7AAN2054 Perspectives on Death and Killing

Syllabus 2013/2014

Credits: 20
Module tutor: Dr. David Galloway
Assessment:

- Formative assessment: one x 2,000–3,000-word essay, submission date TBC
- Summative assessment: one x 4,000-word essay, submission date TBC

Teaching pattern: one weekly one-hour lecture and one weekly one-hour seminar.

For the first five weeks of the course, we will discuss some metaphysical and ethical issues concerning death and its significance. For the final five weeks, we will discuss some ethical problems concerning killing.

Provisional principal readings
Here, in no particular order, is a list of the main texts that will feature prominently in our discussions.

(This article can be downloaded free on line from the Cambridge UP web site. The URL is http://ebooks.cambridge.org/chapter.jsf?bid=CBO9780511621253&cid=CBO9780511621253A012.)

Steven Luper: The Philosophy of Death, CUP 2009

Fred Feldman: Confrontations with the Reaper, OUP 1992; Pleasure and the Good Life, OUP 2004

Thomas Nagel: Mortal Questions, CUP 2013

Thomas Scanlon, Moral Dimensions, Harvard UP 2008

Frances Kamm, Morality, Mortality, 2 vols., OUP 1993/96


Jeff MacMahan, The Ethics of Killing, OUP 2003

Jeff MacMahan, Killing in War, OUP 2009

Provisional schedule of lectures with principal readings

**Week 1: Some mortal questions**
- Reading
  - Thoman Nagel, ‘Death’, ‘War and massacre’, and ‘The absurd’; all in *Mortal Questions*
  - Bernard Williams, ‘The Makropulos Case’

**Week 2: Death, dying, being dead**
- Reading
  - Steven Luper, *Philosophy of Death*

**Week 3: Person and corpse**
- Reading
  - Chapters 3 and 4 of *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Death*

**Week 4: ‘Death is nothing to us’**

**Week 5: The value of a life**
- Reading
  - Fred Feldman, *Confrontations with the Reaper*

**Week 6: Immortality: how bad could it be?**
- Reading
  - Bernard Williams, ‘The Makropulos Case’

**Week 7: The wrongness of killing**
- Reading
  - Jonathan Glover, *Causing Death and Saving Lives*

**Week 8: The doctrine of double effect**
- Reading
  - Thomas Scanlon, *Moral Dimensions*

**Week 9: Killing in war**
- Reading
  - Jeff MacMahan, *Killing in War*

**Week 10: The wrongness of killing and the badness of death**
- Reading
  - Jeff MacMahan, *The Ethics of Killing*