

Utah Authors: Margaret Battin, *The Ethics of Suicide: Historical Sources*

OSHER 892-001

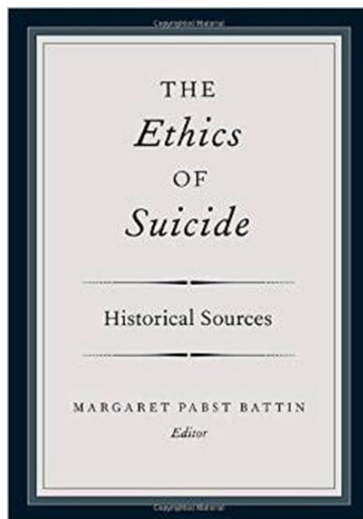
Dates: Monday, 4/11/2016

Times: 9:30AM- 11:30AM

Location: Jewish Community Center, 2 North Medical Drive, Salt Lake City

Instructor: Margaret Battin

Course Overview



Is suicide wrong, profoundly morally wrong? Almost always wrong, but excusable in a few cases? Sometimes morally permissible? Imprudent, but not wrong? Is it sick, a matter of mental illness? Is it a private matter or a largely social one? Could it sometimes be right, or a "noble duty," or even a fundamental human right? Whether it is called "suicide" or not, what role may a person play in the end of his or her own life? This collection of primary sources--the principal texts of ethical interest from major writers in western and nonwestern cultures, from the principal religious traditions, and from oral cultures where observer reports of traditional practices are available, spanning Europe, Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Oceania, the Arctic, and North and South America--facilitates exploration of many controversial practical issues: physician-assisted suicide or aid-in-dying; suicide in social or political protest; self-sacrifice and martyrdom; suicides of honor or loyalty; religious and ritual practices that lead to death, including sati or widow-burning, hara-kiri, and sallekhana, or fasting unto death; and suicide bombings, kamikaze missions, jihad, and other tactical and military suicides. This collection has no interest in taking

sides in controversies about the ethics of suicide; rather, rather, it serves to expand the character of these debates, by showing them to be multi-dimensional, a complex and vital part of human ethical thought.



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Margaret Pabst Battin has established a reputation as one of the top philosophers working in bioethics today. A Distinguished Professor of Philosophy and Adjunct Professor of Internal Medicine, Division of Medical Ethics, at the University of Utah, she has authored, edited, or co-edited some twenty books. Battin's collection covers a remarkably wide range of topics and the fast-moving developments in end-of-life issues. An international leader in the death-with-dignity movement, she has written 'wheelbarrows full' about the right to death for terminally ill and seriously injured people. When her husband Brooke Hopkins broke his neck in a cycling accident and became almost completely paralyzed, she had to face her ideas about a person's right to die in a devastatingly personal way. Battin still supports the right to choose when and how we die, but her experiences with her husband have shown her that each individual case is rife with diverse and conflicting issues: issues about which she continues to lecture and write.

Biography

Education

- BA 1963, Philosophy, Bryn Mawr College
- MFA 1973, Fiction Writing, University of California, Irvine. Project: The Astonishing Possibilities of Love
- PhD 1976, Philosophy, University of California, Irvine. Project: Plato on Truth and Truthlessness in Poetry

Honors & Awards

- University Professorship. University of Utah, 06/2007
- Distinguished Honors Professorship. University of Utah, 06/2002
- Rosenblatt Prize. University of Utah, 06/2000
- Distinguished Research Award. University of Utah, 06/1997

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- Spinoza Chair. University of Amsterdam Academic Medical Center, 03/1993
- First Prize for Book-length Collection of Short Stories. Utah Arts Council, 01/1981
- Fellowship for Independent Study and Research. National Endowment for the Humanities , 07/1977

Affiliations

- The Ethox Center, Dept. Public Health, Oxford Univ., Fellow, 01/2010 - present
- European Society for Philosophy of Medicine and Health Care (ESPMH), Board, 2008-,
- The Hastings Center, Fellow, 01/2008 - present
- International Association for Suicide Research (IASR), Ethics Committee, 01/2002 - International Association for Bioethics (IAB), Board, 1997-2005,
- American Society for Bioethics and Humanities (ASBH), Board 93-96
- American Association of Suicidology (AAS), Board of Directors; Chair Ethics Committee 92-95
- American Philosophical Association (APA), Pacific Division Program Chair, 87 and Exec Cte. 94-97. Cte. Phil. and Medicine; Cte. Intl Cooperat,
- American Society for Aesthetics (ASA), President, Pacific Division, 85-86

In the Media

- Robin Marantz Henig, The New York Times 6th Floor Blog, "Choosing to Die After a Struggle with Life." . 08/21/2013. <http://6thfloor.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/08/21/choos... - opens new window>
- NPR Fresh Air, interview with Terri Gross, "For Bioethicist with Ailing Spouse, End-of-Life Issues Hit Home" . 07/25/2013. <http://www.npr.org/2013/07/25/205455599/for-bioeth... - opens new window>
- Interview with John Hockenberry, WNYC national morning radio news program "The Takeaway" . 07/23/2013. <http://www.thetakeaway.org/2013/jul/23/challenges-... - opens new window>
- Margaret Cheatham Williams, video for New York Times Magazine, "A Right to Die, A Will to Live". 07/21/2013. <http://nyti.ms/1as1gAe - opens new window>
- Robin Marantz Henig, A Life or Death Situation," The New York Times Magazine . 07/21/2013. <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/21/magazine/a-life-... - opens new window>

TEDMED, "A contemporary death." TEDMED, stage presentation September 2014.
<http://www.tedmed.com/speakers/show?id=308908>
www.youtube.com/watch?v=UtkHnUeNEp4

Languages

- Ancient Greek (to 1453); Latin. Both very rusty.
- French, basic. rusty. Spanish, basic. Rusty.
- German, fairly fluent.



- Latin, basic. very rusty.
- Spanish, functional.

Geographical Regions of Interest

- Netherlands. Extensive research over many years on physician-assisted suicide and voluntary euthanasia in the Netherlands.