

2nd Semester, 2021/22

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Monday: 6:30 to 9:30 pm

ZOOM

PHIL5573 TOPICS IN APPLIED PHILOSOPHY:

The Philosophy of Dying and Ageing

死亡與年老哲學

Course description:

Philosophical reflection on death has been one of the most important themes in Western and Chinese philosophical tradition. However, ageing has never been a central philosophical problem because death occurs at every age, but old age is not necessary for everyone. Many philosophers died before being old. This phenomenon has changed in our 21st century, as most people can live for a long life, thereby creating an unprecedented human condition which needs new philosophical attention. This course is an attempt to reflect on the problem of dying and ageing from a phenomenological and existential perspective. The course begins with a review of traditional conception of death and immortality in both Western and Chinese philosophical tradition; then to the philosophy of ageing by Cicero and Seneca in the classical period and by Simone de Beauvoir in the 20th century; then next to the phenomenological analysis on dying by Heidegger in *Being and Time*. With this foundation, the course proceeds to an existential analysis on ageing with respect to temporality, body and identity, narrative, the problem of loss and the meaning of life. It ends with a discussion on the possibility of a “successful and positive” ageing.

Course Outline:

1. Introduction: Why the Opposite to Life is not Death, but Ageing
2. Traditional Conception of Death and Immortality
 - 2.1 The Greek and Judeo-Christian Tradition
 - 2.2 The Chinese Tradition
 - 2.3 The Modern Philosophy
3. Tragedy of Ageing and Dying
 - 3.1 Aristotle on Old Age
 - 3.2 Shakespeare: *King Lear* and Kurosawa's *Ran*
 - 3.3 Norbert Elias: *The Loneliness of the Dying*
4. Philosophy of Ageing
 - 4.1 Seneca: *On the Shortness of Life*
 - 4.2 Cicero: *On Old Age*
 - 4.3 Simone de Beauvoir: *The Coming of Age*
 - 4.4 Helen Small: *The Long Life*
5. Phenomenological Analysis of Dying
 - 5.1 Tolstoy: *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*
 - 5.2 E. Kubler-Ross: *On Death and Dying*,

- 5.3 Heidegger's Being-toward-death
- 6. Existential Analysis of Ageing
 - 6.1 Life-stages
 - 6.2 Time and Temporality: The Chronometric time and Lived-time
 - 6.3 Narrative and Self-identity
 - 6.4 The Body in Ageing
 - 6.5 The Problem of Loss
 - 6.6 Love and Friendship in Old Age
- 7. Ageing and the Art of Living
 - 7.1 Jan Baars: *Ageing and the Art of Living*
 - 7.2 "Successful" Ageing
 - 7.3 The Meaning of Life / Death : Living / Ageing / Dying

Assessment:

1. Mid-term Film/Book Report: 30% Due date: March 14, 2022
2. Final Term Paper: 70% Due date: May 9, 2022.

(All Mid-term reports and Term papers, in Word-format, should be sent directly to this email: dying.ageing.2022@gmail.com
No hard copies are needed)

Readings:

Classic Texts:

1. Aristotle: *On Youth and Old Age, On Life and Death*
2. Cicero: *de senectute* (On Old Age)
3. Seneca: *On the Shortness of Life*
4. Shakespeare: *King Lear*
5. Tolstoy, Leo. *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*. trans. Ronald Wilks.

Modern Texts

1. Baars, Jan. *Aging and the Art of Living*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012
2. Beauvoir, Simone de. *The Coming of Age*. Trans Patrick O'Brian. New York: Norton, 1972.
3. Dastur, Françoise. *Death: An Essay on Finitude*. trans John Llewelyn. London: Athlone, 1996.
4. Elias, Norbert. *The Loneliness of the Dying*. Trans Edmund Jephcott. New York: Continuum. 2001
5. Heidegger, Martin: *Being and Time*, Sections 46-53, trans. John Macquarrie, New York: Harper & Row, 1962
6. Ignatieff, Michael, *Berlin in Autumn: The Philosopher in Old Age*. Berkeley: Occasional Papers of the Doreen B. Townsend Center for the Humanities, no 16. 1999

7. Kübler-Ross, Elisabeth. *On Death and Dying*. 40th Anniversary. London: Routledge, 2009.
8. Small, Helen. *The Long Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Major References

1. Bengtson, Vern L. et al. ed. *Handbook of Theories of Aging*. New York: Springer: 2009
2. Choron, Jacques. *Death and Western Thought*. New York: Collier Books, 1963.
3. Derrida, Jacques. *The Gift of Death*. Trans David Wills. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995.
4. Fingarette, Herbert. *Death: Philosophical Soundings*. Chicago: Open Court, 1999
5. Holliday, Robin. *Aging: The Paradox of Life: Why We Age*. Dordrecht: Springer, 2007.
6. Kramer, Scott & Wu, Kuang-Ming. *Thinking Through Death*. 2 Volumes. Malabar, FL.: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Company, 1988.
7. Leman-Stefanovic, Ingrid. *The Event of Death: A Phenomenological Enquiry*. Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987
8. Malpas, Jeff and Solomon, Robert C. Ed. *Death and Philosophy*. London: Routledge, 1998.
9. McFadden, Susan H. Atchley, Robert C. ed. *Aging and the Meaning of Time. A Multidisciplinary Exploration*. New York: Springer, 2001
10. Nussbaum, Martha & Levmore, Saul. *Aging Thoughtfully: Conversations about Retirement, Romance, Wrinkles, & Regret*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017
11. Overall, Christine. *Aging, Death, and Human Longevity: A Philosophical Inquiry*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003
12. Scarre, Geoffrey ed. *The Palgrave Handbook of The Philosophy of Aging*. London: The Palgrave Macmillan, 2016
13. Scarre, Geoffrey. *Death*. Stocksfield: Acumen, 2007.
14. White, Carol J. *Time and Death: Heidegger's Analysis of Finitude*. Hants: Ashgate, 2005
15. 鄭曉江：《中國死亡智慧》。台北：東大圖書公司，1994。
16. 張三夕：《死亡之思》。台北：洪葉文化，1996。
17. 段德智：《死亡哲學》。台北：洪葉文化，1994。

Recommended Films

1. *Ikiru* (流芳頌 1952) by Akira Kurosawa (黑澤明)
2. *Tokyo Story* (東京物語 1953) by Yasujiro Ozu (小津安二郎)
3. *Wild Strawberries* (1957) by Ingmar Bergman
4. *Ran* (亂 1985) by Akira Kurosawa
5. *Madadayo* (Not Yet, 1993) by Akira Kurosawa
6. *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* (2008) by David Fincher
7. *Amour* (2012) by Michael Haneke
8. *Mr. Morgan's Last Love* (2013) by Sandra Nettelback
9. *The Age of Adaline* (2015) by Lee Toland Krieger
10. *King Lear* (2018) by Richard Eyre
11. *The Father* (2021) by Florian Zeller