

## Syllabus for PHIL 251.501: Introduction to Philosophy

Tuesday & Thursday: 12:45-2:00 (CHEN 104)

Spring 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>Jan.</u>	17	What is Philosophy? 1-13	<u>Mar.</u>	20	Functionalism 146-54
	19	Philosophical tools 15-40		22	Searle: "Is the Brain's Mind a Computer Program?" <i>Readings</i> 366-75
	24	Knowledge & Skepticism 42-57			<b>Essay 3: Nagel, "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?"</b>
	26	Huemer on Skepticism: <i>Readings</i> 47-57			<b>Readings 381-91 (due Mar. 25)</b>
	31	Empiricism 57-67		27	God: arguments & religious experience 156-64
<u>Feb.</u>	2	Rationalism 67-75; Plato, <i>Readings</i> 133-43		29	Cosmological argument 164-69; Clarke on God's existence, <i>Readings</i> 47-50
		<b>Essay 1: Hume on Induction: Readings 284-91 (due Feb. 5)</b>			
	7	Free will/hard determinism 77-88	<u>Apr.</u>	3	Design argument 169-76; Hume's critique of the teleological argument, <i>Readings</i> 93-99
	9	Compatibilism 88-97		5	God: ontological & wager arguments 176-85
	14	Libertarianism 97-102; Chisholm, "Freedom and the Self," <i>Readings</i> 106-14			<b>Essay 4: Kierkegaard on faith (from Fear and Trembling), Readings 271-81 (due Apr. 8)</b>
	16	Holmstrom, "Firming Up Soft Determinism," <i>Readings</i> 304-17		10	Problem of evil 185-95
		<b>Essay 2: Strawson, "Moral Responsibility," Readings 318-27 (due Feb. 19)</b>		12	Ethical relativism/divine command 197-211
	21	Personal identity: body, soul 104-118		17	Utilitarianism 211-19; Mill, <i>Readings</i> 358-66
	23	Memory theory 118-25; Schechtman, "Identity and the Past," <i>Readings</i> 235-43		19	Kantian Ethics 220-26
	28	Dennett, "The Origin of Selves," <i>Readings</i> 254-65			<b>Essay 5: Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, Readings 378-85 (due Apr. 22)</b>
<u>Mar.</u>	1	<b>Mid-semester exam</b> (in class)		24	Virtue Ethics 226-32; Hursthouse, "Normative Virtue Ethics," <i>Readings</i> 674-84
	6	Mind-body dualism 126-39		26	Nagel on the Absurdity of life, <i>Readings</i> 825-34
	8	Behaviorism/Identity theory 139-46	<u>May</u>	1	[No class: redefined Friday class]
				4	(Friday) <b>Final exam 12:30-2:30 p.m.</b> (in class)

The **semester grade** is based on:

- Five 500-word essays on questions based on readings (10 pts each); due as email attachments by midnight.
- Exams: mid-semester: on two previously announced questions (20 pts); final: on three questions (30 points).
- There is no separate grade for attendance or participation, but both affect the grading of essays and exams.
- You need to **outline readings** before each class (based on questions I provide) to prepare to discuss in class the main claims, arguments, objections, and unclear issues. If you don't understand something in the reading, **consult with others** on the course Facebook site **before** class so that you are prepared.
- If you miss a class or are not prepared to discuss a reading in class when called on, you need to send me a 300-word essay on the reading before the next class (unless you've made other arrangements with me). This is to make sure you don't get behind. You can lose points if you don't turn in the essay.
- 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 10-11, 2:15-5 (3:30 on Dept colloquium days). **Phone:** 845-5619 (office), 324-4199 (cell). **Email:** [sdaniel@philosophy.tamu.edu](mailto:sdaniel@philosophy.tamu.edu). **Class website:** [philosophy.tamu.edu/%7Esdaniel/251sy12a.html](http://philosophy.tamu.edu/%7Esdaniel/251sy12a.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/>.