

Syllabus for PHIL 251.501: Introduction to Philosophy

Tuesday & Thursday: 12:45-2:00 (ZACH 227A)

Spring 2011; 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 (available at bookstores and online); and (2) selections from *Readings on the Ultimate Questions* (3rd ed), ed. by Nils Rauhut, and the Hume and Kierkegaard readings from Pojman and Vaughn's *Philosophy: The Quest for Truth* (all downloadable at the Evans Library Course Reserves website <http://library-reserves.tamu.edu/areslocal/index.htm>). To print and bind the readings at the least cost, go to Notes-n-Quotes (across University Blvd from Blocker).

Jan. 18 What is Philosophy? 1-13
20 Philosophical tools 15-40
25 Knowledge 42-48
27* Skepticism 48-57; *Readings* 32-41

Feb. 1 Empiricism 57-67
3* Rationalism 67-75
Essay 1: Readings 47-57 (due Feb. 6)
8 Free will/hard determinism 77-88
10* Compatibilism 88-97
15 Libertarianism 97-102; *Readings* 106-14
17* Personal identity 104-113
Essay 2: Readings 172-82 (due Feb. 20)
22 Body theories 113-16; *Readings* 165-71
24* Soul theory 116-18; *Readings* 152-61

Mar. 1 Memory theory 118-25
3 **Mid-semester exam**
8 Mind-body dualism 126-39
10* Critique of dualism, *Readings* 202-14

*Thursday homeworks (before class).

Mar. 22 Behaviorism/Identity theory 139-46
24* Functionalism 146-54
Essay 3: Readings 249-61 (due Mar. 27)
29 God: arguments & religious experience 156-64
31* Cosmological arg 164-69; *Readings* 292-301

Apr. 5 Design argument 169-76; *Hume reading* 93-99
7* God: ontological & wager arguments 176-85
Essay 4: Kierkegaard Read 166-71 (due Apr. 10)
12 Problem of evil 185-95; *Readings* 341-51
14* Ethical relativism 197-207
19 Divine Command 208-11, *Readings* 385-88
21* Utilitarianism 211-19
Essay 5: Readings 379-85 (due Apr. 24)
26 Kantian Ethics 220-26
28* Virtue Ethics 226-32

May 3 [No class: redefined Friday class]
11 (Wednesday) **Final exam 8-10 a.m.**

Cell phones must be turned off during class.

The **semester grade** is based on

- Twelve Thursday homeworks (begin Jan. 27): 200-word essays on questions about Tuesday/Thursday readings (4 points each). Send to TA as email attachments before Thursday class.
- Five 500-word homework essays on questions based on readings (10 pts each). Send to TA as email attachments by midnight Sunday.
- Mid-semester exam: in-class response to two previously announced questions (20 points).
- Final exam: in-class response to three previously announced questions (30 points).
- No separate grade for attendance or participation, but both affect the grading of essays and exams. If you miss the mid-semester or final exam, contact Dr. Daniel *immediately*. Expectations of the quality of essays rise if essays are submitted past the deadlines; grades are assessed accordingly.
- Minimum grades: 130=A, 115=B, 100=C, 85=D.

Office (Bolton 302-B) hours: Tues & Thurs 11:00-12:20, 2:15-3:30 (often until 5:00; call ahead). Will stick around the Zachry lobby after class.

Phone: 845-5619 (office), 846-4649 (home), 324-4199 (cell)

E-mail: sdaniel@philosophy.tamu.edu

Website: philosophy.tamu.edu/%7Esdaniel/251sy11a.html

Teaching Assistant: **Kyle Driggers** (Bolton 310, 845-6222; office hours: Mon 9-11, Wed 9-10)

Email: k-driggers@philosophy.tamu.edu

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/>.