

# CU Denver Philosophy Department

## 2021 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 2:00 OM - 3:15 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 2:00 PM - 3:15 PM

B. Lisle

See Section 002

#### Section 003

MW 3:30 PM - 4:45 PM

B. Lisle

See Section 002

#### Section 004

MW 9:30 AM - 10:45 AM

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 005

TuTh 11:00 AM - 12:15 PM

A. Yost

What is justice? What is love? Does God exist? Can I ever stop suffering? Who am I? Questions like these are the heart-and-soul of philosophy, and asking them is what makes us human. In *Introduction to Philosophy* we'll take up these Big Questions and explore the answers philosophers have come up with over the past 2500 years or so. We'll hear from voices all over the world and throughout time. From the Buddha to W.E.B. DuBois, Aristotle to Hannah Arendt, Kant to Ta Nehisi Coats, we'll look closely at what matters most to us today and explore practical ways to apply philosophical ideas to modern problems. If you're interested in looking behind the veil of modern culture and exposing the philosophical forces animating it, then this class is for you. But be forewarned: we will get deep, and you will be challenged. As we say in philosophy, the unexamined life is not worth living.

#### Section E01

Online

D. Hildebrand

Does life have meaning? This deceptively simple question will provide our entry point into philosophy. We will read and discuss a number of writers, from Plato to the present, who investigate this question. A range of fascinating topics will enter into our inquiry; these may include technology and art, religion and science, advertising and consumerism, and existential questions such as our place in the universe and our responses to death and mortality.

## PHIL 1020- Introduction to Ethical Reasoning



### Section 001

MW 3:30 PM - 4:45 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 002

TuTh 9:30 AM - 10:45 AM

D. Reeves

This course will provide an investigation into moral reflection. The goal is to invite students to subject their own views about ethics to critical examination. We will work towards three ends. 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 their due. The second objective will be to understand and evaluate the role philosophy and critical thinking in addressing issues such as financial bailouts, pandemics, affirmative action and taxation. We will look at three central theories or ways of thinking about ethical issues: virtue, freedom and welfare.

### Section 003

MW 9:30 AM - 10:45 AM

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 E01

Online

D. Mehring

See Section 003

### Section E02

Online (Second 8 Week Course)

D. Mehring

See Section 003

## PHIL 1111- First Year Seminar – Why Follow the Laws?

### Section 001

MW 11:00 AM - 12:15 PM

J. Golub

We usually assume that what defines our society and our politics are the laws. But this assumption introduces two sets of questions. On the one hand, what makes a law *right*? What makes it *binding* on us? And at what point might law lose such binding force? Does our answer apply to different countries with different laws? Indeed, if their laws are right for them—but not for us—what does that tell us about the limits of law as a force that legitimately constrains or permits human actions? On the other hand, what about our assumptions that certain laws are clearly immoral? Consider the laws that sanction slavery, or those that prevent women from voting, or those that dictate the terms of torture? There is a way in which we cannot get along without laws -- but given that there are laws humans create which are clearly wrong, we need to figure out where the force of law comes from. In this course, we will take up these two sets of questions under the general aim of producing a philosophical response to the question "what does recourse to Law mean?" An answer to this question may supply a rich resource toward understanding our philosophically critical role in the social and the political realms of today.

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



### Section 001

TuTh 9:30 AM - 10:45 AM

M. Tanzer

The aim of this course is to develop critical thinking, specifically by learning the rules and methods by which legitimate rational arguments are constructed, as well as learning the rules and methods by which to recognize faulty argumentation. The course will examine both deductive and inductive logic, the latter being the type of reasoning that guides scientific reasoning. 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 understanding of the formal structure of arguments, and the recognition of logical fallacies.

### Section 002

MW 12:30 PM - 1:45 PM

D. Mehring

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 science, and broadly desired by employers.

### Section 003

TuTh 3:30 PM - 4:45 PM

TBA

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 science, and broadly desired by employers.

### Section 004

MW 11:00 AM - 12:15 PM

D. Mehring

See Section 002

### 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.

### Section E02

Online (First 8 Week Course)

J. Golub

We derive the term "logic" from the Ancient Greek word *logos*, a word notorious for its range of possible interpretations of meaning. We can grasp the run of this course by means of three possible English renditions of the word *logos*: it can refer (1) to an account, an explanation, an argument, a speech, a description—whether written or spoken—and any of these in isolation, in a treatise, a dialogue or an entire book; thus, *language* in general; (2) a collecting or gathering together of either disparate or common elements into a thematic whole, and hence, a rational ordering or *reasoning* in general (3) the abstract discipline and study of such concepts in their coordination and systematic coherence and thus, *logic* itself. Our foremost aim is to achieve competency in these three areas through the close analyses of both formal and informal systems of logic, ordinary language arguments, common patterns of valid and invalid inference, truth table and tableau proofs of propositional/predicate translations, and the basic elements of scientific inquiry including standards for evidence, experimentation, and material inference. What all of this boils down to, however, is quite simple: the study of logic refines thinking and produces better thinkers. In this course, students will gain the ability to examine patterns in statements, recognize and create proofs, analyze correct and incorrect forms of argument, and become familiar with valid constructions and symbolic representations of reasoning. We will address logical as well as epistemological problems and seek ultimately to situate the discipline as a philosophically engaging (and distinctively powerful) foundation to higher-level critical thought.

## PHIL 3002/5002- Ancient Greek Philosophy



### Section 001 (Hybrid)

TuTh 2:00 PM - 3:15 PM

R. Metcalf

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

## PHIL 3280- War and Morality



### Section 001

MW 12:30 PM – 1:45 PM

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 3340- Investigating Nature: Introduction to the Philosophy of Science



### Section 001

MW 2:00 PM - 3:15 PM

C. Shelby

This course is designed to introduce students to the Philosophy of Science. (No background in philosophy is required.) Philosophy of Science is concerned with how best to use observation and experiment to learn about the world, whether we are investigating fundamental physical structures, the complex operations of biological organisms, or the social dynamics of human groups. Drawing on both historical and contemporary works, we will seek to understand, among other topics, what makes scientific inquiry distinct from other forms of human learning, what accounts for the credibility and objectivity of scientific claims, the influence of psycho-social biases on observation and theory formation, as well as whether accepting a scientific theory, explanation, or hypothesis means that we think it is true.

## PHIL 3430/5430- Environmental Ethics



### Section 001

Th 5:00 PM - 7:50 PM

G. Zamosc

While human industry/technology creates enormous material prosperity, it can result in devastating environmental damage. This course analyzes the moral values, consequences and duties implied in relationships between human beings, animals and ecological systems, while seeking out new and ethical approaches.

## PHIL 3441/5441- Philosophical Reasoning Skills



### Section 001

MW 11:00 AM – 12:15 PM

C. Shelby

This course provides Philosophy majors and other philosophically interested students with the skills and tools necessary for effectively navigating philosophical discussions. In this course, we will cover issues such as validity and soundness, as well as several systems useful for demonstrating validity. The course will in addition address important issues in the philosophy of language, including the very important question of definitions, as well as the use of thought experiments and avoidance of informal fallacies. Finally, since philosophical reasoning increasingly involves knowledge of methods of scientific reasoning, those skills will also be included in the course.

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



### Section 001

MW 11:00 AM – 12:15 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

TuTh 11:00 AM - 12:15 PM

B. Lisle

See Section 001

### Section 003

TuTh 3:30 PM - 4:45 PM

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 004

MW 2:00 PM - 3:15 PM

B. Jeong

In this course, we discuss the issues of racism and sexism with a focus on the relationship between self and other. We begin with the basic philosophical questions concerning the idea of the self, and then learn how the self is socially constructed in its relation to an 'Other.' While considering how gender and racial differences shape our identities, we come to identify and examine critically the social norms of whiteness, patriarchy and heterosexuality underlying our self-understanding and relational practices. This course fulfills the CU Denver Cultural Diversity Requirement.

### Section E01

Online

J. Golub

Our course begins with the question: are we still subject to "mythology" in the forms of modern ideologies? 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? Or, on the other hand, if we think of ourselves as "people" based on the ideologies we belong to, does that 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? Are we free, in other words, to recognize and change such ideologies if we choose to? Or are we as powerless as the people of antiquity to see our own myths for what they are? We will begin with these sketched out problems of modern mythology, and then focus on each of the four elements of the course: ideology, culture, racism, and feminism. We will explore each quadrant of the course using classical philosophical texts, contemporary works, film and media, political movements, and social issues.

## PHIL 3760/5830- Kant



### Section E01 (Remote)

TuTh 12:30 PM – 1:45 PM

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 4812/5812- Politics of Time



### Section 001

M 5:00 PM - 7:50 PM

B. Jeong

Do we live in the same time or in different times? How does our lived experience of time - such as getting 'behind the time,' 'stuck in the past' or 'trapped in circle' - challenge the linear notion of time ('clock' time)? As a critical approach to the metaphysical theories of time, this course considers the ways in which time functions as a normative structure that naturalizes dominant narratives of gender, race, and class. We look at the temporal logic of heteropatriarchy, capitalism, racism and colonialism, while exploring the possibilities to create counter-narratives to the normative temporality.

## PHIL 4920/5920- Philosophy of Media and Technology



### Section 001

Tu 5:00 PM - 7:50 PM

D. Hildebrand

As we are constantly reminded, we live in an ever-accelerating "Information Age," an era of rapidly shifting images and voluminous data. This is an age of apps, algorithms, and robots where social media and identity become increasingly difficult to disentangle. What is "knowledge" and "truth" in such an environment? What is "wisdom"? What is morality in this shifting technological era? What does it mean to be "human" and to live a meaningful life? Finally, what challenges are posed to our public life, our democracy? To pursue these questions, this course will investigate key approaches to the philosophy of technology and media along with critiques and alterations of those approaches.