

# The Oxford Handbook of MEANING IN LIFE

- Presents the first handbook and scholarly companion to meaning in life
- Discusses a very wide array of topics in meaning in life research, some of which have never been discussed in the philosophical literature until this point
- Explores, among numerous other topics, meaning in life and achievement, forgiveness, gratitude, death, suicide, suffering, religion, psychology, and neuroscience

## *Contributors*

Lucy Allais, Nomy Arpaly, Roy F. Baumeister, David Benatar,  
Guy Bennett-Hunter, Gwen Bradford, Michael S. Brady,  
Stephen M. Campbell, Michael Cholbi, John Cottingham, John Danaher,  
Doret de Ruyter, Alan H. Goldman, P. M. S. Hacker, Jens Johansson,  
Guy Kahane, Antti Kauppinen, Iddo Landau, Steven Luper, Tony Manela,  
Ned Markosian, T. J. Mawson, Todd May, Katie McShane, Thaddeus Metz,  
Sven Nyholm, Derk Pereboom, Marya Schechtman, Anders Schinkel,  
Saul Smilansky, Galen Strawson, Frans Svensson, Paul Thagard,  
Rivka Weinberg, Erik J. Wielenberg

A topic of universal concern, the philosophy of meaning in life has roots in spiritual and religious movements in almost all cultures. Many of the issues dealt with in these movements, such as human vocation, our relation to what is "greater" than us, and our encounters with suffering and with death, are also discussed (even if in a different manner) in the philosophy of meaning in life. However, only recently has the topic received elaborate discussion within analytic philosophy, becoming a thriving field of research.

This volume presents thirty-two chapters by leading authorities in their respective subfields on a wide array of subjects in meaning in life research. Part I focuses on ways of conceptualizing life's meaning. Part II presents opposing views on whether neuroscience sheds light on life's meaning, inquires whether determinism must render life meaningless, and explores the relation between time, personal identity, and meaning in life. Part III considers life's meaning from both atheist and theist perspectives, and examines the relation between meaningfulness, mysticism, and transcendence. Part IV examines (among other issues) whether meaningful lives must be moral, how important forgiveness is for meaning, the implications of life's meaningfulness or meaninglessness for procreation ethics, and whether animals can have meaningful lives. Part V compares philosophical and psychological research on life's meaning, explores the experience of meaningfulness, and discusses the relation between meaningfulness and desire, love, and gratitude. Finally, the book elaborates on meaning in life and topics such as suicide, suffering, education, optimism, and pessimism.

*Oxford Handbooks* offer authoritative and up-to-date surveys of original research in a particular subject area. Specially commissioned essays from leading figures in the discipline give critical examinations of the progress and direction of debates, as well as a foundation for future research. *Oxford Handbooks* provide scholars and graduate students with compelling new perspectives upon a wide range of subjects in the humanities, social sciences, and sciences.

For a full list of our current and forthcoming Oxford Handbooks, please visit [www.oup.com](http://www.oup.com)

**Iddo Landau** is a Professor of Philosophy at the University of Haifa, Israel. He has published extensively on meaning in life, and is the author of *Finding Meaning in an Imperfect World* (Oxford University Press, 2017).