

## Topics in Philosophy II A | PIU11013

Year	Junior Freshman
ECTS Credits	5
Contact Hours	22 hours (18 hours of lectures; 4 hours of tutorials)
Pre-requisite	None
Semester	1
Module Leader & Lecturer	Prof. Farbod Akhlaghi & Prof. Lilian Alweiss
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### Module Outline:

This module has two components and each explores a different topic in philosophy.

#### **Component 1: Transformative Experience**

Suppose you were considering becoming a parent, getting married, going to university, choosing a career, or emigrating to a new country. These and many other major life-decisions are typically *transformative choices*. Transformative choices and experiences change who we are and what we care about, and we may not be able to know what they would be like for us at our time of choosing. But, if so, how, for example, can you make a rational decision to become a parent, if doing so will change what you care about, and if you can only know what it would be like to do so once you do? And would it be wrong for a friend, family member, or romantic partner to try to stop you from making a transformative choice, like, say, getting married? Together, we will explore these and other challenging philosophical questions regarding transformative experience.

#### **Component 2: Death**

There is no doubt as soon ‘as we are born, we are old enough to die.’ Death is something that can occur at any moment. Yet while there is no way to deny this, the question I would like to explore in this course is what we are to make of that fact. We shall examine a number of issues that arise once we reflect on our mortality. Many see death as an evil that needs to be overcome. Either it is questioned whether death really points to an absolute end, or the argument is that the ultimate aim of life is to achieve immortality. The course will ask whether death is something we should try to overcome and indeed whether immortality is something desirable. We shall look at a selection of texts possibly – among others – the epic of Gilgamesh and texts by Epicurus, Plato, Nagel, Williams, Freud, Kierkegaard and Heidegger.



## Assessment:

Coursework: one essay (chosen from either Component One or Two): 50%

Examination: one exam question (chosen from the Component for which an essay was not submitted): 50%

## Recommended Reading List:

An extensive and detailed reading list will be made available at the start of the module. The following resources offer helpful preparatory reading:

### Component One:

- Chan, Rebecca. (2023). Transformative Experience. In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta.
- Paul, Laurie. (2014). *Transformative Experience*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ullmann-Margalit, Edna. (2006). Big Decisions: Opting, Converting, Drifting. *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplements* 58: 157–172.

### Component Two:

- Gilgamesh (2750BCE): a new English Version by Stephen Mitchell Profile Books 2004
- Plato: Phaedo
- Plato: The Trial and Death of Socrates