

12-15 March, 2024

Nijmegen, the Netherlands

**Keynote speaker:**

**Professor dr. Vikki Entwistle**

**University of Aberdeen, Scotland**

**Advanced European Bioethics Course**

**SUFFERING, DEATH & PALLIATIVE CARE**

**Ethical Issues of Medically Assisted Death and Palliative Care in a Pluralistic World**

**INTRODUCTION**

New developments in health care strengthen the promise of a better life for everyone. This process also influences the way societies deal with the end of life and with questions regarding the meaning of suffering and death.

International debates often centre around the question whether medically hastening death is a proper means to preserve human dignity and quality of life. The other side of this issue is palliative care, defined by the WHO as the active total care of patients whose disease is not responsive to curative treatment. The suggestion that adequate palliative care helps prevent the cry for euthanasia and assisted dying, needs careful investigation.

Questions raised by these developments require thorough conceptual interpretation as well as ethical reflection. Objective of this course is to educate the participants on two main aspects: ethical questions of palliative care and medically assisted death, and philosophical, theological and medical reflections on the concepts of death and suffering. Attitudes towards death and dying, and the ethical aspects of continuing or foregoing medical treatment, and of medically assisted death receive considerable attention in this course. In addition, the dimensions of spirituality, rituals and intercultural diversity are covered.

**SUBJECTS AND METHODS**

The course consists of a series of lectures, discussions, parallel sessions and audiovisual materials centred around a variety of topics:

autonomy and dependence; palliative sedation and euthanasia; spirituality and palliative care; quality of life and a good death; scientific research in palliative care; moral deliberation.

The parallel sessions are devoted to in-depth small group discussions and moral deliberation on different real life cases and particular, contemporary issues in the area of end-of-life decisions. Each group will consist of ten to fifteen participants, led by a faculty member.

The course management strives for a diverse group of participants, with a large diversity in professional and cultural background.

This diversity among both faculty and participants stimulates fruitful exchange of ideas and enhances understanding of others' professional and cultural perspectives on suffering, death and palliative care. The course language is English.

Prior to the course participants will receive a syllabus with introductory readings. Since the programme schedule is strict, participants are advised to study these materials in advance.

**COURSE COORDINATOR: Gert Olthuis PhD**

Gert Olthuis is associate professor of medical humanities at the Radboudumc. He wrote his PhD-thesis 'Who cares' on the moral attitude of professionals in palliative care practice. He is a university lecturer and researcher on various topics, including informal carers and end-of-life decision making.

**CONTACT INFORMATION and REGISTRATION**

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Please go to [Information](#) and the [registration form](#), for all information regarding this course.

The **keynote lecture** will be held by a renowned researcher in the broad field of end-of-life research. **This year's keynote speaker is prof. dr. Vikki Entwistle**, professor of Health Services Research (Institute of Applied Health Sciences) and Philosophy (School of Divinity, History, Philosophy & Art History) at the University of Aberdeen, Scotland. Prof. Entwistle uses social research and practical philosophy to help understand what matters for 'good' public health, healthcare and care of the dead and bereaved, and to consider how policy and practice should be developed in those domains.

**Tuesday afternoon 12 March 2024**

*Please note: the course starts at 13.00 hrs*

Introduction into palliative care, Kris Vissers

Fear of death, Enny Das

Keynote lecture, Vikki Entwistle

**Wednesday 13 March 2024**

Autonomy and Dependence, Gert Olthuis

Parallel session: Autonomy and beneficence in terminal illness

Cultural issues in death and dying, Natashe Lemos Dekker

What about suffering, Jelle van Gorp

Workshop: Art and Suffering

Documentary: 'Choosing to Die'

**Thursday 14 March 2024**

Physician assisted dying, Marianne Dees

Euthanasia in the Netherlands, Theo Boer

Palliative sedation: ethical issues, Evelien Kuip, Maaïke van der Lee-Rijpstra & Gert Olthuis

Parallel sessions: case discussion using the

Nijmegen method of moral deliberation

**Friday 15 March 2024**

Spiritual care at the end of life, Mustafa Bulut

Introduction to rituals regarding death and suffering, Joanna Wojtkowiak

*Please note: the course finishes at 14.00 hrs*

**PARTICIPANTS**

Previous participants for this course came from diverse professional backgrounds, such as nursing, medicine, health care administration, ethics, philosophy, theology and pastoral care, and PhD students in these areas.

At the conclusion of the course participants will receive a certificate. Participants are reminded that they may be eligible for continuing education credits from their professional association. Accreditation from the Dutch Medical Association (KNMG) and the Dutch register for Pastoral Carers (SKGV) will be applied for. Please contact the program coordinators for further details or if you have any questions regarding this issue.

**COURSE FEES and PAYMENTS**

The course fee is € (Euro) 790. There is an early bird discount of € 100 for registration before 6 January 2024. This price includes tuition and course materials, as well as refreshments, three lunches and one dinner.

Please note: the course will be organized in accordance with the [Dutch measures against COVID-19](#). Please read our terms and conditions before registering for the course.

- **Theo Boer PhD**, professor of medical ethics, Protestant Theological University Groningen
- **Mustafa Bulut MA**, spiritual caregiver (Islamic), Elisabeth Tweesteden Ziekenhuis Tilburg
- **Enny Das PhD**, professor of communication and persuasion, Radboud University Nijmegen
- **Marianne Dees PhD**, general physician, post-doctoral researcher, Radboudumc Nijmegen
- **Jelle van Gorp PhD**, assistant professor clinical bioethics, Radboudumc Nijmegen
- **Evelien Kuip MD, PhD**, oncologist and internist, Radboudumc Nijmegen
- **Maaïke van der Lee-Rijpstra MD**, PhD candidate, dept. of Anesthesiology, Radboudumc Nijmegen
- **Natashe Lemos Dekker PhD**, anthropologist, Institute of Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology, Leiden University
- **Gert Olthuis PhD**, associate professor medical humanities, Radboudumc Nijmegen
- **Kris Vissers MD, PhD**, professor in pain and palliative care, Radboudumc Nijmegen
- **Joanna Wojtkowiak PhD**, assistant professor, Department of Humanist Chaplaincy Studies, University of Humanistic Studies Utrecht