

Graduate School of Humanities
and Social Sciences

PUBLIC GUEST LECTURE

Suffering and Meaning in Life.

Prof. Michael Brady, University of Glasgow



WEDNESDAY, MAY 13TH, 2020, 6.15 P.M.

UNIVERSITY OF LUCERNE, ROMM 3.A05

Short CV

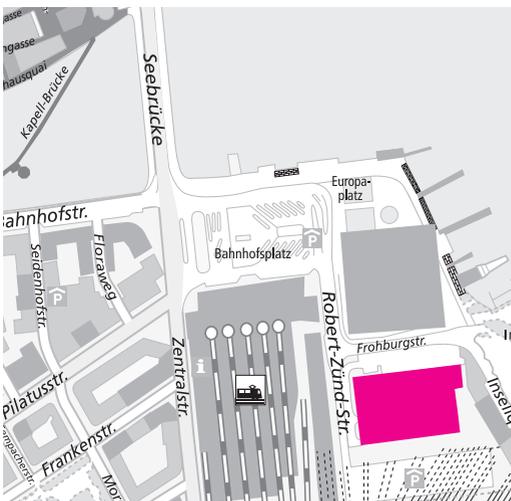


Michael S. Brady is Professor of Philosophy and Head of the School of Humanities at the University of Glasgow. His research centres on the philosophy of emotion, and its links with moral philosophy and epistemology. He is the author of three books: *Emotional Insight* (Oxford University Press, 2013); *Suffering and Virtue* (Oxford University Press, 2018); and *Emotion: The Basics* (Routledge, 2018), and the editor of four volumes. He was Director of the British Philosophical Association, having previously served as Secretary of the Scots

Philosophical Association. Outside of academia, he is philosopher-in-residence with the Manchester-based theatre and performance company Quarantine..

Abstract Talk

It seems clear that suffering threatens to undermine or even destroy the meaning in a person's life: think of the effects of chronic pain, poverty, violence, political oppression. These and similar things can rule out the presence of those elements that are constitutive of a meaningful life – as Thaddeus Metz puts it, these include “intellectual reflection, moral achievement, and artistic creation”. (*Meaning in Life*, p. 60) In his talk, Michael Brady wants to consider a number of ways in which suffering can have a positive relation to meaning, even for those who suffer greatly. One of the central ways in which this can happen is through the development of empathy, moral emotions, and moral achievement. To make this argument, he'll first look at historical approaches, focusing on the thoughts of Nietzsche, alongside St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Augustine, and Aristotle. He'll then consider religious approaches, and their secular counterparts. His conclusion will be that far from undermining meaning, in many cases suffering is vital to it.



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