

## PHIL 20240 Applied Ethics

### Module outline

Module co-ordinator: Dr. Christopher Cowley (Christopher.cowley@ucd.ie)

This module will examine certain metaphysical (first half) and ethical (second half) questions surrounding human death. One of our claims will be that the ethical cannot be properly understood without first understanding something of the metaphysical.

What is death, exactly: a process or a state, or simply an end-point? What does the necessity of death (at a determinate but unknown time in the future) mean for our lives in the present? What would resurrection and immortality entail, exactly? Can a cadaver be harmed or wronged? Can a person's life be tarnished by what happens to their projects after their death? Why can I decide, and why do I care, what happens to my organs and to my property, when neither will be 'mine' after I die? Why is suicide not like any other choice one can make? Why is dementia sometimes called a 'living death'? Should euthanasia (in some form) be legalised?

#### Timetable:

Week	<b>PART I: metaphysical issues surrounding death</b>	
1	8 and 10 Sept	Introduction: What is metaphysics? What is ethics? What is death? Content, structure, and assessment of module
2	15 and 17 Sept	<b>Is death an evil?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rosenbaum S. 'How to Be Dead and Not Care: A Defense of Epicurus' in: <i>American Philosophical Quarterly</i>, Vol. 23 No. 2. April 1986.</li> </ul>
3	22 and 24 Sept <i>Tutorials begin</i> <i>First summary due on Friday</i>	<b>Posthumous harm</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pitcher G. 'The misfortunes of the dead' in: <i>American Philosophical Quarterly</i>, Vol. 21 No. 2, April 1984</li> </ul>
4	29 Sept and 1 Oct	<b>Immortality</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ribero B. (2011) 'The problem of heaven' in: <i>Ratio</i> vol. 24.</li> </ul>
5	6 and 8 Oct <i>Second summary due on Friday</i>	<b>Death and the meaning of life</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Perrett R. (1985) 'Tolstoy, death and the meaning of life' in: <i>Philosophy</i> vol. 60(232).</li> <li>Tolstoy L. 'The death of Ivan Illych'</li> </ul>
6	13 and 15 Oct	<b>Organ donation and retention</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wilkinson T. 'Individual and Family Decisions About Organ Donation' in: <i>Journal of Applied Philosophy</i>, Vol. 24, No. 1, 2007</li> </ul>
	<b>PART II: ethical issues surrounding death</b>	
7	20 and 22 Oct	<b>Refusal of life-saving treatment</b>

	<i>Third summary due on Friday</i>	N.B. this topic <i>replaces</i> the topic ‘Killing in self-defence’ in earlier versions of this Module Outline. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Savulescu J. and Momeyer R. (1997) ‘Should informed consent be based on rational beliefs?’ in: <i>Journal of Medical Ethics</i> vol. 23</li> <li>• Bock G. (2012) ‘Jehovah’s Witnesses and autonomy: honouring the refusal of blood transfusions’ in: <i>Journal of Medical Ethics</i> vol. 38</li> </ul>
8	<i>Mon 27 Oct</i>	<i>Bank holiday – no lecture</i>
	<i>Wed 29 Oct</i>	<b>Deliberate ageism</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Callahan D. ‘Terminating treatment: age as a standard’ in: <i>The Hastings Center Report</i>, Vol. 17 No. 5, Oct. – Nov. 1987</li> </ul>
		<i>No tutorials this week</i>
9	3 and 5 Nov <i>Fourth summary due on Friday</i>	<b>Suicide</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cholbi M. (2012) ‘What is Wrong with “What is Wrong with Rational Suicide”’ in: <i>Philosophia</i> vol. 40</li> </ul>
10	10 and 12 Nov <i>Last week of tutorials</i>	<b>Dementia</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dworkin R. ‘Life past reason’ in: <i>Life’s Dominion</i>, Knopf 1993</li> </ul>
11	17 and 19 Nov <i>Fifth summary due on Friday</i>	<b>Euthanasia I – physician-assisted suicide</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shaw D. ‘The body as unwarranted life support: a new perspective on euthanasia’ in: <i>Journal of Medical Ethics</i>, vol. 33, 2007</li> <li>• McLachlan H. ‘Physician-assisted suicide and the assisted suicide and the killing of people? Maybe. Killing of patients? No: the rejection of Shaw’s new perspective on euthanasia’ in: <i>Journal of Medical Ethics</i>, vol. 36, 2010</li> </ul>
12	<i>Mon 24 Nov</i>	<b>Euthanasia II – withholding treatment from the comatose</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keown J. ‘Restoring moral and intellectual shape to the law after Bland’ in: <i>Law Quarterly Review</i>, vol. 113, 1997</li> </ul>