

# HOW TO THINK ABOUT OLD AGE

Sponsored by the Department of History & Philosophy



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Philosophers have not written a great deal about old age, but it's an important topic. How we think about aging concerns us personally, if old age lies ahead of us. Our understanding of old age also matters to the extent that we interact with or care for elderly parents or otherwise play a role in the lives of elderly people. How we think about the lives of old people affects decisions we must make about ourselves and others, and emotions we're bound to have about aging. Though old age has had its defenders and its detractors, the philosophical literature is strikingly scant on the question how, in the most basic sense, we should think about how life goes for the very old. Should we approach the question with general norms – the same account of wellbeing that we would apply to people at any other stage of life? Or do we need stage-adjusted norms for thinking about old age and perhaps for thinking about childhood as well? I'll spend most of this talk arguing that we need stage-adjusted norms and exploring what appropriate norms would look like. I'll end by addressing the debate between old age's defenders and detractors and asking whether our lives would go better as a whole if we could skip old age, though without living shorter lives.

**THURSDAY, APRIL 8, 2021**

**5:00 – 6:30pm (ET)**

**ZOOM:**

**<https://emich.zoom.us/j/81641464961>**