



Syllabus for PHIL 251.200: Introduction to Philosophy

Tuesday & Thursday: 9:35-10:50 (YMCA 113)

Spring 2016; Dr. Stephen H. Daniel



In **Introduction to Philosophy** students develop the critical-thinking skills needed to write and speak effectively about God, reason, the mind-body relation, knowledge, identity, freedom, ethics, and political relations. 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.

Textbook: *The Norton Introduction to Philosophy*, ed. Gideon Rosen et al.

<u>Jan.</u>	19	God: rational arguments 3-15, 43-53	<u>Mar.</u>	22	Free will 583-97
	21	Practical rationality & belief, Pascal 54-64		24	Freedom & Wolff 621-31
	26	Basic beliefs: Wm. James, Plantinga 76-96		29	Objective morality 641-46, 657-67
	28	Induction, Hume 133-50		31	Nagel on ethics 668-76
<u>Feb.</u>	2	Causation 192-97, 223-36	<u>Apr.</u>	5	Doing what is right 699-704, 711-20
	4	Other minds, skepticism 237-43, 282-93		7	Hume on the passions 720-31
	9	Knowledge of the external world 294-312	(9)		Essay 2 Saturday midnight Kant on moral motivation 732-43
	11	Contextualism, best explanation 318-35		12	Moral reasoning, J. S. Mill 744-62
	(13)	Essay 1 Saturday midnight Is Mind Material? Descartes/Ryle 351-71		14	Contractarianism 774-81
	16	Mental states/computers 380-96		19	Intuitions in ethics 795-804
	18	Consciousness/Nagel 397-411		21	Rights, utilitarian basis of State 955-72
	23	Consciousness/Chalmers 430-39		26	Value of liberty, J. S. Mill 973-78, 983-91
	25	Ontology & fiction 494-507		28	Equality 1037-56
<u>Mar.</u>	1	Science & metaphysics 523-37	<u>May</u>	3	[No class: redefined Friday class]
	3	Mid-semester exam		5	(Thurs) Final exam 12:30-2:30 p.m. (in class)
	8	Personal identity & Locke 538-51			
	10	Personal identity & Parfit 558-70			

- The **semester grade** is based on:
 - answers to daily reading questions at Assignments on [eCampus](#): submitted **no later than 2 a.m. the night of class**, starting Jan 26 (75 pts). **Each answer must refer to the page number(s) of the reading on which the answer is drawn.**
 - two 500-word [essays](#) (10 pts each); due at Assignments on [eCampus](#) Sunday midnight.
 - mid-semester exam (two questions, 10 pts each) and final exam (three questions, 10 pts each)
 - total possible points: 145; minimum grades: 129=A, 114=B; 99=C, 84=D.
- There is no separate grade for attendance or participation, but both will affect your mastery of the material. [Student Rule 7](#) notes that you are expected to attend all classes.
- You should prepare answers to questions before each class: you will be asked about them. Use the [questions in the reading packets](#) as the basis for classroom discussions of central claims, arguments, and objections.
- If you miss the essays, mid-semester, or final exam, contact me immediately. My expectations of the essays rise if they are submitted past deadlines, but you should definitely still turn in assignments even after they are due (but no more than one week late) for some credit.
- The final exam (worth 30 points) draws together themes raised throughout the semester.

Office hours (YMCA 417): Tues/Thurs 11:00-12:45, 2:00-3:30. **Phone:** 979-324-4199 (cell); **email:** sdaniel@tamu.edu. **Web:** philosophy.tamu.edu/~sdaniel/.

Students with disabilities are guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact [Disability Services](#), 757 West Campus Blvd, 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: no second chances. For information on cheating and plagiarism, go to <http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu/>.