



Syllabus for PHIL 251.505: Introduction to Philosophy

Monday & Wednesday: 4:10-5:25 (YMCA 109)

Fall 2013; Dr. Stephen H. Daniel



In **Introduction to Philosophy** students 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 available at Notes-n-Quotes (across University Blvd from the Mitchell Physics Building).

<u>Aug.</u>	26	What is Philosophy? 1-13	<u>Oct.</u>	16	God: religious experiences, cosmological argument 156-69
	28	Activity of Philosophy, Readings 1-7, 26-31		21	*Design argument 169-76; Hume's critique: <i>Readings</i> 93-99
<u>Sept.</u>	2	Knowledge & Skepticism 42-57		23	Kierkegaard on faith, <i>Readings</i> 519-25 & "Faith and Reason" reading
	4	*Huemer on Skepticism: <i>Readings</i> 47-57		(25)	Essay 3: Ontological/ wager arguments 176-85
	(6)	Essay 1: Empiricism 57-65; Berkeley Readings 278-80, 290-96		28	Problem of evil 185-95
	9	Rationalism 67-74		30	Ethical relativism/divine command 197-211
	11	*Descartes on Knowledge <i>Readings</i> 242-55	<u>Nov.</u>	4	Utilitarianism 211-19
	16	Hume 65-67 & <i>Readings</i> 284-90; Kant <i>Readings</i> 555-56		6	*Act/rule utilitarianism, <i>Readings</i> 352-65
	18	Free will/hard determinism 77-88		11	Kantian/duty ethics <i>Readings</i> 486-99
	(20)	Essay 2: Compatibilism & libertarianism 88-101		13	Virtue Ethics 226-32, <i>Readings</i> 425-28
	23	Strawson on freedom, <i>Readings</i> 318-27		(15)	Essay 4: Rawls & Nozick on Justice Readings 379-87
	25	Sartre on freedom: <i>Readings</i> 195-206		18	Nietzsche on morality <i>Readings</i> 378-85
	30	Personal identity 104-125		20	Epictetus: meaning of life <i>Readings</i> 607-16
<u>Oct.</u>	2	*Mind-body dualism 126-39		25	Nagel on the absurdity of life, <i>Readings</i> 825-34
	7	Physicalist theories 139-48, 152-54		27	[No class: Thanksgiving holiday]
	9	Against Functionalism 148-51; Jackson, "Qualia" <i>Readings</i> 127-36	<u>Dec.</u>	2	[No class: redefined Friday]
	14	Mid-semester exam (in class)		9	(Monday) Final exam 3:30-5:30 p.m. (in class)

- The **semester grade** is based on:
 - four 500-word essays on [questions](#) (10 pts each); due at Assignments on [eCampus](#) Friday midnight.
 - mid-semester exam (two questions, 10 pts each) and final exam (three questions, 10 pts each)
 - answers to questions on readings on five marked (*) days; turned in **prior to class** (2 pts per day)
- 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 (using the [questions in the reading packets](#)) to prepare to discuss in class central claims, arguments, and objections. If something in the readings puzzles you, consult with others (e.g., in the Discussion page on [eCampus](#)) **before class** so that you are prepared.
- If you miss a class, send Dr. Daniel or John Forcey short answers to the posted questions so that we can provide you feedback and you don't get behind.
- To communicate with Dr. Daniel about grades or graded material, use [eCampus](#).
- If you miss the mid-semester or final exam, contact Dr. D immediately. Our 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.

Dr. Daniel office hours (YMCA 417): Mon/Wed 11:30-3:00. **Phone:** 845-5619 (office), 324-4199 (cell); **Email:** sdaniel@tamu.edu. **Web:** philosophy.tamu.edu/~sdaniel/.

TA: John Forcey office hours (YMCA 423): Tues/Thurs 11:00-12:30. **Phone:** 845-5660. **Email:** j-forcey@philosophy.tamu.edu. **Web:** philosophy.tamu.edu/People/Grads/Forcey/.

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 fail the course. For information on cheating and plagiarism, go to <http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu/>.