reading: Moore, Adrian W. (2006) "Williams, Nietzsche and the meaninglessness of immortality" *Mind* Vol. 115: 311-330.  
Fischer, John Martin and Mitchell-Yellin, Benjamin (2014) "Immortality and Boredom" *Journal of Ethics* Vol. 18: 353-372.  
Sagar, Paul (2018) "On going on and on and on" *Aeon*. Available at: <https://aeon.co/essays/theres-a-big-problem-with-immortality-it-goes-on-and-on>  
Smuts, Aaron (2011) "Immortality and Significance" *Philosophy and Literature* Vol. 35, No. 1: 134-149.  
Bortolotti, Lisa and Nagasawa, Yujin (2009) "Immortality without Boredom" *Ratio* Vol. 22, No. 3: 261-277.

WEEK 4: SUICIDE

Primary reading: Brandt, Richard (1979) "The Morality and Rationality of Suicide" in James Rachels (ed.) *Moral Problems* (Harper & Row).

Secondary reading: Cowley, Christopher (2006) "Suicide is Neither Rational nor Irrational" *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* Vol. 9: 495-504.  
Pilpel, Avita and Amsel, Lawrence (2011) "What is Wrong with Rational Suicide" *Philosophia* Vol. 39, No. 1: 111-123.  
Cholbi, Michael (2012) "What is Wrong with "What is Wrong with Rational Suicide"" *Philosophia* Vol. 40, No. 2: 285-293.  
Hill, Daniel J. (2011) "What is it to commit suicide?" *Ratio* Vol. 24, No. 2: 192-205.  
Hume, David (1783) "Of Suicide" in *Essays: Moral, Political, and Literary*.

Listening: Edmonds, David and Warburton, Nigel (2015) *Simon Critchley on Suicide* [podcast] Philosophy Bites. Available at: <http://philosophybites.com/2015/02/simon-critchley-on-suicide.html>

WEEK 5: ASSISTED SUICIDE

Primary reading: Thomson, Judith Jarvis "Physician-Assisted Suicide: Two Moral Arguments" *Ethics* Vol. 109, No. 3: 497-518.

Secondary reading: Brock, Dan W. Brock "A Critique of Three Objections to Physician-Assisted Suicide" *Ethics* Vol. 109, No. 3: 519-547.  
Dworkin, Ronald et al. (1997) "Assisted Suicide: The Philosophers' Brief" *New York Review of Books* Vol. 44: 41-47.  
Weithman, Paul J. (1999) "Of Assisted Suicide and "The Philosophers' Brief"" *Ethics* Vol. 109, No. 3: 548-578  
Dworkin, Gerald (1999) "Sex, Suicide, and Doctors" *Ethics* Vol. 109, No. 3: 579-585.

Listening: Edmonds, David and Warburton, Nigel (2009) *Raymond Tallis on Assisted Dying* [podcast] Philosophy Bites. Available at: <http://philosophybites.com/2009/03/raymond-tallis-on-assisted-dying.html>  
Edmonds, David and Warburton, Nigel (2014) *Dominic Wilkinson on Should Euthanasia be legal?* [podcast] Practical Ethics Bites. Available at: <http://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/should-euthanasia-be-legal>

WEEK 6: ABORTION

Primary reading: Thomson, Judith Jarvis (1971) "A Defense of Abortion" *Philosophy & Public Affairs* Vol. 1, No. 1: 47-66.

Secondary reading: Singer, Peter (1979) "Taking Life: The Embryo and the Fetus" in his *Practical Ethics* (Cambridge University Press).  
Finnis, John (1973) "The Rights and Wrongs of Abortion: A Reply to Judith Thomson" *Philosophy & Public Affairs* Vol. 2, No. 2: 117-145.  
Thomson, Judith Jarvis (1973) "Rights and Deaths" *Philosophy & Public Affairs* Vol. 2, No. 2: 146-159.  
Foot, Philippa (1967) "The Problem of Abortion and the Doctrine of Double Effect" *Oxford Review* No. 5: 5-15.

Listening: Edmonds, David and Warburton, Nigel (2014) *Rebecca Roache on the Rights and Wrongs of Abortion* [podcast] Practical Ethics Bites. Available at: <http://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/rights-and-wrongs-abortion>

WEEK 7: EATING ANIMALS

Primary reading: Diamond, Cora (1978) "Eating Meat and Eating People" *Philosophy* Vol. 53, Issue 206: 465-479.

Secondary reading: Gleeson, Andrew (2008) "Eating Meat and Reading Diamond" *Philosophical Papers* Vol. 37, No. 1: 157-175.  
McMahan, Jeff (2005) "Our Fellow Creatures" *Journal of Ethics* Vol. 9, No. 3-4: 353-380.  
Regan, Tom (1975) "The Moral Basis of Vegetarianism" *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* Vol. 5, No. 2: 181-214.  
Regan, Tom (1980) "Utilitarianism, Vegetarianism, and Animal Rights" *Philosophy & Public Affairs* Vol. 9, No. 4: 305-324.  
Kagan, Shelly (2016) "What's Wrong with Speciesism?" *Journal of Applied Philosophy* Vol. 33, No. 1: 1-21.

Listening: Edmonds, David and Warburton, Nigel (2015) *Shelly Kagan on Speciesism* [podcast] Philosophy Bites. Available at: <http://philosophybites.com/2015/08/shelly-kagan-on-speciesism.html>  
Edmonds, David and Warburton, Nigel (2008) *Peter Singer on Using Animals* [podcast] Ethics Bites. Available at: <http://philosophybites.com/2008/05/peter-singer-on.html>

WEEK 8:	WAR
Primary reading:	Nagel, Thomas (1972) "War and Massacre" <i>Philosophy and Public Affairs</i> Vol. 1, No. 2: 123-144.
Secondary reading:	<p>Anscombe, G. E. M. "Mr Truman's Degree", reprinted in her (1981) <i>The Collected Philosophical Papers of G. E. M. Anscombe, vol. III, Ethics, Religion and Politics</i> (Blackwell).</p> <p>Anscombe, G. E. M. "War and Murder" reprinted in Walter Stein (ed.) (1969) <i>Nuclear Weapons: A Catholic Response</i> (Sheed and Ward).</p> <p>Shue, Henry (1978) "Torture" <i>Philosophy and Public Affairs</i> Vol. 7, No. 2: 124-143.</p> <p>Gutting, Gary and McMahan, Jeff (2015) "Can Torture Ever be Moral?" <i>The New York Times</i>. Available at: <a href="https://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/01/26/can-torture-ever-be-moral/">https://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/01/26/can-torture-ever-be-moral/</a></p>
Listening:	Edmonds, David and Warburton, Nigel (2008) <i>Richard Norman on What's Wrong with Killing?</i> [podcast] Ethics Bites. Available at: <a href="http://www.open.edu/openlearn/history-the-arts/culture/philosophy/whats-wrong-killing">http://www.open.edu/openlearn/history-the-arts/culture/philosophy/whats-wrong-killing</a>
WEEK 9:	KILLING IN SELF-DEFENSE
Primary reading:	Otsuka, Michael (1994) "Killing the Innocent in Self-Defense" <i>Philosophy &amp; Public Affairs</i> Vol. 23: 74-94.
Secondary reading:	<p>McMahan, Jeff (1994) "Self-Defense and the Problem of the Innocent Attacker" <i>Ethics</i> Vol. 104, No. 2: 252-290.</p> <p>Frowe, Helen (2008) "Equating innocent threats and bystanders" <i>Journal of Applied Philosophy</i> Vol. 25, No. 4: 277-290.</p> <p>Frowe, Helen (2008) "Threats, bystanders and obstructors" <i>Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society</i> Vol. 108: 365-372.</p> <p>Thomson, Judith Jarvis (1991) "Self-Defense" <i>Philosophy and Public Affairs</i> Vol. 20, No. 4: 283-310.</p> <p>Quong, Jonathan (2009) "Killing in Self-Defense" <i>Ethics</i> Vol 119, No. 3: 507-537.</p>
Listening:	Edmonds, David and Warburton, Nigel (2009) <i>Jeff McMahan on Killing in War</i> [podcast] Philosophy Bites. Available at: <a href="http://philosophybites.com/2009/11/jeff-mcmahan-on-killing-in-war.html">http://philosophybites.com/2009/11/jeff-mcmahan-on-killing-in-war.html</a>