

Fall 2022
 Philosophy of Death
 Philosophy 316—01

Professor:

Charles Joshua Horn, Ph.D.

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Drop-In Hours: MWF, 2:00pm—3:00pm; By Appointment (Zoom also available during this time.)

<http://charlesjhorn.webstarts.com/index.html>

Course Information:

Class Time: MWF, 9:00am—9:50am

Class Location: CCC 233

“ALL WHO ACTUALLY ENGAGE IN PHILOSOPHY ARIGHT
 ARE PRACTICING NOTHING OTHER THAN DYING AND BEING DEAD.”
 PHAEDO 64A

Course Description:

Questions concerning the nature and phenomena of death are as old as philosophical inquiry itself. The philosophy of death may cover any number of issues in a number of different fields of academia including legal, ethical, and religious aspects. In this particular course we will devote our attention primarily to a wide range of metaphysical and epistemological topics.

In the first part of the course, we will examine some traditional perspectives on death and dying in both Western and Eastern cultures. Included in this section of the course will be an analysis of Christianity, Islam, Plato, Hinduism, Taoism, and other historical and philosophically rich traditions. Additionally, we will investigate reflections on death and dying from different contemporary perspectives.

In the second part of the course, we will focus our attention on the philosophy of parapsychology by examining several supernatural cases which seem to suggest survival after death. Included in this part of the course will be an analysis of alleged cases of trance mediumship, reincarnation, possession, lingering spirits, and out of body experiences.

In the third part of the course, we will consider questions related to the meaning of life and death by examining some classical issues in existentialism. Included in this part of the course will be an analysis of good and bad death, the importance of dying in particular ways, and whether immortality is desirable.

Some of the questions to be examined in this course will be:

- (1) What attitude should we have about death?
- (2) How is death significant?
- (3) How do Eastern conceptions of death differ from traditional conceptions of death in the West?
- (4) Is there any evidence, empirical or rational, for the survival of the self after death?
- (5) Is there something morally repugnant about merciful acts of killing?
- (6) How do we confront death?
- (7) In what way does death make our lives meaningful?
- (8) How does immortality relate to the meaning of life?

Texts:Rental:

Immortal Remains: The Evidence for Life after Death (IR)
 Stephen E. Braude
 Rowman and Littlefield Publishers
 ISBN: 978-074251472

The Eternal Pity: Reflections on Dying (EP)
 Ed. Richard Neuhaus
 University of Notre Dame Press
 ISBN: 978-0268027575

Death and Philosophy (DP)
 Ed. J.E. Malpas, Robert C. Solomon
 Routledge
 ISBN: 978-0-415-19144-9

Life, Death, & Meaning: Key Philosophical Readings on the Big Questions, 3rd Ed. (LDM)
 Ed. David Benatar
 Rowman and Littlefield Publishers
 ISBN: 9781442258334

Expectations:

Students are expected to check into Canvas daily in order to check for class announcements, complete assignments, use the discussion board, etc. Students are expected to attend every class and remain for the entire time. Do not come late or leave early. Students must complete the necessary readings prior to class and be prepared for discussion and participation. Students will treat other students with respect. This means, turning off all electrical equipment, including cell phones, laptops, and tablets. Students must also address their peers in a respectful tone. It is important to note that the nature of this class will inevitably result in disagreements among colleagues; however, it is essential to maintain respect toward one another despite disagreement.

Course Goals:

- Demonstrate an ability to read carefully, speak clearly, think critically, or write persuasively about cultures and cultural works/artifacts (including texts, images, performances, and technologies, as well as other expressions of the human condition).
- Identify and analyze how beliefs, values, languages, theories, or laws shape cultures and cultural works/artifacts.
- Engage a variety of ideas and worldviews critically by formulating reflective and informed moral, ethical, or aesthetic evaluations of cultures and cultural works/artifacts.

Grading Criteria:

To provide a great deal of flexibility for students, assignments can be submitted at any point during the week that they are due (Sunday—Saturday). Assignments can be made up beyond the due dates for both unexcused and excused absences. For unexcused absences, a late penalty may be imposed. Late work must be complete within one week of the assignment due date.

Canvas will automatically calculate and update grades as the semester progresses. To determine your current grade in the class, take the score in the “Total” column and divide by 100. If there are still remaining assignments left, add the remaining points possible to your points earned to see the best-case scenario for your grade. Then use the grading scale below. The goal for the class is to try to earn as many points as possible. Any points earned over these 100 points will count as extra credit. Final grades will be calculated based upon the following.

1. Three Essays 60 Points Total (20 Points Each)
Each essay should be 1-2 single-spaced pages. Students should consult the “Tips for Writing” on Canvas and “Writing Philosophy Papers” on pg. 14 of the textbook for help with writing their persuasive essay. It would also be helpful to complete an outline of your paper before starting. Look at the “Essay Construction Handout” for a blueprint. Essays should be uploaded to Canvas as PDFs.
2. Twenty Reading Quizzes 40 Points Total (2 Points Each)
There are quizzes associated with most of the readings in the class. Students will have 5 minutes to answer questions on the readings designated on the course schedule (look for Q# on the schedule to see which quiz is associated with each reading). Because there are 25 quizzes on the course schedule, students may earn up to 10% bonus in extra credit for the semester. This also means that you can skip up to 5 quizzes and still earn the full 40% for this part of your grade!
3. Engagement
Engagement comes in many forms. I reserve the right to raise or lower final grades up to 10 points based on engagement, meaning that it is also possible for engagement points to remain at 0. There is no hard and fast rule for raising or lowering the 10 points. While the grade is subjective, it is not arbitrary. Taken together, engagement includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Preparation: reviewing readings and materials before class.
 - b. Focus: avoiding distractions during class.
 - c. Presence: responsive during class.
 - d. Asking Questions: in class, out of class, on the discussion board, through email, etc.
 - e. Listening: hearing what others say, and what they are not saying.
 - f. Specificity: referring to specific ideas from readings and discussions.
 - g. Synthesis: making connections between readings and discussions.

“Pass” Range			“Fail” Range	
(70—100 Points)			(<70 Points)	
“A” Range	“B” Range	“C” Range	“D” Range	“F” Range
	B+ (87—89)	C+ (77—79)	D+ (67—69)	F (<60)
A (94—100)	B (84—86)	C (74—76)	D (60—66)	
A- (90—93)	B- (80—83)	C- (70—73)		

Academic Integrity:

Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism or helping others to commit these acts will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty will result in severe disciplinary action including, but not limited to, failure of the student assessment item or course, and/or dismissal from the University.

Academic integrity violations include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Cheating: Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, notes, study aids, or other devices in any academic exercise. This definition includes unauthorized communication of information during an academic exercise.
- 2) Fabrication and Falsification: Intentional and unauthorized alteration or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise. Falsification is a matter of inventing or counterfeiting information for use in any academic exercise.
- 3) Multiple Submissions: The submission of substantial portions of the same academic work for credit (including oral reports) more than once without authorization.
- 4) Plagiarism: Intentionally or knowingly presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e., without proper acknowledgment of the source). The sole exception to the requirement is when the ideas, information, etc., is common knowledge.
- 5) Complicity in Academic Dishonesty: Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic dishonesty.

Additional information can be found at:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/SRR-2010/rightsChap14.pdf>

Disability Information:

Students with disabilities should register with the ADA coordinator on campus and let me know at the beginning of the semester. I would be happy to accommodate you in any way that I can. Just let me know. More information can be found at:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/ADA/rightsADAPolicyInfo.pdf>

Intellectual Property Notice:

Lecture materials and recordings for Philosophy 316 are protected intellectual property at UW-Stevens Point. Students in this course may use the materials and recordings for their personal use related to participation in this class. Students may also take notes solely for their personal use. If a lecture is not already recorded, you are not authorized to record my lectures without my permission unless you are considered by the university to be a qualified student with a disability requiring accommodation. [Regent Policy Document 4-1] Students may not copy or share lecture materials and recordings outside of class, including posting on internet sites or selling to commercial entities. Students are also prohibited from providing or selling their personal notes to anyone else or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the instructor's express written permission. Unauthorized use of these copyrighted lecture materials and recordings constitutes copyright infringement and may be addressed under the university's policies, UWS Chapters 14 and 17, governing student academic and non-academic misconduct.

Part I: Perspectives on Death

Week 1		(September 4—September 10)	
September 7		Syllabus/Course Introduction	
September 9	Q1	PH—Plato, Phaedo	Canvas, 57a—85b
Online Tasks		Q1	
Week 2		(September 11—September 17)	
September 12	Q2	PH—Plato, Phaedo	Canvas, 85b—118a
September 14		EP—The Life of the World to Come, Book of Common Prayer	173—178
September 16	Q3	EP—The Quran (Fate as the Will of God)	74—82
Online Tasks		Q2, Q3	
Week 3		(September 18—September 24)	
September 19		EP—Katha Upanishad (The Figure of Death)	42—45
September 21	Q4	DP—Robert Wicks, Death and Enlightenment	71—82
September 23	Q5	DP—Roger Ames, Death as Transformation in Classical Daoism	57—70
Online Tasks		Q4, Q5	
Week 4		(September 25—October 1)	
September 26		DP—Tem Horwitz, My Death	5—15
September 28	Q6	EP—Montaigne “To Philosophize Is to Learn to Die” (Acceptance Beyond Fear)	66—70
September 30	Q7	DP—Graham Parkes, Death and Detachment	83—97
Online Tasks		Q6, Q7	
Week 5		(October 2—October 8)	
October 3		DP—Kathleen Higgins, Death and the Skeleton	39—49
October 5	Q8	DP—Betty Flowers, Death, the Bald Scenario	50—56
October 7	Q9	DP—Peter Loftson, The Antinomy of Death	135—151
Online Tasks		Q8, Q9	
Week 6		(October 9—October 15)	
October 10	Q10	DP—Robert Solomon, Death Fetishism, Morbid Solipsism	152—176
October 12		Essay I Peer Review	
October 14		Essay I Due	
Online Tasks		Q10	

Part II: Death and Beyond—Philosophy of Parapsychology

Week 7		(October 16—October 22)	
October 17	Q11	IR—Chapter 1: Preliminaries	1—30
October 19	Q12	IR—Chapter 2: Drop-In Communicators	31—52
October 21	Q13	IR—Chapter 3: Trance Mediumship	53—79
Online Tasks		Q11, Q12, Q13	
Week 8		(October 23—October 29)	
October 24	Q14	IR—Chapter 3: Trance Mediumship	79—100
October 26		IR—Chapter 4: The Case of Sharada: Psychopathology and Xenoglossy	101—132
October 28	Q15	IR—Chapter 4: The Case of Sharada: Psychopathology and Xenoglossy	101—132
Online Tasks		Q14, Q15	
Week 9		(October 30—November 5)	
October 31	Q16	IR—Chapter 5: The Case of Patience Worth	133—151
November 2	Q17	IR—Chapter 5: The Case of Patience Worth	151—175
November 4	Q18	IR—Chapter 6: Reincarnation and Possession	177—198
Online Tasks		Q16, Q17, Q18	
Week 10		(November 6—November 12)	
November 7	Q19	IR—Chapter 6: Reincarnation and Possession	198—224
November 9	Q20	IR—Chapter 7: Lingering Spirits	225—244
November 11	Q21	IR—Chapter 8: Out-of-Body Experiences	245—282
Online Tasks		Q19, Q20, Q21	
Week 11		(November 13—November 19)	
November 14		Horn/Braude Correspondence; Make Up Day	
November 16		Essay II Peer Review	
November 18		Essay II Due	
Online Tasks			

Part III: Life, Death, Immortality, and Meaning

Week 12		(November 20—November 26)	
November 21		LDM—Richard Taylor, The Meaning of Life	21—30
November 23	Q22	LDM—Thomas Nagel, The Absurd	31—43
November 25		No Class—Academic Holiday	
Online Tasks		Q22	
Week 13		(November 27—December 3)	
November 28		EP—Leo Tolstoy “The Death of Ivan Ilych”	92—99
November 30	Q23	EP—Gilbert Meilaender, “I Want to Burden My Loved Ones”	117—120
December 2		LDM—Susan Wolf, The Meaning of Lives	113—130
Online Tasks		Q23	

Week 14		(December 4—December 10)	
December 5	Q24	LDM—Bernard Williams, The Makropulos Case: Reflections on the Tedium of Immortality	315—332
December 7		LDM—John Martin Fischer, Why Immortality Is Not So Bad	333—347
December 9	Q25	EP—Jeffrey Ford, “Mercy Killing at Golgotha	122—124
Online Tasks		Q24, Q25	

Week 15 (December 11—December 15)

December 12	Make Up Day
December 14	Essay III Peer Review
Online Tasks	

FINALS WEEK

Week 16	(December 16—December 22)
Online Tasks	Essay III Due (12/21/2022 at 4:45pm)

SPECIAL VISITS

1. Megan Mapes—ICU Nurse
2. Heather Schultz—Medical Examiner/Coroner
3. Jason Nguyen—Shuda Funeral Home
4. Valerie Kedrowski—Stevens Point Paranormal Society