PHIL 51650 / DVPR 42806
Death: Some Aspects

Winter term 2016
Swift 400
Thursdays, 9:00-11:50

Instructors: Dan Arnold (d-arnold@uchicago.edu), Dan Brudney (dbrudney@uchicago.edu)

Office hours: Dan Arnold (Swift 401A, 702-8276), Fridays, 9:30-11:00 (or by arrangement with instructor); for appointments during regular office hours, contact instructor’s secretary, Susie McGee (Martin Marty Center); Dan Brudney (Stuart 218, 702-7546), Mondays, 2-3:45 (or by appointment)

Required Readings:

All readings are available on reserve at Regenstein Library; all non-book-length readings can be found electronically on Chalk (chalk.uchicago.edu), where they are to be found under “Library Course Reserves.” The following books are (or will soon be) available for purchase at the Seminary Coop Bookstore; students found to have purchased them instead on Amazon may be subjected to stern rebuke.

– Anne O’Byrne, *Natality and Finitude* (Indiana U. Press, 2010)

Course Requirements:

In addition to exemplifying regular attendance and spirited participation in discussion, students will be required to submit a paper of moderate length (15-25 pages), on a topic to be developed in consultation with the instructors. Papers will be due March 18th.

Schedule of Topics & Readings:

**Week 1** (Thursday, January 7; Prof. Brudney away): “To study philosophy is nothing but to prepare one’s self to die” (Cicero). Course introduction, logistics, etc.

**Week 2** (Thursday, January 14): Some classic framings of the issues. Reading: Epicurus and Lucretius (selections from Long and Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, and from Inwood and Gerson, *The Epicurus Reader*); Marcus Aurelius (selections from the *Meditations*, ed. G. M. A. Grube); Thomas Nagel, “Death”

**Week 4** (Thursday, January 28): Is death bad? (If so, when, and for whom?)  

**Week 5** (Thursday, February 4): When push comes to shove: On prioritizing survival.  

**Week 6** (Thursday, February 11): What is the subject of anxiety about death? Death and its implication in other philosophical puzzles.  
**Reading:** J. J. Valberg, *Dream, Death, and the Self* (Princeton University Press, 2007), parts I and II (pp.1-236)

**Week 7** (Thursday, February 18): A naturalist account of what it could mean to survive death.  
**Reading:** Mark Johnston, *Surviving Death*

**Week 8** (Thursday, February 25): On the difference it makes that others survive us.  
**Reading:** Samuel Scheffler, *Death and the Afterlife*

**Week 9** (Thursday, March 3): Not that we die but that we were born: An alternative take on what essentially characterizes being human.  
**Reading:** Anne O’Byrne, *Natality and Finitude*

**Week 10** (Thursday, March 10; Prof. Arnold away): Do we have the right to die?  

**TBD** (Monday, March 7?): Other ways of thinking about how concern for the future figures in thinking about death: The case of organ transplantation.  
**Reading:** Franklin Miller and Robert Truog, *Death, Dying, and Organ Transplantation: Reconstructing Medical Ethics at the End of Life*

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Final papers due Friday, March 18th!