We all work, play, eat, have sex, love, get sick, get older, and die. And we all make choices about all of these things. (Although we unfortunately do not choose whether we will die, we can make choices about how to live with the knowledge that we will die, and how to assess our lives in light of the fact that they will end.)

In this course, we will think philosophically about a handful of questions raised by these topics. Is there anything wrong with chemically enhancing ourselves to excel at sports or school? Why is participation in sports valuable, anyway? Should we be vegetarians? Are there any sexual practices that are perverted or immoral—even though they take place between consenting adults? What, if anything, is wrong with selling sex? Should we fear death? Why? How can death be bad for us, since we’re no longer around once we’re dead? And can we say anything substantive about the point of it all? That is… what is the meaning of life?

Teaching Assistant
David Zettel  dwz8@cornell.edu  Office Hours: Tues 12:30-2:30 in Goldwin Smith 344

Required Texts
• Coursepack
• Havi Carel, Illness
• E.D. Klemke and Steven M. Cahn, eds., The Meaning of Life: A Reader

All three texts are available at the Cornell Store. The Carel and Klemke books are also on reserve at Uris.

Further Resources
• The best online resource, by far, is the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: http://plato.stanford.edu
• The Cornell Library maintains a list of both online and print philosophy resources here: http://www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/phil.html

Evaluation
• Papers: 85%
  You will write three 5-7 page papers for this course. The first will be written in two drafts, and worth 25%. The other two will be worth 30% each. All papers must be typed, double spaced, with reasonable font size and margins. I will provide more details on what I expect later on.
• Homework and Participation: 15%
  A brief homework assignment will be assigned most Wednesdays, and will be due on the next Thursday evening at 8 PM (yes, the next day). You’ll turn these in via Blackboard. They won’t be graded, just checked off—your homework grade will be based on the percentage of assignments you have completed. Your participation grade will be determined by the extent to which you are actively engaged in the course: attendance, contributions to class discussions, and individual meetings all count.
Policy Notes
1. Homework cannot be made up.
2. Extensions will be readily granted on papers as long as you talk to your TA in advance. If you do not make arrangements beforehand, late papers will be downgraded by 1/3 letter grade per day.
3. To pass this class, you must write all three papers.
4. Each student in this course is expected to abide by the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity. Any work submitted for academic credit must be the student's own work, and all references must be properly cited.

Tentative Schedule of Readings
Abbreviations:
CP = Coursepack
IL = Illness (Carel)
ML = The Meaning of Life: A Reader (ed. Klemke and Cahn)

Introduction
8/31 no reading assigned

1. Choices about leisure time: sports and pharmaceutical enhancement
9/2 U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, “Anabolic steroids: A dangerous and illegal way to seek athletic dominance and better appearance,” CP
   National Institute on Drug Abuse, “Steroids (Anabolic-Androgenic),” CP
   Noë, “A-Rod Isn’t a Cheater,” CP
   Hyland, selection from Philosophy of Sport, CP
9/7 Mill, from On Liberty, CP
9/9 Talbot, “Brain Gain,” CP
9/14 McGinn, “Athletic Investigations,” from Sport, CP

2. Choices about love and sex
9/16 Nagel, “Sexual Perversion,” CP
9/21 Priest, “Sexual Perversion,” CP
   Levinson, “Sexual Perversity,” CP
9/23 Nussbaum, “Whether From Reason or Prejudice: Taking Money for Bodily Services,” CP
9/28 Paper #1 draft due
   Satz, “Markets in Women’s Sexual Labor,” CP

3. Choices about what we eat
9/30 Singer, “All Animals are Equal,” CP
10/5 Paper #1 drafts returned
10/7 Scruton, “The Conscientious Carnivore,” CP
   Scruton, “The Carnivore’s Credo,” CP

Fall Break
10/14  **Paper #1 final version due**  
Hare, “Why I am Only a Demi-Vegetarian,” CP  
Pollan, “The Ethics of Eating Animals,” from *The Omnivore’s Dilemma*, CP  
10/21  Continued and catch-up

4. **That which is not chosen: illness, aging, and death**  
10/26  de Beauvoir, from *A Very Easy Death*, CP  
Epicurus, “Letter to Menoeceus”, CP  
Lucretius, selection from Book 3 of *On the Nature of Things*, CP.  
10/28  Nagel, “Death,” CP  
11/2  **no class**  
11/4  McMahan, “Death and the Value of Life” (selection), CP  
11/9  **Paper #2 due**  
Carel, Introduction and chapters 4 and 5 of *Illness* (“Fearing Death” and “Living in the Present”), IL  

5. **The meaning of life**  
11/16  Tolstoy, “My Confession,” ML 7-16  
Cahn, “Meaningless Lives?” ML 236-238  
Taylor, “The Meaning of Life,” ML 134-142  
11/25  **no class** (Thanksgiving)  
11/30  Nagel, “The Absurd,” ML 143-152  
12/2  continued and wrap-up

**Paper #3 due at 4:30 PM December 11** (the end of the official final exam slot for the course)