

## **Course Outline Death & Dying**

### Course Description:

In this course, students will learn about philosophical issues related to death and dying. Roughly, the course is broken up into four thematic sections. The first section address meaning in life, the nature of death, and whether death is a bad thing. The second section looks at applied biomedical issues related to death and dying, including euthanasia, assisted suicide, and abortion. The third section of this course goes beyond human-centered issues on death and dying by addressing the meaning of death to non-human animals. Lastly, the final section of this courses surveys topics concerned with issues after life, including respecting the dead, posthumous harm, and immortality.

### Course Texts:

I am aware of the financial impediments posed by acquiring materials for class. To remove this potential barrier to your academic success, all readings are free-to-use and made available electronically.

### Course Reading Schedule:

#### **Day 1: Introduction**

#### **Day 2: Reading and Writing Philosophy; University Resources**

Reading: 1,000 Word Philosophy, “How to Read Philosophy”

Reading: Harvard Writing Center, “How to Write the Philosophy Paper”

#### **Day 3: Meaning in Life**

Reading: Susan Wolf, “The Meanings of Lives”

#### **Day 4: Meaning in Life**

Reading: Thomas Nagel, “The Absurd”

#### **Day 5: What is Death?**

Reading: David DeGrazia, “The Nature of Human Death”

#### **Day 6: What is Death?**

Reading: Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, “Death” (Sections 1: Life & Section 2: Death)

#### **Day 7: The Badness of Death**

Reading: Epicurus, “Letter to Menoeceus”

#### **Day 8: The Badness of Death**

Reading: Thomas Nagel, “Death”

#### **Day 9: The Badness of Death**

Reading: Anthony Brueckner and John Fischer, “Why is Death Bad?”

#### **Day 10: The Badness of Death**

Reading: Ben Bradley, “Existential Terror”

**Day 11: Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide**

Reading: Dan Brock, “Voluntary Active Euthanasia”

**Day 12: Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide**

Reading: Daniel Callahan, “Physician-Assisted Dying: Self Determination Run Amok”

**Day 13: Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide**

Reading: J. David Velleman, “A Right to Self-Termination”

**Day 14: Abortion**

Reading: Judith Jarvis Thomson, “A Defense of Abortion”

**Day 15: Abortion**

Reading: Mary Anne Warren, “On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion”

**Day 16: Abortion**

Reading: Don Marquis, “Why Abortion is Immoral”

**Day 17: Abortion**

Reading: Walter-Sinnott Armstrong, “You Can’t Lose What You Ain’t Never Had: A Reply to Marquis”

**Day 18: Allocating Life Saving Medicines**

Reading: Nicholas Rescher, “The Allocation of Exotic Medical Lifesaving Therapy”

**Day 19: Death and Non-Human Animals**

Reading: Susana Monso, “What Animals Think of Death”

**Day 20: Death and Non-Human Animals**

Reading: Elizabeth Harman, “The Moral Significance of Animal Pain and Death”

**Day 21: Death and Non-Human Animals**

Reading: John Hadley, “Does a Painless Death Harm an Invertebrate?”

**Day 22: Death and Non-Human Animals**

Reading: Jeff McMahan, “The Comparative Badness for Animals of Suffering and Death”

**Day 23: Factory Farming**

Reading: Alistair Norcross, “Puppies, Pigs, and People”

**Day 24: Humane Slaughter**

Reading: Jeff McMahan, “Eating Animals the Nice Way”

**Day 25: Respecting the Dead**

Reading: Joel Feinberg, “The Mistreatment of Dead Bodies”

**Day 26: Respecting the Dead**

Reading: Barry Lam, “Is it Moral to Respect the Wishes of the Dead, Above the Living?”

**Day 27: Posthumous Harm**

Reading: Simon Keller, “Posthumous Harms”

**Day 28: Afterlife**

Reading: Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, “Afterlife”

**Day 29: Immortality**

Reading: Bernard Williams, “The Tedium of Immortality”

**Day 30: Immortality**

Reading: John Martin Fischer, “Why Immortality is Not so Bad”