

Engaging the Contemporary 2026: Experiences of Life and Death

Conference Programme

Wednesday 18 November		
9.00-9.15	Convener's Welcome Address Claude Mangion, Head of Department Niki Young, Lecturer	
9.15-10.30	Keynote Speech Keith Crome Manchester Metropolitan University	
10.30-11.00	Coffee Break	
11.00-12.30	Panel 1 Chair: Enrico Schiró	Panel 2 Chair: Keith Pisani
	Sahand Ashrafiyan Bonab <i>Illness, Finitude and the Resilience of the Body</i>	Matthew Barnard <i>Is Artificial Intelligence an Artificial life?</i>
	Nga Chun Josh Law <i>Habit in Later Life Repetition without Stagnation in Beauvoir's Old Age</i>	David Deamer <i>Nietzsche's 'Comedy of Existence' and Monty Python's The Meaning of Life</i>
	Kathryn Ruthven Body <i>Risky bodies: Resilience amongst extremely clinically vulnerable (CEV) populations during the COVID-19 pandemic</i>	Dalia Staponkutė <i>Quoted Lives, Living Deaths: Under the Star of Malta—the Afterlife of Plot in Marina Tsvetaeva</i>
12.30-14.30	Lunch	
14.30-16.00	Panel 1 Chair: David Roden	Panel 2 Chair: Claude Mangion
	Minvydas Simanaitis <i>"And to Eat a Fruit is to Know its Meaning": Death as Formal Indication</i>	Stacey Mitchell <i>Our Interconnected Ecological Existence, and Reflections on the Approaches of Eco-chaplaincy and Eco-ontology</i>
	Kalin Pak <i>The Ontology of Care in Eco-Death Practices</i>	Sophie Ingle <i>Two Halves of a Walnut: Benjamin, Hegel, Death and the Living Aftermath of Tragedy in Hamnet</i>

	Adam Buben <i>The Personhood of the Digital Dead: Postmortem Human Trafficking and Prostitution Regulation</i>	Susana Viegas <i>Genre After Death: Testament-Films</i>
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Thursday 19 November		
9.00-10.30	Panel 1 Chair: Enrico Schiró	Panel 2 Chair: Keith Pisani
	Artur R. Boelderl <i>"There Must Be More to Life Than ... Life?" Ricœur, Derrida, and Bataille on Life and Death</i>	Adrian Camilleri Chiaro <i>The Copycat Defence. Rethinking AI art</i>
	David Vella <i>The Neoliberal Self In Ruins: Surrender and the Phenomenology of Exhaustion</i>	Kurt Zammit <i>Dying for the Highest Good</i>
	Martina Volarevic <i>Dasein's Listening to Death</i>	Francesco Frendo <i>Death, The Symbolic, and Death's Symbolic</i>
10.30-11.00	Coffee Break	
11-13.00	Panel 1 Chair: Dalia Staponkutė	Panel 2 Chair: Niki Young
	Daniel Guy Baldwin <i>I Have No Mouth, and I Must Scream: The Prudential Case for Euthanasia, Assisted Dying, and Suicide</i>	Jesse Germans <i>Mourning Animals</i>
	Kristina Simanaitė <i>The Spectrum of Death in Psychosis: Phenomenological Approach</i>	Urška Jenčič <i>Fictions of Liveness: Taxidermy, Objectification, and the Politics of Representing Animals</i>
	Nana Kawamura <i>Resisting Suicidism: Through the Communication of Lived Experience</i>	Amanda Rosa Pérez Morales <i>Virophilia: Disease as Excess of Life in BioArt</i>
	Natasha Galea <i>Dying Before Death: Simone de Beauvoir and the Social Death of Ageing</i>	Emily Cogburn <i>Ecofeminist ontology: Val Plumwood, Graham Harman, and an Object Oriented Ontology Understanding of Humans and Nature</i>
13.00-14.30	Lunch	

14.30-16.00	Panel 1 Chair: David Roden	Panel 2 Chair: Adrian Camilleri Chiaro
	Niki Young <i>Against Thanatocentrism: Alphonso Lingis and the Excess of Life</i>	Junko Matsuzaki Carreira <i>Material Culture and Cross-Cultural Encounter in Nanban Japan: Rethinking Life and Death through Ceramics and Tea Practices</i>
	Julie Reshe <i>Being-With-Towards-Death: Pregnancy and the Death Drive</i>	Ahmet Uruk <i>Overlapping of Life and Death as the Technological Uncanny: Posthuman Gothic in Don DeLillo's The Body Artist</i>
	Drew M. Dalton <i>The Light of the Living Dead: A Biophysical Critique of Heidegger's Phenomenology</i>	Mark Fedyk <i>Dying, Caring, and Intentionality</i>

Friday 20 November		
9.00-10.30	Panel 1 Chair: Ana Ilievska	Panel 2 Chair: Amanda Rosa Pérez Morales
	Irene Olivero <i>Artificial Wombs and Digital Afterlives: Ethically Controversial Artifacts and the Future of the Human</i>	Stefano Oliva <i>Decreation and the Death Drive: Insights from Artistic Practice</i>
	Olivia Barbaro <i>Reconsidering Death: Griefbots and the Extension of Life</i>	Stefano Pavarini <i>Heidegger, Benjamin and the Meaning of Death</i>
	Nataliya Atanasova <i>No Body to Mourn: The Poor Image and its Afterlives</i>	Giovanni Temporin <i>The Irrelevance of Our Fate: Future and Immanence in Contemporary Materialism</i>
10.30-11.00	Coffee Break	
11-13.00	Panel 1 Chair: Enrico Schiró	Panel 2 Chair: Niki Young
	Katarzyna Gurczyńska-Sady <i>Speaking to the Dead: Dialogue Beyond Presence</i>	David Roden <i>Xenopoetics and the Necroconcept</i>
	Hakan Atay <i>Lives, All Lives: A Literary-Metaphysical Inquiry</i>	Ana Ilievska <i>Kill Bill: Documentality, Deletion, and the Body as Last Document</i>

	Julian Galea <i>The Ontological Insecurity of Remission - Narrative Conflicts Between Winning and Watchfulness</i>	Martin E. Rosenberg <i>Zen Paradox, Contradiction, and Arakawa and Gins' Making Dying Illegal (2006)</i>
	Michael Cholbi <i>Grieving Our Own Deaths</i>	Marleen van Haalen <i>Inner sense of gender: an ontological account of gender identity oppression</i>
13.00-15.00	Lunch	
15.00-16.30	Panel 1 Chair: Martin E. Rosenberg	Panel 2 Chair: Emily Cogburn
	Kiki Berk <i>Why Extinction Threatens Present Meaning</i>	Christian J. Feldbacher-Escamilla <i>Bringing Forgotten Dead Back to Life. Death, continuity, and historical mediation</i>
	Luke Joseph Buhagiar & Matthew Pulis <i>Game Over? Meaning(s) of Life at the End of Life</i>	Luciana Taddei & Antonio Albanese <i>After Prometheus: Algorithmic Power, Residual Life, and the Fate of the Human</i>
	Helen Upfield <i>Choreographies of Everyday Living: Quotidian Belongings in the Workplace</i>	Angela Bonett <i>On the Borders of Death</i>
16.30-16.45	Concluding Remarks Claude Mangion, Head of Department, University of Malta	