

CU Denver Philosophy Department

2020 SPRING COURSE LISTINGS

Legend

Fulfills Program Requirements

-  Philosophy Major
-  Ethics Minor
-  Philosophy Minor
-  Certificate in Ethics
-  Philosophy of Science

PHIL 1012- Introduction to Philosophy: Relationship of the Individual to the World

Section 001

MW 9:30 AM - 10:45 AM

D. Mehring

This introductory course will examine the position of five major philosophers (Plato, Epicurus, the Stoics, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche) on perennial philosophical conundrums (What is the good life? Is there life after bodily death?) in a manner that is both understandable and relevant. In addition to reading the philosophers' writings, we will read Alain de Botton's *The Consolations of Philosophy*.

Section 002

TuTh 9:30 AM - 10:45 AM

B. Lisle

This course explores some of the key figures and texts in the history of Western civilization. We will learn how to interpret and analyze central claims and arguments made by these key figures, so that each student will develop a general understanding of this particular history of ideas. The main topics we will cover include: (1) a broad inquiry into the nature of the human condition, (2) the inquiry into the nature of knowledge as it may be distinguished from mere opinion, and (3) the basic metaphysical question, "what is the nature of reality?" We begin our semester with an examination of key texts in the tradition of the Ancient Greeks and then work our way toward some of the more well-known philosophical projects of the last four centuries. We will discuss such fundamental questions as: how do we come to know the underlying causes of experience? What is the nature of reality as it exists independently of our partial perspectives? What is the structure and function of language, and to what degree does that structure determine thought? On what evidence can we base our most cherished beliefs about the world, ourselves, God, nature, justice, virtue, beauty and truth?

Section 003

MW 12:30 PM - 1:45 PM

B. Lisle

This course explores some of the key figures and texts in the history of Western civilization. We will learn how to interpret and analyze central claims and arguments made by these key figures, so that each student will develop a general understanding of this particular history of ideas. The main topics we will cover include: (1) a broad inquiry into the nature of the human condition, (2) the inquiry into the nature of knowledge as it may be distinguished from mere opinion, and (3) the basic metaphysical question, "what is the nature of reality?" We begin our semester with an examination of key texts in the tradition of the Ancient Greeks and then work our way toward some of the more well-known philosophical projects of the last four centuries. We will discuss such fundamental questions as: how do we come to know the underlying causes of experience? What is the nature of reality as it exists independently of our partial perspectives? What is the structure and function of language, and to what degree does that structure determine thought? On what evidence can we base our most cherished beliefs about the world, ourselves, God, nature, justice, virtue, beauty and truth?

Section 004

TuTh 2:00 PM - 3:15 PM

M. Tanzer

This course will examine fundamental philosophical issues, primarily, although not exclusively, in the theory of knowledge and in ethics. The first half of the course, focusing on the theory of knowledge, will examine the thought of Plato and of David Hume; while the second half of the course, focusing on ethics, will look at the ethical theories of John Stuart Mill and of Immanuel Kant. This section of the course will also look at how the ethical theories of Mill and Kant have been applied to the problem of animal rights, by Peter Singer and Tom Regan.

Section 005

TuTh 12:30 PM - 1:45 PM

G. Zamosc

Introduction to Philosophy: Relationship of the Individual to the World. Introductory course in philosophy that focuses on some of the central questions of philosophy, including theories of reality and the nature of knowledge and its limits. The knowledge of these areas is essential to the student for informed participation in the resolution of contemporary problems in today's society.

Section E01**Online****D. Mehring**

This introductory course will examine the position of five major philosophers (Plato, Epicurus, the Stoics, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche) on perennial philosophical conundrums (What is the good life? Is there life after bodily death?) In a manner that is both understandable and relevant. In addition to reading the philosophers' writings, we will read Alain de Botton's *The Consolations of Philosophy*.

PHIL 1020- Introduction to Ethical Reasoning**Section 001****MW 11:00 AM - 12:15 PM****D. Mehring**

In this course we will examine the major ethical theories that Philosophers have proposed for answering moral dilemmas: Ethical Egoism, Utilitarianism, Deontology, Stoicism, Feminist Ethics, and Virtue Ethics. But since, "Theory without practice is empty," we will consider how these different theories are applied in real-life situations. Questions of honesty are regarded as of the utmost ethical importance. Yet, virtually none of us have been taught how to tell the truth "at the right time, in the right place, in the right way, for the right reason, to the right person." Clearly, How one tells the truth as important as What the truth is. This course will consider the important questions of how to be a responsible truth-teller—and when to depart from the truth. We will examine such questions as when it is permissible (even necessary) to "slant" the truth? Under what conditions we need to (in the words of Mark Twain) "learn how to lie healingly and well." In addition, each student will construct their own personal Code of Ethics or Mission Statement.

Section 002**MW 3:30 PM - 4:45 PM****B. Lisle**

In this course we will examine specific ethical issues from a select set of philosophical perspectives. We will start by reading and discussing some of the more well-known ethical theories in Western philosophy. Then we'll investigate specific ethical issues through the perspectives offered by these theories. We will survey key concepts and issues such as individual and group rights, political and interpersonal oppression, animal rights, abortion, euthanasia (or "mercy killing"), war, poverty, environmental degradation, self-deception, gender identity, and the general question regarding one's moral obligation(s) to family, and to country or community, and perhaps to future generations.

Section 003**MW 5:00 PM - 6:15 PM****A. Yost**

What should I be doing with my life? What kind of person should I be? Which is better: justice or mercy? Does it matter whether what I do is right or wrong, or should I just focus on getting a job? These are ethical questions, and they are good ones. They're the kind of questions we ask ourselves everyday, whether implicitly or explicitly, and the answers we come up with shape to our lives and give us meaning. In this course we'll take a deep look at what it means to live "The Good Life." We'll explore answers through art, film, literature, poetry, music, and above all, discussion. We'll cover some core philosophical ideas (like what it means to seek "the greatest good for the greatest number" or whether or it's okay to lie) and examine how other, fundamentally important human experiences also raise ethical concerns, like love, science, beauty, and religion. We'll stay grounded along the way and pay attention to how ethical theories hook up with practical living. Warning: this course is not for wallflowers. We'll have a lot of conversation. We'll be doing philosophy, not just studying it

Section 004**TuTh 12:30 PM - 1:45 PM****D. Hildebrand**

All who live in this world must choose what to do. Yet to live in the world we must live with people. When we make choices involving people we are engaged in ethical activity. Ethical debates arise from those situations where there is disagreement about: 1) how we should treat others and 2) the reasons (or arguments) for treating them in one-way rather than another. This course will examine specific ethical theories as they become relevant within issues we face everyday. Such issues may include abortion, environmental justice and the moral standing of animals, consumerism, and dilemmas posed by new technologies, such as smart phones. Whatever the issue, though, our goal is the same: to gain a better understanding by reading, thinking, and talking carefully and critically.

Section 005**TuTh 2:00 PM - 3:15 PM****S. Walker**

The purpose of this course is to provide the student with useful tools for solving ethical problems. We will investigate major positions from the philosophic tradition of ethics from Plato to Sartre. We will work toward the understanding of moral terminology and the development of moral reasoning through the examination of contrasting ethical theories. We will consider such issues as virtue, rights, and our obligations to others.

Section E01**Online****D. Mehring**

In this course we will not only examine the major ethical theories (e.g., Utilitarian, Duty-based, Existentialist, etc.) But since “theory without practice is empty” we will consider how to apply these ethical theories in real-life situations. Questions of honesty are regarded as of the utmost ethical importance. Yet, virtually none of us have been taught how to tell the truth “at the right time, in the right place, in the right way, for the right reason, to the right person”. Clearly, how one tells the truth is as important as what the truth is. This course will focus on questions of how to be an effective truth-teller—and when to depart from the absolute truth. We will consider such questions such as when is it permissible (even necessary) to “slant” the truth? Under what conditions do we need to (in the words of Mark Twain) “learn how to lie healingly and well?”

PHIL 2441- Logic, Language, and Scientific Reasoning**Section 001****TuTh 9:30 AM - 10:45 AM****G. Zamosc**

Logic, Language and Scientific Reasoning. Intro course in argumentation, critical thinking and scientific reasoning. Covers rules of logical inference, informal fallacies, problem solving, and probabilistic reasoning. Enhances analytical and critical thinking skills tested on LSAT and MCAT, central to advancement in sciences, and broadly desired by employers.

Section 002**MW 2:00 PM - 3:15 PM****M. Pike**

Effective reasoning and critical thinking are central to success in academic study, empirical investigation, and in daily life outside the university. This course aims to make you better at both! In this class, you will develop a better understanding of good reasoning (and how to avoid bad reasoning) by learning about argumentation, evidence evaluation, scientific investigation, and common mistake/fallacy identification. You will learn both informal and formal tools for logical reasoning, practice them on a range of arguments, and become better at finding the truth and persuading others.

Section 003**TuTh 11:00 AM - 12:15 PM****M. Tanzer**

The aim of this course is to learn how to construct precise, rational arguments, as well as to critique arguments put forth by others. Our assessment of the key elements that constitute proper argumentation will include the examination of the functions of the basic parts of an argument, the recognition of logical fallacies, and the understanding of the formal structure of arguments.

Section 004**MW 11:00 AM - 12:15 PM****M. Pike**

Effective reasoning and critical thinking are central to success in academic study, empirical investigation, and in daily life outside the university. This course aims to make you better at both! In this class, you will develop a better understanding of good reasoning (and how to avoid bad reasoning) by learning about argumentation, evidence evaluation, scientific investigation, and common mistake/fallacy identification. You will learn both informal and formal tools for logical reasoning, practice them on a range of arguments, and become better at finding the truth and persuading others.

Section E01**Online****B. Hackett**

This course teaches the basics of systematic reasoning and its relation to the sciences. We begin the semester by focusing on the logician’s notion of an argument. What, exactly, counts as an argument? What is the difference between a “true statement” and a “good/sound argument”? After discussing answers to questions like these, we learn two simple ways of objectively assessing the reasoning in simple, easily understood deductive arguments. Next, we learn how to systematically represent the reasoning in less simple arguments, allowing us to accurately understand and effectively evaluate the ones that matter (e.g., concerning science, morality, religion, politics). Finally, we learn methods for conducting systematic inquiry in both the deductive and physical sciences. In an effort to encourage the mastery of learned skills, we practice techniques throughout the semester on various simple arguments. Since these methods are usefully applied to any academic inquiry, this course aims to be one of the most useful college courses you will take.

PHIL 3002- Ancient Greek Philosophy

Section 001

MW 12:30 PM - 1:45 PM

R. Metcalf

History of ancient Greek thought, including traditional myth, pre-Socratic fragments, Plato's dialogues, and Aristotle's systematic philosophy.

PHIL 3022- Modern Philosophy

Section 001

TuTh 11:00AM - 12:15PM

C. Shelby

The period of Western philosophy commonly referred to as "modern" (roughly the end of the 16th century to the end of the 18th century) is often presented as a period narrowly focused on questions of epistemology: questions concerning the nature and extent of human knowledge. In our course we will examine some of these basic epistemological themes, while attempting to broaden that scope a bit by also surveying some of the metaphysical themes that modern thinkers inherit from classical and medieval philosophy. We will be reading and discussing texts by Descartes, Leibniz, Spinoza, Locke, Hume, and Kant. Some of the basic questions we will be addressing are as follows: how does the strictly causal realm of matter in motion relate to the mental, subjective character of knowledge, and what can we claim about the nature of subjectivity within that relation? Similarly, can philosophy establish a foundation for knowledge that can save scientific inquiry from the challenges of skepticism?

PHIL 3200- Social-Political Philosophy

Section 001

TuTh 9:30AM - 10:45AM

S. Walker

We will consider major issues in the history of political philosophy. In particular we will discuss the two dominant political theories of the last 500 years, modern Liberalism and Socialism. In doing so we will consider the impact different conceptions of human nature have on both the choice of political philosophy the method for its development. We will read such philosophers as Plato, Hobbes, Marx, Sartre, Nozick, Rawls, and Jagger.

PHIL 3500- Ideology and Culture: Racism and Sexism

Section 001

MW 11:00AM - 12:15PM

D. Reeves

This course offers a critical analysis of the intersecting categories of race, class, gender, and sexuality. Our analysis will include implicit biases that are embedded in society as a neutral point of view and which often make it difficult to identify racism and sexism. Topics may include the social construction of difference, heterosexism and class privilege, questions of identity, discrimination in everyday life, the economics of race, class and gender and race and gender issues in U.S. law.

Section 002

TuTh 11:00AM - 12:15PM

S. Tyson

In this course, we will explore how racism and sexism have been and continue to be integral to dominant ideologies and cultural formations in the US. We will not only engage with some of the most important theoretical work on these topics, but will we also reflect on the formation of our own lives, practices, beliefs, and values. That self and group reflection will also bring us into contact with the limits of such work and what those limits mean for ideological and cultural change.

Section 003

MW 2:00PM - 3:15PM

D. Reeves

This course offers a critical analysis of the intersecting categories of race, class, gender, and sexuality. Our analysis will include implicit biases that are embedded in society as a neutral point of view and which often make it difficult to identify racism and sexism. Topics may include the social construction of difference, heterosexism and class privilege, questions of identity, discrimination in everyday life, the economics of race, class and gender and race and gender issues in U.S. law.

Section E01

Online

B. Jeong

In this course, we will approach the question of ideology, racism and sexism in terms of subjectivity. We will begin with the basic questions concerning the idea of the self. Then we explore the view of the self as a social construct, the idea that the self is defined in its relation to 'the Other.' As we think about how our identities are formed by the differences in gender and race, we will examine our own assumptions, beliefs and practices. Personal and collective reflections produced in this class should allow us to understand how power works and shapes who we are. This course fulfills the CU Denver Cultural Diversity Requirement.

PHIL 4000/5000 Section 001- 19th and 20th Century Philosophy

Section 001

M 5:00PM - 7:50PM

B. Jeong

This course examines the notions of time and temporality in twentieth-century philosophy. In the first segment of the semester, we discuss some of the key topics in the philosophy of time such as habit, memory, repetition and duration. The second segment looks at the politics of time while thinking critically about temporal logics of heteropatriarchal, capitalist, racist, colonial systems.

PHIL 4350/5350- Philosophy of Science

Section 001

MW 3:30PM - 4:45PM

M. Pike

This course examines some of the central philosophical questions concerning the nature of scientific investigation, such as the logical relation of evidence to hypothesis, the objective adjudication of competing hypotheses, the logical function of modeling in empirical inquiry, the criterion for a classificatory system to underwrite induction and explanation, the explanatory relationships between the differing sciences, as well as the theoretical and pragmatic function of scientific law and its relationship to explanation.

PHIL 4600/5600- Philosophy of Religion

Section 001

Tu 5:00PM - 7:50PM

R. Metcalf

A close study of some classics in the history of philosophy of religion, including Plato's *Euthyphro* and *Republic* (selections), Lucretius' *On the Nature of Things*, Spinoza's *Theological-Political Treatise*, Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, James' *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, Freud's *The Future of an Illusion*, and Dewey's *A Common Faith*. The course culminates with a fieldwork project that integrates readings from the course and observations of a faith community of the student's choosing.

PHIL 4812/5812 Section 001- Prisons, Punishment, and Social Justice

Section 001

TuTh 2:00PM - 3:15PM

S. Tyson

What is the role of prisons in the US? Are they necessary? Are they effective? Are there alternative ways to address harm? In this course, we will explore theories of punishment and theories of redressing harm that do not rely on punishment. We will use the critical tools of philosophy to think about what prisons do, how they shape the world we live in, and what alternatives might be.

PHIL 4833/5833- Existentialism

Section 001

TuTh 12:30PM - 1:45PM

B. Lisle

The lasting appeal of Existentialism as a literary, philosophical and artistic movement has much to do with its overall approach to basic human questions, such as: how to live in a seemingly absurd world full of incomprehensible forces and events. For example, when one lives during a time of war, it becomes tempting to conclude that life is absurd, that justice is an impossible ideal, and that beauty is only a temporary distraction. This course is an investigation of some of the central themes in the Existentialist tradition, including some of the most famous late 19th and early 20th Century writers in that tradition. We will be focusing on the writings of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Sartre, and Beauvoir.