This course will be about the philosophy of science (not about the physicists' view of nature).

The main questions to be answered are: What is science? Is there a scientific method? What distinguishes science from pseudoscience?

The textbook we will use is:

Alan F. Chalmers, What is this thing called science? (4th edition).

The UO book store does not have this book, so please order it from, e.g., Amazon.

There will be reading assignments (from the textbook mostly, plus additional articles provided here on canvas) to be finished before class, so that we can discuss these readings in class. Your active participation in the class discussions form a non-negligible part of the final grade (30%). The questions to be answered in class are the following:

(i) which of the arguments the author gives (for whatever he is arguing for in the readings) do you like best?

(ii) which do you like the least, and why?

(iii) do you know examples from your own field/study that illustrate what the author writes?

(iv) do you think you have counterexamples from your own study that refute (more or less) what the author writes?

The following are the readings for each week from the textbook (this is tentative, the schedule might shift a little bit):

Week 1: Intro + Ch. 1

Week 2: Ch.2, 3

Week 3: Ch. 4

Week 4: Ch. 5,6

Week 5: Ch. 7

Week 6: Ch. 8,9
Week 7: Ch. 10
Week 8: Ch. 11
Week 9: Ch. 12
Week 10: Ch. 13

Homework assignments will consist of essays (4 during the term) to be written about articles by either philosophers or scientists, to be posted on canvas. The homework will count for 45%.

The final will consist of questions about a chapter (not from the textbook, to be provided before dead week), relating it to what you learned from the textbook. The final counts for 25%.

The first homework will be due the first week: it won't be graded, but it is compulsory as you will later be asked to comment on it!

Office hours: Thursdays, 11-noon and 2-3 pm (in WIL 251). I have an open-door policy and you can ask me questions at any time.