

Death and What Comes After

Instructor: Huw Duffy

Winter 2015, Mondays, 11–12:50

Contact Information

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Expectations

My hope for this tutorial is that we'll have lively and focused discussions of the readings. The assignments are designed with this in mind, and are not graded, though I will return comments on the essays.

For each regular class meeting, starting with Week 2, I'll ask you to send me a one-page abstract of the reading. It should have three parts: a restatement of the paper's main thesis, a brief summary of the argument for that thesis, and a reaction you had to the reading—this can be a critical comment or a question. I'll use the reactions as a basis for discussion: please send them by 5 p.m. on the day before class. There are also two essays (3 pages), due on 26 January and 2 March.

Unfortunately, two of our meetings fall on holidays. On those weeks, I'll schedule a voluntary meeting of the tutorial on a different day.

Schedule of Readings

All readings are available online, either through links on this syllabus or on Coursework; physical copies of some will be on reserve in Tanner Library, Building 90.

Ancients: Epicurus and Lucretius

5 Jan Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus* (Diogenes Laertius paragraphs 122–138, pp. 649–659 in Loeb) ([at Loeb Classics Online](#)); (Tanner Reserves)

12 Jan Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* Book III lines 830-1024 ([at Loeb Classics Online](#)) (Tanner Reserves)

TBD (voluntary) Martha Nussbaum, 'Lucretius on Death and the Voice of Nature' ([at JSTOR](#))

Contemporaries: the Evil of Death

26 Jan Thomas Nagel, 'Death' ([at JSTOR](#)) *First essay due*

2 Feb Jeff McMahan, 'Death and the Value of a Life' ([at JSTOR](#)) [skip pages 34–38]

9 Feb Kai Draper, 'Disappointment, Sadness and Death' ([at JSTOR](#))

Living Well, Dying Well

TBD (voluntary) Frances Kamm 'Rescuing Ivan Ilyich: How We Live and How We Die' ([at JSTOR](#)). You'll probably find it helpful to read the Tolstoy short story that inspired Kamm's piece, *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* ([online here](#)).

23 Feb Bernard Williams, 'The Makropulos Case: Reflections on the Tedium of Immortality' (on Coursework, in Tanner Reserves); Plato, *Symposium* (excerpt: 207c–209e) [at Loeb Classics Online](#)

After Death

2 Mar Samuel Scheffler, *Death and the Afterlife* Lectures 1 ([online here](#) or [as a PDF](#)) and 2 ([online here](#) or [as a PDF](#)) (Tanner Reserves) *Second essay due*

9 Mar Scheffler Lecture 3 ([online here](#) or [as a PDF](#)), Susan Wolf, ‘The Significance of Doomsday’ ([online here](#) or [as a PDF](#))

Students with Disabilities

If you need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability, you must initiate the request with the Office of Accessible Education and obtain an Accommodation Letter from them detailing the accommodations required. Please do so in a timely manner as the OAE requires notice to coordinate accommodations. The OAE is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk (phone: 723-1066, 723-1067 TTY).