

# CU Denver Philosophy Department

## 2020 FALL COURSE LISTINGS

### Legend

Fulfills Program *Requirements*

■ Philosophy Major

■ Ethics Minor

■ Philosophy Minor

■ Philosophy of Science

### Subject to Change

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



#### Section 001

TuTh 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 002

MW 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 003

MW 9:30 AM - 10:45 AM

B. Lisle

See Section 001

#### Section 004

TuTh 11:00 AM - 12:15 PM

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 005

TuTh 3:30 PM - 4:45 PM

B. Lisle

See Section 001

#### Section 006

TuTh 2:00 PM - 3:15 PM

D. Mehring

See Section 004

#### Section E01

Online

J. Golub

Investigating the origin, meaning, and scope of human knowledge begins, properly speaking, by asking what knowledge is. But like every thoughtful question, forming the right inquiry involves knowing what kind of answer to expect. After all, any answer to the question 'what is knowledge?' assumes the very capacity we are putting into question: we somehow already know what it is to have knowledge by virtue of the ability to ask the very question. To suspend this conviction that we already 'know' what knowledge is, to refuse to take knowledge for granted, is to adopt a skeptical attitude (in the ancient sense of those who were called

skeptikos). The task in this course will be to understand the value and nuance of this philosophical attitude, as well as to critique it and seek its limitations, by means of examining classic ancient, modern, and contemporary paradigms.

## PHIL 1020- Introduction to Ethical Reasoning



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### Section 001

TuTh 9:30 AM - 10:45 AM

R. Metcalf

This course introduces students to ethical reasoning through the careful study of classical and contemporary philosophical texts, along with some films. Students will take part in debates about topics in moral philosophy and will write papers analyzing these topics in some detail.

### Section 002

MW 9:30 AM - 10:45 AM

D. Reeves

This course will provide a journey into moral reflection. Its aim is to invite students to subject their own views about ethics to critical examination. We will work towards three goals. The first is to explore several moral issues that raise questions about ethics and justice in today's diverse and complex society. We will ask how a just society might distribute the things we prize – income and wealth, duties and rights, powers and opportunities, offices and honors in the right way; how ought each person be awarded her or his due. The second goal will be to understand and evaluate the role of philosophy and critical thinking in addressing issues such as financial bailouts, affirmative action and the death penalty. We will ponder three central ideals or ways of thinking about ethical issues: virtue, freedom and welfare. The third goal is for students to engage in constructive discussion of the issues presented. A subset of this goal will to exposed students to diverse views while exploring and developing their own positions.

### Section 003

MW 12:30 PM - 1:45 PM

D. Reeves

See Section 002

### Section 004

MW 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 005

TuTh 3:30 PM - 4:45 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 form 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 E01

Online

D. Mehring

See Section 005

## PHIL 2441- Logic, Language, and Scientific Reasoning



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### Section 001

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 the psychology of

reasoning, cognitive biases and pitfalls, logical 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 thinking, finding the truth, and persuading others.

**Section 002** **TuTh 9:30 AM - 10:45 AM** **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 003** **MW 5:00 PM - 6:15 PM** **M. Pike**

[See Section 001](#)

**Section 004** **MW 3:30 PM - 4:45 PM** **M. Pike**

[See Section 001](#)

**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** **TuTh 2:00 PM - 3:15 PM**

**R. Metcalf**

This course introduces students to ancient Greek philosophy through a survey of its most important thinkers, beginning with the Presocratics, and concluding with Plato and Aristotle. By the end of the course students will be able to 1) transliterate Greek philosophical concepts and explain their significance, 2) identify the authors of influential and memorable passages in Greek philosophical texts, and 3) analyze the different philosophical positions of Greek thinkers and explain their relative merits.

## **PHIL 3280- War and Morality**



**Section 001** **MW 11:00 AM – 12:15 AM** **S. Walker**

War continues to exist, in part, due to our inability to come to terms with it adequately. Some claim certain wars to be just. Others have argued that war itself opens the door to a condition so extraordinary that it negates the possibility of any legitimate philosophical or ethical evaluation. In this course we will attempt to identify and analyze some of the major moral issues of war. When is a war just, and when is it not? Are there moral means of conducting war? What are morally acceptable rules of engagement? What if anything justifies violating them? How does one evaluate terrorism as a means of conducting war? Given the topic of this course we will likely generate more questions than answers. Readings will include, among others, works by St Augustine, Hobbes, Walzer, Nagle, Sartre, Milne, Gandhi and Buber.

## **PHIL 3410/RLST 3410 – Asian Philosophy and Religions**

**Section 001** **MW 3:30 PM – 4:45 AM** **Staff**

We in the Western world encounter a vastly different world, a radically different “universe of meaning,” when we examine the traditions of the East. Even what we tacitly assume to be “real” is claimed by the Hindus and Buddhists to be a grand illusion. The world of China is, again, every different from India. An examination of Tibetan and Japanese religious forms will conclude our study of Asian thought.

## PHIL 3441/5441- Philosophical Reasoning Skills

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### Section 001

MW 2:00 PM - 3:15 PM

C. Shelby

This course concentrates on the principles of correct reasoning, both formal and informal, in particular as employed in philosophical writing. In this class students will develop such skills a distinguishing argumentative from non-argumentative passages in ordinary language, analyzing the form of an argument, and recognizing the moves known to the tradition as ‘fallacies’, or ‘mistakes’ in reasoning, both formal and informal. Further, students will become familiar with deductive logic of syllogistic, sentential, and propositional types, and learn to employ several techniques for determining the validity or invalidity of arguments in both ordinary language and in symbolic form. Finally, students will learn to employ specialized philosophical tools, such as thought experiments, concept analysis, and linguistic analysis, for use in developing and defending philosophical arguments.

## PHIL 3500- Ideology and Culture: Racism and Sexism

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### Section 001

MW 12:30 PM – 1:45 PM

B. Lisle

This course explores, in detail, the way ideology functions within culture. Particular attention will be placed on the way ideological forces work to foster and maintain racist and sexist forms of thought and behavior. We will begin by analyzing the nature and scope of ideological forces as cultural forces, and then we will explore various ways certain contemporary thinkers claim it may be possible to resist or eliminate racist and sexist thinking within an individual and collectively. One basic question we will be asking: to what extent can one escape ideologically founded thinking? Is it possible, in other words, for one to gain a self-critical relation to one’s own culture, especially since cultural traditions seem to mask themselves within the guise of common sense or conventional wisdom?

### Section 002

MW 3:30PM - 4:45PM

B. Lisle

[See Section 001](#)

### Section 003

TuTh 12:30 PM - 1:45 PM

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.

### Section 004

TuTh 11:00 AM - 12:15 PM

B. Jeong

[See Section 003](#)

### Section E01

Online

J. Golub

Our course begins with this question: are we subject to modern “mythologies” in the forms of ideologies and cultures? That is, do we set out in our most basic presumptions about ourselves, each other, and our common world from within a context of beliefs centered on a belongingness to a people, e.g. as Americans, or as working class, or as religious, or as socially constructed? Or, on the other hand, does philosophical suggestion of an “emerging people” not already reveal some of the basic mechanisms that permit racism and sexism to flourish, either in the open or under the cover of commonly held practices and norms? We will begin with these sketched-out problems of modern mythology, but our investigation of ideology, culture, racism and

sexism will quickly grow into a wide study of contemporary texts, film, art, media, and in-depth class discussion.

## **PHIL 3760/5830- Kant**



### **Section 001**

**TuTh 12:30PM - 1:45PM**

**M. Tanzer**

Immanuel Kant's revolutionary thought represents one of the most important developments in the history of Western philosophy. As a result, all subsequent philosophical thought has had to take Kant's transcendental idealism, and its radical reconceptualization of the subject/object distinction, into account. This course will consist of a detailed examination of Kant's ontology, epistemology and ethics.

## **PHIL 4101/5101 - Pragmatism: Classical American Philosophy**



### **Section 001**

**Tu 5:00 PM - 7:50 PM**

**D. Hildebrand**

Perhaps the three most important questions for our nation of immigrants have been: Who are we? What do we believe? Should we accept the views of earlier generations? In addressing these questions, American philosophers have both accepted and rejected different pieces of their intellectual heritage (especially Descartes, Hume, Kant, Hegel, among others). In their most critical moments, American philosophers argue that philosophy must reassert itself as an active, constructive, and ethical force in human life. Doing this means shaking and breaking many traditional philosophical distinctions including those between: mind and body, fact and value, appearance and reality, self and society, probability and certainty, and language and world. We'll examine important philosophical themes developed and sustained by both classical and neopragmatists, spanning the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries. Philosophers likely to include Charles Peirce, William James, John Dewey, Jane Addams, Alain Locke, Richard Rorty, and Hilary Putnam.

## **PHIL 4300/5300- Philosophy of Mind**



### **Section 001**

**M 5:00PM - 7:50PM**

**C. Shelby**

With Descartes' famous "cogito ergo sum", the question of mind per se became a hot topic of philosophical discussion. More recently, over the past 150 years, the increasing influence of Darwin's dangerous idea (to borrow Daniel Dennett's phrase), has resulted in rising scientific as well as philosophical interest in the question of the mind's connection to the brain. Is the mind caused by the brain? Is the mind just the sum of the brain's activities, or some subset thereof? If so, what is that nature of those activities? Are brains computer-like, or is the analogy misguided? What about consciousness? How does one explain something like that in physical terms? Consciousness seems to be categorically different from the physical, as does intentionality (the aboutness or directedness, of consciousness—how does that happen?). What about the minds of animals other than humans? Can we say anything about those? And what about rationality, the cornerstone of Philosophy? Are humans really rational in the way that we think we are? If so, what is the role of emotion in our mental lives? This course will address all these questions and numerous others, from a variety of perspectives. Thus, you can expect exposure to metaphysics, epistemology, neuroscience, computer science, and more! This is a 3-credit course that does not fulfill any Core Course requirements.

## **PHIL 4308/5308- Contemporary Feminist Thought**



### **Section 001**

**TuTh 3:30PM - 4:45PM**

**S. Tyson/G. Silverman**

This course examines changes and continuities in feminist thought in contemporary America—from the late-20th century to the 21st. Using philosophical documents and literature as our material, and philosophical and literary analysis as our method, we will explore the ways that women's characteristics, experiences, and capabilities have been understood and challenged. The course pays particular attention to the diverse ways that "feminism" has been and continues to be conceptualized over time. It also addresses issues of intersectionality by examining how categories like race, class, and ethnicity, intersect with gender, sexuality, and sexual identity.

## **PHIL 4650/5655 RLST 4400/5400 – Differing Concepts of God**

### **Section 001**

**MW 5:00 PM - 6:15 PM**

**Staff**

God, gods and goddesses have been imagined in many different modes, forms, aspects and guises throughout human history. This class will investigate paleolithic models of God, the Great Goddess of the Neolithic era, the Gods of mythological traditions, the Biblical God, the abstract God of the philosophers, the God of the pantheists, the deists, and the God of the mystics.

## **PHIL 4790/5790- Nietzsche**



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### **Section 001**

**MW 9:30 AM - 10:45 AM**

**G. Zamosc**

In this course we will examine the thought of Friedrich Nietzsche through some of his most important and influential works. Some of the texts we will read include: *The Birth of Tragedy*, *The Untimely Meditations*, *Beyond Good and Evil*, and *The Genealogy of Morals*. One explicit aim of the class will be to explore whether and how Nietzsche's thought changed during the course of his intellectual development. Another goal will be to try to understand not just Nietzsche's various criticisms of the philosophical tradition but his positive contributions to it as well: that is, the ideals and values he sought to promote.