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).

Aug. 28 What is Philosophy? 1-13
30 Activity of Philosophy, Readings 1-7, 26-31
Sept 4 Knowledge & Skepticism 42-57
6 Hume on Induction, Readings 284-91
Essay 1: Hueneman on Skepticism: Readings 47-57 (due Sept. 9)
11 Empiricism 57-67
13 Rationalism 67-75; Plato, Readings 94-100
18 Kant, Readings 201-11
20 Free will/hard determinism 77-88
25 Compatibilism 88-97
27 Libertarianism 97-102

Oct. 2 Strawson on freedom and responsibility, Readings 318-27
4 Personal identity: body, soul 104-118
9 Memory theory 118-25
11 Mid-semester exam (in class)
16 Mind-body dualism 126-39

Oct. 18 Behaviorism/Identity theory 139-46
23 Functionalism 146-54
25 Nagel, “What Is It Like to Be a Bat?” Readings 381-91
30 God: arguments & religious experience 156-64

Nov. 1 Cosmological argument 164-69

Essay 3: Design argument 169-76 & Hume’s critique: Readings 93-99 (due Nov. 4)

Oct. 31 Cosmological argument 164-69
6 God: ontological & wager arguments 176-85
8 Problem of evil 185-95
13 Kierkegaard on faith, Readings 271-81
15 Ethical relativism/divine command 197-211

Essay 4: Utilitarianism 211-19; Mill, Readings 358-66 (due Nov. 18)

Dec. 4 Nagel on the Absurdity of life, Readings 825-34
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/.