

CU Denver Philosophy Department

2021 SPRING 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 (Remote)

MW 9:30 AM - 10:45 AM

S. Tyson

Why am I here? Where do I belong? What should I do? How can I live well? Can philosophy really help me with these questions? Through close reading of texts from throughout the history of Western philosophy, as well as reflection on our own experience, we will explore these questions. In the process, students will develop their critical thinking skills, refine their speaking, reading, and writing skills, and gain a deeper understanding of the role of questioning in the pursuit of a good life. In most classes, we will discuss texts and their relevance to issues in our contemporary lives.

Section 002 (In Person)

MW 12:30 PM - 1:45 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 003 (Remote)

TuTh 9:30 AM - 10:45 AM

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 004 (Remote)

TuTh 12:30 PM - 1:45 PM

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.

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 (In Person)

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 002 (Remote)

MW 12:30 PM - 1:45 PM

G. Zamosc

This course aims at helping students develop their skills at interpreting texts, critical thinking, and argumentation, while introducing them to a series of issues in ethics and morality. We will examine some of the principal theories about the nature of morality, including: virtue ethics, utilitarianism, and deontology. Then we will look at other theories with a more political and social bent such as libertarianism, egalitarianism, and contractarianism. Time permitting, toward the end of the course, we will explore some practical ethical problems we faced today, like abortion, euthanasia, and the like, attempting to apply some of the theories learnt.

Section 003 (Remote)

TuTh 9:30 AM - 10:45 AM

G. Zamosc

[See Section 002](#)

Section 004 (Remote)

TuTh 11:00 AM - 12:15 PM

G. Zamosc

[See Section 002](#)

Section 005 (Remote)

TuTh 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 E01

Online

D. Mehring

[See Section 001](#)

PHIL 2441- Logic, Language, and Scientific Reasoning



Section 001 (Remote)

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 (Remote)

MW 2:00 PM - 3:15 PM

M. Pike

[See Section 001](#)

Section 003 (Remote)**TuTh 2:00 PM - 3:15 PM****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 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 3002/5002- Ancient Greek Philosophy**Section 001 (Hybrid)****MW 11:00 AM - 12:15 PM****R. Metcalf**

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

PHIL 3022/5022- Modern Philosophy**Section 001 (Remote)****TuTh 12:30 PM - 1:45 PM****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 3030- Philosophies of Happiness**Section 001 (Hybrid)****F 11:00 AM - 12:15 PM****D. Mehring**

Everyone is striving to be Happy. But what is "Happiness"? To answer this question, we will explore Philosophical Views on Happiness from Socrates to Contemporary Thinkers such as Viktor Frankl (1905-1997). Every Student Will Develop their Personal Philosophy of Happiness. A key question this course will consider is, "Can someone be genuinely happy in a time of crisis such as we are going through with the Covid Pandemic?"

PHIL 3200/5200- Social-Political Philosophy**Section 001 (Remote)****TuTh 11:00 AM - 12:15 AM****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 3440- Intro to Symbolic Logic



Section 001 (Remote)

MW 5:00 PM - 6:15 PM

M. Pike

A study of the formal techniques of modern symbolic logic. Covers the translation of arguments into logic formulas and the evaluation of those arguments by formal tools such as truth tables and proof construction. Both sentential / propositional logic and quantificational logic systems will be learned. Attention is also given to such problems in metatheory as proofs of the completeness and consistency of systems of logic.

PHIL 3500- Ideology and Culture: Racism and Sexism



Section 001 (Remote)

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 (Remote)

MW 3:30 PM - 4:45 PM

B. Lisle

[See Section 001](#)

Section 003 (Remote)

TuTh 11:00 AM - 12:15 PM

B. Lisle

[See Section 001](#)

Section E01

Online (January 19 – March 13

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.

PHIL 4242/5242- Bioethics



Section E01

Online

G. Smith

This course examines some of the major moral issues confronting the nation's health care system. The class will search for solutions to such problems as financing health care for those unable to do so on their own, determining the extent of a patient's right to both refuse and demand certain types of medical treatment, and allocating scarce medical resources such as lifesaving vital organs. The springboard for examining these issues will be the physician-patient relationship framed by the moral principles of respect for persons and beneficence.

PHIL 4260/5260- Philosophy of Law



Section 001 (Remote)

MW 3:30 PM - 4:45 PM

D. Reeves

This course will cover fundamental theories in the philosophy of law, including the nature and content of law, its relation to morality, and the obligation to obey the law, as well as theories of legal interpretation. In addition to philosophical questions such as the relationship between morality and laws, we will consider what kinds of behavior should or should not be legal. For example, what should be the limits on freedom of speech? We will also address the disproportionate effect that certain laws seem to have on minorities and ask whether the law, in fact, remains neutral with regards to morality and politics. If the legal system lacks the kind of neutrality that legal theorists claim for it, what route of restructuring or escape does that leave us?

PHIL 4800/5800- Plato



Section 001 (Hybrid)

MW 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM

R. Metcalf

In this course we will study a number of Plato's most influential dialogues – namely, *Apology*, *Ion*, *Symposium* and *Republic* – in the context of the Greek literary tradition in which Plato was writing. Among the texts that we will read alongside Plato are selections from Homer's *Iliad*, Sappho's poetry, Gorgias' speeches, and Aristophanes' *Ecclesiazusae*. Students will have the opportunity to present their own interpretations of these texts before completing a research paper analyzing the significance of Plato's philosophical thought.

PHIL 4812/5812- Decolonial Thought



Section 001 (Remote)

Tu 5:00 PM - 7:50 PM

B. Jeong

This course examines the condition of coloniality, white supremacy and heteronormativity in the formation of the philosophical canon. We take seriously the 'Decolonial Turn' as a significant shift in knowledge production, and problematize the systemic exclusion of Africa, Asia, Latin America and Indigenous peoples in the Eurocentric construction of philosophy as a discipline. While practicing decolonial thinking and being, we will explore ways to do philosophy *otherwise*.

PHIL 4833/5833- Existentialism



Section 001 (Remote)

TuTh 2:00 PM - 3:15 PM

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.