

# The Ethics of a Human Life

Hope House  
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Ethical questions arise at every stage of a human life, from before a person is born until after she dies. We will explore the ethical questions that arise at familiar stages of a person's life: her conception, childhood, adulthood, death, and after her death. We will consider some surprising ways philosophers have tried to answer these questions, and we will think about the arguments they make helps us better understand the ethical shape of a human life as a whole.

All readings are included in the course reader. Each reading is accompanied by study questions.

Week 1, April 2<sup>nd</sup>: *What's wrong with being born?*

Reading:

Interview with David Benatar, "Better Never to Have Been"

Week 2, April 9<sup>th</sup>: *Do biological family ties matter?*

Reading:

David Velleman, "Family History"

Week 3, April 16<sup>th</sup>: *Is it bad to be a child?*

Reading:

Anca Gheaus, "Unfinished Adults and Defective Children: On the Nature and Value of Childhood"

Week 4, April 23<sup>rd</sup>: *Do we wrongfully discriminating against young people?*

Reading:

Juliana Bidadanure, "Six Reasons why the UK Parliament should have Youth Quotas"

Week 5, April 30<sup>th</sup>: *Is it bad to grow old?*

Reading:

Martha Nussbaum, "Our Bodies, Ourselves: Aging, Stigma, and Disgust"

Week 6, May 7<sup>th</sup>: *Why do we love some people and not others?*

Reading:

Neil Delaney, "Romantic Love and Loving Commitment"

Week 7, May 14<sup>th</sup>: *What's wrong with marriage?*

Reading:

Elizabeth Brake, "Divorce as Promise-Breaking"

Week 8, May 21<sup>st</sup>: *Does it matter how our life goes?*

Reading:

Tom Hurka, "Life's Ups and Downs"

Week 9, May 28<sup>th</sup> (Memorial day, class rescheduled): *Is it bad to die?*

Reading:

Thomas Nagel, "Death"

Week 10, June 4<sup>th</sup>: *Does it matter what happens after we die?*

Reading:

Samual Scheffler, "Afterlife"