

LIFE & DEATH

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Summer Session: 6/27/2005 to 8/05/2005
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday: 1:30pm – 3:05pm

This course will examine the meaning and value of human life, the meaning and value of death, the possibility of “life after death”, and the significance death should have for the living of one’s life.

Required Texts:

- ◆THE MEANING OF LIFE, edited by E. D. Klemke (KLEMKE)
- ◆THE METAPHYSICS OF DEATH, edited by John Martin Fischer (FISCHER)
- ◆THINKING CLEARLY ABOUT DEATH, by Jay Rosenberg (ROSENBERG)

Course Requirements:

●**Class Participation** (10% of grade): Based on quantity and quality of in-class participation. Effort counts. Attendance also counts. Any unexcused absence can result in a 20% reduction in your overall class participation grade. Absences are unexcused unless you have contacted me prior to noon on the day of the class you’ll be missing to let me know both that you will be absent and why.

●**Questions** (20% of grade): An important part of philosophy is learning to ask good questions. For each class, beginning June 28, you will be required to submit three questions about the reading for that day’s class, one of which you will attempt to answer in a paragraph to a page of writing. There will be papers due on July 18 and August 4, and so no Questions are due on those days. That means that you will owe a total of 20 sets of Questions. Each set will be worth 1% of your overall course grade. Take them seriously. They should be submitted, via e-mail (alex.guerrero@nyu.edu), by noon of the day that the reading will be discussed.

●**Paper One** (30% of grade): The first paper will be due July 18. Topics will be distributed on July 7. Papers will be returned on July 21.

●**Paper Two** (40% of grade): The second paper will be due August 4. Topics distributed July 21.

Schedule:

- ◆June 27: **Introduction**
 - T. Nagel, “Prologue” in KLEMKE (p. 5)
- ◆June 28: **Meaning and Meaninglessness**
 - R. Taylor, “The Meaning of Life” in KLEMKE (p. 167)
- ◆June 29: **Meaning, Meaningless, and Explanation**
 - K. Baier, “The Meaning of Life” in KLEMKE (p. 101)

- ◆June 30: **Examining the Question**
 - K. Nielsen, “Linguistic Philosophy and ‘Meaning of Life’” in KLEMKE (p. 233)

- ◆July 5: **Nozick: “Philosophy and the Meaning of Life”**
 - R. Nozick, from Philosophical Explanations—handout

- ◆July 6: **Recent Work on the Meaning of Life**
 - T. Metz, “Recent Work on the Meaning of Life”—handout

- ◆July 7: **A Christian Answer**
 - W. L. Craig, “The Absurdity of Life Without God” in KLEMKE (p. 40)

- ◆July 11: **A Buddhist Answer**
 - Readings TBA—handout

- ◆July 12: **Absurdity**
 - T. Nagel, “The Absurd” in KLEMKE (p. 176)

- ◆July 13: **Death: An Introduction to the Issues**
 - J. Fischer, “Introduction: Death, Metaphysics, and Morality” in FISCHER (p. 3)

- ◆July 14: **Is Death Bad?**
 - T. Nagel, “Death” in FISCHER (p. 59)

- ◆July 18: **Is it Rational to Fear Death?**
 - J. Murphy, “Rationality and the Fear of Death” in FISCHER (p. 41)

- ◆July 19: **Would it Be Good to Be Immortal?**
 - B. Williams, “The Makropulos Case...” in FISCHER (p. 71)

- ◆July 20: **Introduction to Thinking Clearly About Death**
 - ROSENBERG—Preface to the Second Edition, Prelude, Chapter 0 (pp. xvi-27)

- ◆July 21: **The Possibility of Life after Death**
 - ROSENBERG—Chapter 1 (pp. 30-55)

- ◆July 25: **Bodies and Souls**
 - ROSENBERG—Chapter 2 (pp. 56-93)

- ◆July 26: **Bodies and Souls**
 - ROSENBERG—Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 (98-152)

- ◆July 27: **Death and Personhood**
 - ROSENBERG—Interlude and Chapter 5 (pp. 154-191)

- ◆July 28: **Values, Rights, Taking Life**
 - ROSENBERG—Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 (pp. 193-233)

- ◆Aug 2: **Applications**
 - R. Dworkin—Chapter 3 from Life’s Dominion, “What is Sacred?”—handout

- ◆Aug 3: **Applications**
 - R. Dworkin—Chapter 7 from Life's Dominion, “Dying and Living”—handout

- ◆Aug 4: **Applications**
 - R. Dworkin—Chapter 8 from Life's Dominion, “Life Past Reason”—handout