



World Philosophy Day at CCNY

November 21, 2024

Keynote Talk: Philosophy in the Ivory Tower, Philosophy behind Bars.
by Professor Rob Colter (U. Wyoming and Wyoming Pathways from Prison)
6 PM | NAC 1/203

Pizza Forum—Roundtable discussion of The Value of Philosophy in Prison Education with Taylor Rae Almonte (director of Just Ideas at Columbia), Larry Williams (a graduate of the Just Ideas program), and Professor Rob Colter.
12:30 PM | NAC 5/144



The keynote speaker will be Prof. Rob Colter, from the University of Wyoming, who will be giving a talk on “Philosophy in the Ivory Tower, Philosophy behind Bars.”

The question “What is philosophy?” comes up in a variety of contexts. It might come from the parents of a student taking a class, from the person sitting next to you on an airplane, or perhaps from your least favorite philosophy professor. One very popular answer, going back at least to the ancient Greeks, goes like this: Philosophy is some sort of sublime mental activity that can only be accessed by elite thinkers who are able to truly devote themselves to philosophical development, to the exclusion of all else, at least as far as possible. But there is another answer on offer in the history of philosophy – a much more humble one. We will try to articulate this conception of philosophy and see how it might be practiced among a particularly underprivileged population – the incarcerated. Prof. Colter is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at University of Wyoming, founder and Director of Wyoming Stoic Camp, and Co-Director of Wyoming Pathways from Prison.



Taylor Rae Almonte-Roman is a Brooklyn-based host, creator, athlete, and activist. Her social impact work meets at the intersection of racial justice and wellness. Taylor is currently pursuing her master’s degree at Columbia University at the Institute for the Study of Human Rights with a concentration on Mass Incarceration. Her research is on access to outdoor recreation and exercise for women of color in New York correctional facilities. She has been the Assistant Director at Just Ideas since 2022. She has taught several courses at Metropolitan Detention Center through the program. Just Ideas brings together Columbia professors and interns to teach (and be taught by) occupants of Brooklyn’s MDC. She also recently taught a semester-long course inside the Taconic Correctional Facility as part of the Justice-in-Education Initiative at Columbia University.



Larry Williams is a criminal justice advocate and mitigation specialist with the Federal Defenders Office of the Eastern District of New York, whose work draws on his transformation from jailhouse lawyer to leader in restorative justice. With degrees in Business and Philosophy and a certification in restorative practices, Larry has committed his career to opening pathways for redemption and reentry. He has taught at Columbia University and served as a lead program manager for St. Francis College’s Justice Initiative, designing and leading workshops on justice reform. Through Columbia’s Just Ideas program, he co-instructs courses that blend academic and practical perspectives on criminal justice and philosophy, sharing his insights on accountability, reform, and redemption at venues like the American Philosophical Association.

For more information and updates, please visit: <https://philosophydayatccny.org>