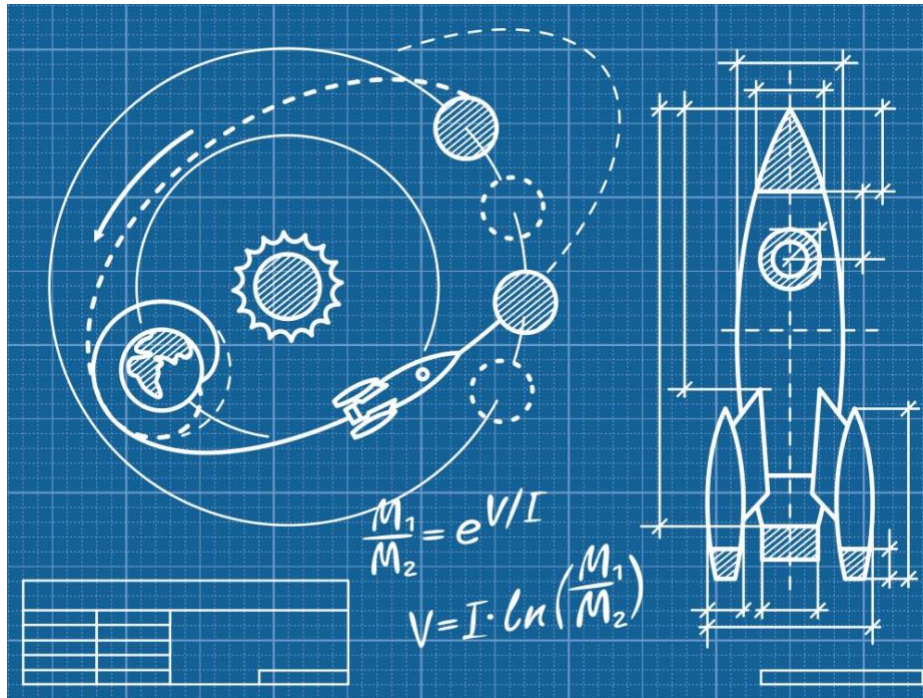


# PHIL 160 section 01, “Philosophy of Science”

Monday, Wednesday: 10:30-11:45

Fall 2020

Prof. James Lindahl  
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Philosophy of Science is an investigation into the nature, purpose, and impact of scientific reasoning and theory. Much of what we believe to be true in modern culture is based on our understanding of science. But what do scientific theories really tell us? We will investigate the relationship between scientific theories and reality, the methods of science in connection to “objective” reality, and the role that science and scientific reasoning has on shaping our beliefs and values in the modern world.

During the first half of the semester, we will explore philosophical issues in the physical sciences. From gravity to evolution, we’ll explore the development of various theories, their justifications, and how it is that they ground our understanding of the world.

During the second half of the semester, we will investigate the nature and methods of the social sciences. Are there “laws” of social behavior? Do social theories function like physical theories? Do people operate according to describable criteria of rationality? Can we understand a society in anything like the way we understand a physical process?

We will finish by reflecting on the role that scientific reasoning (both physical and social) plays in shaping our values, the way we live, and the way we understand the meaning of life, the universe, and everything.

## Required Texts/Readings

Godfrey-Smith, Peter – *Theory and Reality*, University of Chicago Press, 2003  
isbn: 0-226-30063-3

Hollis, Martin – *The Philosophy of Social Science*, Cambridge University Press,  
(revised) 2003, isbn: 0-521-44780-1

Philosophy 160 satisfies upper division G.E. Area R