

AMA Announcement: Thursday 1/25 1PM EST - Michael Cholbi on ethical theory, Kant and the philosophy of death and dying

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April 17, 2023

Abstract

The mods of /r/philosophy are pleased to announce an upcoming AMA by Michael Cholbi, Professor of Philosophy and Director, California Center for Ethics and Policy, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. This AMA is the second in our Spring 2018 AMA Series; you can find more details on all of this semester's AMAs with philosophers by going to the AMA Hub Post. You can find all of our previous AMAs over the years by going to the AMA wiki. Professor Cholbi will be joining us on Thursday January 25th at 1PM ET to discuss issues in ethical theory, moral psychology, practical ethics, Kant and the philosophy of death and dying. Hear it from him: Michael Cholbi I'm Professor of Philosophy at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. I work and publish in a number of area of ethics, including ethical theory, moral psychology, practical ethics, and the history of moral philosophy. Much (though not all) of my work has a Kantian flavor – but do note I'm willing to take Kant and Kantians to task when need be! (For a good overview of my work on Kant's ethics, check out my book *Understanding Kant's Ethics*). Here are some more specifics about my research: I'm perhaps best known for my work on philosophy of death and dying, including my work on suicide and grief. With respect to suicide, my views are complicated: I argue that most acts of suicide violate our Kantian duty to preserve our rational agency, but precisely because this is a self-regarding duty or duty to self, then at a social level, individuals have an autonomy-based right to shorten their lives, consistent with their moral obligations to others; that medically assisted dying is not contrary to the moral norms of medicine and that the medical profession should not monopolize access to desirable ways of shortening our lives; that, all other things being equal, mental health problems provide equally strong justifications for suicide as do 'physical' ailments, etc.; and that non-invasive public health measures to prevent suicide are typically defensible. Grief is an understudied phenomenon among philosophers. Much of my work here is concerned with understanding how grief can makes our lives better — why we wouldn't find it desirable to be unable to grieve, like Meursault in Camus' *The Stranger* — despite the fact that it involves pain or mental distress. In the book I'm writing, I propose that grief represents an especially fruitful opportunity to know ourselves and understand our own commitments and values more deeply. In other areas of social ethics, I write on paternalism, defending what I call the 'rational will' conception of paternalism, wherein paternalism is wrong because it intercedes in our powers of rational agency in various ways; on race and criminal justice, where I argue (in a forthcoming paper in *Ethics*) that racial bias in the administration of the death penalty in the U.S. merits its de facto abolition; and on the philosophy of work and labor, a new area of research where I'm exploring universal basic income and notions of meaningful work. As you can tell, my work is very diverse, both topically and methodologically. I try to integrate empirical work from economics, legal studies, and psychiatry into my research where appropriate. I look forward to discussing any and all of my work with the reddit audience! Links of Interest: My Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy article on suicide My review of Fischer and Mitchell-Yellin's book on near death experiences A piece on grief in *Four By Three* A blog post on paternalism from LSE's The Forum AMA Please feel free to post questions for Professor Cholbi here. He will look at this thread before he starts and begin with some questions from here while the initial questions in the new thread come in. Please join me in welcoming Professor Michael Cholbi to our community!

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BERNARDJORTCUTT [R/SCIENCE](#)

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AMA

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