

Syllabus for PHIL 251.200: Introduction to Philosophy

Tuesday & Thursday: 2:20-3:35 (YMCA 113)

Fall 2012; Dr. Stephen H. Daniel

In **Introduction to Philosophy** you will develop the critical-thinking skills needed to write and speak effectively about knowledge, freedom, identity, the mind-body relation, God, and ethics. This means being able to identify issues, present arguments, critique those arguments, and formulate replies to those criticisms. There are no prerequisites for this course.

Textbooks: (1) *Ultimate Questions* (3rd ed) by Nils Rauhut; and (2) *Readings* selections in the course packet. The packet is downloadable from the Evans Library Course Reserves website <http://library-reserves.tamu.edu/areslocal/index.htm> and is also available already bound at Notes-n-Quotes (across University Blvd from Blocker).

<u>Aug.</u>	28	What is Philosophy? 1-13	<u>Oct.</u>	18	Behaviorism/Identity theory 139-46
	30	Activity of Philosophy, <i>Readings</i> 1-7, 26-31		23	Functionalism 146-54
<u>Sept</u>	4	Knowledge & Skepticism 42-57		25	Nagel, "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?" <i>Readings</i> 381-91
	6	Hume on Induction, <i>Readings</i> 284-91		30	God: arguments & religious experience 156-64
		Essay 1: Hume on Skepticism: <i>Readings</i> 47-57 (due Sept. 9)	<u>Nov.</u>	1	Cosmological argument 164-69
	11	Empiricism 57-67			Essay 3: Design argument 169-76 & Hume's critique: <i>Readings</i> 93-99 (due Nov. 4)
	13	Rationalism 67-75; Plato, <i>Readings</i> 94-100		6	God: ontological & wager arguments 176-85
	18	Kant, <i>Readings</i> 201-11		8	Problem of evil 185-95
	20	Free will/hard determinism 77-88		13	Kierkegaard on faith, <i>Readings</i> 271-81
	25	Compatibilism 88-97		15	Ethical relativism/divine command 197-211
	27	Libertarianism 97-102			Essay 4: Utilitarianism 211-19; Mill, <i>Readings</i> 358-66 (due Nov. 18)
		Essay 2: Chisholm, "Freedom and the Self," <i>Readings</i> 106-14 (due Sept. 30)		20	Kantian Ethics 220-26, <i>Readings</i> 301-304
<u>Oct.</u>	2	Strawson on freedom and responsibility, <i>Readings</i> 318-27		22	(Thanksgiving holiday)
	4	Personal identity: body, soul 104-118		27	Nietzsche on morality, <i>Readings</i> 378-85
	9	Memory theory 118-25		29	Virtue Ethics 226-32, <i>Readings</i> 162-67
	11	Mid-semester exam (in class)	<u>Dec.</u>	4	Nagel on the Absurdity of life, <i>Readings</i> 825-34
	16	Mind-body dualism 126-39		12	(Wednesday) Final exam 1-3 p.m. (in class)

- The **semester grade** is based on:
 - four 500-word essays on questions that deal with our readings (10 pts each); due by midnight on Sunday as email attachments.
 - exams on previously announced questions: mid-semester (two questions, 24 pts) and final (three questions, 36 pts).
- There is no separate grade for attendance or participation, but both affect the grading of essays and exams.
- You should outline readings before each class (based on the questions provided on the course website) to prepare to discuss in class the main claims, arguments, and objections. If something in the reading puzzles you, consult with others on the course Facebook site *before class* so that you are prepared.
- If you miss a class, send me short answers to the posted questions so that I can provide you feedback and you don't get behind.
- To communicate with me about grades or graded material, use filex.tamu.edu.
- If you miss the mid-semester or final exam, contact me immediately. My expectations of the quality of essays rise if essays are submitted past deadlines; grades are assessed accordingly.
- Minimum grades: 88=A, 78=B, 68=C, 57=D.

Office hours (YMCA 417): Tues/Thurs 12-2 (and after class until 5:00 except on Dept colloquium days). **Phone:** 845-5619 (office), 324-4199 (cell). **Email:** sdaniel@tamu.edu. **Website:** philosophy.tamu.edu/%7Esdaniel/251sy12c.html.

Students with disabilities are guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Dept of Student Life, [Disability Services](#), Cain Hall B118, or call 845-1637.

Students are bound by the Aggie honor code not to lie, cheat, steal, or tolerate those who do. If you violate the code (e.g., by plagiarizing something from the Internet), you will fail the course. For information on cheating and plagiarism, go to <http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor/>.