

**Rutgers University**  
**PHIL 730:371 Philosophy of Death and Dying<sup>1</sup>**  
**Spring 2015**

**Times:** Every Tuesday and Friday from 9:50am to 11:10am

**Location:** [Frelinghuysen Hall](#), Room B1

**Professor:** [Christopher G. Weaver](#)

**E-mail:** cgweaver [at] rci.rutgers.edu

**Office Hours:** Office 510 on the fifth floor in the [Gateway Building](#) at 106 Somerset St. New Brunswick, NJ, every Tuesday we have class from 12pm to 1:00pm.

### **I. Course Description**

The course will introduce students to various metaphysical and ethical issues regarding life, killing, death, and dying.

### **II. Learning Objectives**

Students will learn various theories of death and dying, while also acquiring the ability to critically engage scholarly literature on the metaphysics and ethics of death, dying, and killing.

### **III. General Approach**

On designated quiz days (see the schedule below), at the start of class, I will administer a quiz over the assigned reading material, as well as the material presented during previous lectures. I will then collect the quizzes and go over the correct answers taking any questions you might have. I will then make a few points about the assigned reading, and subsequently start lecturing through new material. On days we do not take a quiz, we will first discuss the assigned reading, and then move into the content of a new lecture. All lectures will be supported by lecture notes that will be made available on the course Sakai site.

### **IV. Textbook**

The required textbooks for this course are:

1. Jeff McMahan, *The Ethics of Killing: Problems at the Margins of Life* (Oxford Ethics Series) (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003) ISBN: 0195169824
2. Fred Feldman, *Confrontations with the Reaper: A Philosophical Study of the Nature and Value of Death* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) ISBN: 019508928-6

We will also be reading some chapters out of the following text (though *it is not mandatory* that you purchase it since I will make mandatory readings from it available):

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<sup>1</sup> The Instructor reserves the right to adjust the syllabus when he deems that a change is necessary.

3. Ben Bradley, Fred Feldman, and Jens Johansson (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Death* (Oxford Handbooks). (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013) ISBN: 0195388925.

## V. Assignments and Grading

### Preparation and Class Attendance

10%

You are expected to read all of the assigned material. You are also expected to ask questions during the lectures and participate in in-class activities. **Missing more than two classes will negatively affect your grade.** If you are absent, you might want to e-mail a classmate and get the notes. It is your responsibility to keep up with any work you miss. Class participation grades will also be negatively affected if disrespect is shown to others.

### Quizzes

30%

These will be given at the beginning of class on designated quiz days (see the schedule below) and will cover material peculiar to the assigned reading and lecture material of the preceding classes. Quizzes will be true or false. **Your lowest quiz score will be dropped and will not count against you.** If you miss a quiz because you are late to or absent from class, you will receive a zero for that quiz, but remember, your lowest quiz score will not count against you.

### Mid-Term

20%

Your Mid-Term will be on **Friday, March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2015.**

### Final Paper

40%

Your final paper must be on a topic covered in class or in one of the textbooks. You should try to have your final paper topic approved by Instructor Weaver by March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2015. Your paper must be 7 to 10 pages *single spaced*, justified, and in Times New Roman font (size 12), with one inch margins. The paper must be documented in the University of Chicago manual of style and should include a bibliography. **Final papers are due in PDF format via Sakai, on Friday May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at 11:00am.**

## VI. Schedule for the Winter Session<sup>2</sup>

### Part 1: Death and Immortality

**1 (Tuesday, January 20<sup>th</sup>):** Death: An Introduction

Homework: Read Feldman, Chapter 4 (Due January 27<sup>th</sup>)

Recommended Non-Mandatory Reading: Cody Gilmore, "When Do Things Die?" (2013, pp. 5-59)

**2 (Friday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>):** Death: An Introduction

**3 (Tuesday, January 27<sup>th</sup>):** Dying as a Process (**Quiz Today**)

Homework: Read Feldman, Chapter 5 (Due December 30<sup>th</sup>)

Recommended Non-Mandatory Reading: Fred Feldman, "Death and the Disintegration of Personality" (2013, pp. 60-79)

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<sup>2</sup> The underlined readings will be posted to Sakai.

**4 (Friday, January 30<sup>th</sup>):** Dying as a Process

**5 (Tuesday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>):** No Class

**6 (Friday, February 6<sup>th</sup>):** Death and Evil (**Quiz Today**)

Homework: Read Feldman, Chapter 8 and McMahan, Chapter 2 (Due February 13<sup>th</sup>)

Recommended Non-Mandatory Reading: Theodore Sider, “The Evil of Death: What Can Metaphysics Contribute?” (2013, pp. 155-166) & John Broome, “The Badness of Death and the Goodness of Life” (2013, pp. 218-233)

**7 (Tuesday, February 10<sup>th</sup>):** Death and Evil

**8 (Friday, February 13<sup>th</sup>):** Survival of Death: The Embodied Mind View (**Quiz Today**)

Homework: Read McMahan Chapter 5 (pp. 423-442) (due February 20<sup>th</sup>)

Recommended Non-Mandatory Reading: John Martin Fischer, “Immortality” (2013, pp. 336-354)

**9 (Tuesday, February 17<sup>th</sup>):** No class

**10 (Friday, February 20<sup>th</sup>):** [Substitute Teacher TBD] Survival of Death: The Embodied Mind View (**Quiz Today**)

**11 (Tuesday, February 24<sup>th</sup>):** Survival of Death: The Substance Dualist View

Homework: Read William Hasker’s “Prospects for Survival” (1999, pp. 204-235) (due February 27<sup>th</sup>)

**12 (Friday, February 27<sup>th</sup>):** Survival of Death: The Substance Dualist View (**Quiz Today**)

**13 (Tuesday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>):** The Ethics of Killing

Homework: Read McMahan Chapter 3 (pp. 189-202) (due March 6<sup>th</sup>)

Non-Mandatory Reading: Matthew Hanser, “The Wrongness of Killing and the Badness of Death” (2013, pp. 391-408)

**14 (Friday, March 6<sup>th</sup>):** The Ethics of Killing (**Quiz Today**)

**15 (Tuesday, March 10<sup>th</sup>):** The Ethics of Killing: Animals

Homework: Read McMahan Chapter 3 (pp. 203-231) (due March 13<sup>th</sup>)

Non-Mandatory Reading: Alastair Norcross, “The Significance of Death for Animals” (2013, pp. 465-474)

**16 (Friday, March 13<sup>th</sup>):** Mid-term

**March 14<sup>th</sup> to March 22<sup>nd</sup>: Spring Break**

**17 (Tuesday, March 24<sup>th</sup>):** The Ethics of the Death Penalty

Homework: Torbjörn Tännsjö, “Capital Punishment” (2013, pp. 475-494) (due March 27<sup>th</sup>)

**18 (Friday, March 27<sup>th</sup>):** The Ethics of the Death Penalty (**Quiz Today**)

**19 (Tuesday, March 31<sup>st</sup>):** The Ethics of Abortion  
Homework: Read Judith J. Thomson (1971) (due April 3<sup>rd</sup>)

**20 (Friday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>):** The Ethics of Abortion (**Quiz Today**)

**21 (Tuesday, April 7<sup>th</sup>):** The Ethics of Abortion  
Homework: Read Alexander Pruss, "[I Was Once a Fetus: That is Why Abortion is Wrong](#)" (due April 10<sup>th</sup>)  
Recommended Non-Mandatory Reading: Don Marquis, "Abortion and Death" (2013, pp. 409-431)

**21 (Friday, April 10<sup>th</sup>):** The Ethics of Abortion (**Quiz Today**)

**22 (Tuesday, April 14<sup>th</sup>):** The Ethics of Suicide  
Homework: Read McMahan Chapter 5 (pp. 455-503) (Due April 17<sup>th</sup>)

**23 (Friday, April 17<sup>th</sup>):** The Ethics of Suicide (**Quiz Today**)

**24 (Tuesday, April 21<sup>st</sup>):** Cloning, Bioethics, and Productive Liberty  
Homework: Read Beckwith Chapter 8 (Due April 24<sup>th</sup>)

**25 (Friday, April 24<sup>th</sup>):** Cloning, Bioethics, and Productive Liberty (**Quiz Today**)

**26 (Tuesday, April 28<sup>th</sup>):** Cloning, Bioethics, and Productive Liberty

**27 (Friday, May 1<sup>st</sup>):** Review (**Quiz Today**)

## **VI. Current Academic Integrity Policy**

To view the current academic integrity policy, visit the link [here](#).

## **VII. Self-Reporting Absence Application:**

“Students are expected to attend all classes; if you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me [the instructor].”