



## Syllabus for PHIL 251.200: Introduction to Philosophy

Tuesday & Thursday 12:45-2:00 (YMCA 113)

Fall 2016; Dr. Stephen H. Daniel



In **Introduction to Philosophy** students develop the critical-thinking skills needed to write and speak effectively about the history of Western philosophy and issues regarding knowledge, mind, freedom, the self, religious belief, the world, and morality. 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:** *Sophie's World* [SW] by Jostein Gaarder  
*Think: A Compelling Introduction to Philosophy* [T] by Simon Blackburn  
*The Grasshopper: Games, Life, and Utopia* [G] by Bernard Suits

<u>Aug.</u> 30	SW 3-78: Philosophy up to Plato	<u>Oct.</u> 25	T 149-76: God/Arguments & Evil
<u>Sept.</u> 1	SW 79-161: Plato to Christianity	27*	T 176-92: <a href="#">God/Miracles &amp; Belief</a>
6	SW 162-243: Middle Ages to Descartes	<u>Nov.</u> 1	T 193-211: Logic
8*	SW 244-337: <a href="#">Spinoza to Kant</a>	3	T 211-232: Plausibility & Chance
13	SW 338-422: Romanticism to Darwin	8	T 233-50: Realism
15	SW 423-507: Freud to "The Big Bang"	10	T 250-69: Idealism
(18)	(Sunday) <a href="#">Essay 1</a>	(13)	(Sunday) <a href="#">Essay 2</a>
20	T 1-13: Introduction to Philosophy	15	T 270-86: Ethical reasons
22	T 15-32: Descartes: Doubt/Self	17*	T 286-98: <a href="#">Ethical relativism</a>
27	T 32-48: Descartes: Knowledge	(18)	(Friday: Q-drop deadline)
29*	T 49-65: <a href="#">Mind: Locke/Leibniz</a>	22	G ix-xxiii, 8-20: Rules of the Game
<u>Oct.</u> 4	T 65-80: Analysis/Private Language	(24)	(No class: Thanksgiving)
6	T 81-99: Determinism/Compatibilism	29	G 24-43, 96-122: Goals & Roles
11	T 100-119: Compatibilism/Freedom	<u>Dec.</u> 1	G 126-50: Make-Believe
13	<a href="#">Mid-semester exam</a> (in class)	6	G 165-96: "Playing" games
18	T 120-35: Self/Substance	14	(Wed) <a href="#">Final exam 8-10 a.m</a>
20	T 135-48: Self/Identity		

\* Answers to [daily reading questions](#) due online

- The **semester grade** is based on:
  - mid-semester exam (two questions, 10 pts each) and final exam (three questions, 10 pts each)
  - two 500-word [essays](#) (10 pts each); due at Assignments on [eCampus](#) Sunday midnight.
  - answers to reading questions (\*) at Assignments on [eCampus](#): submitted **no later than midnight after the class meeting**, starting Sept 8 (33 pts).
  - total possible points: 106; minimum grades: 90=A, 80=B; 70=C, 58=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 [daily reading questions](#) 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 same applies to the answers to reading questions.
- The final exam draws together themes raised throughout the semester.

**Dr. Daniel office hrs** (YMCA 417): Tues & Thurs: 9:30-12:30. **Phone:** 979-324-4199 (cell); **Web:** [philosophy.tamu.edu/~sdaniel/](http://philosophy.tamu.edu/~sdaniel/) **Email:** [sdaniel@tamu.edu](mailto:sdaniel@tamu.edu).

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](#), Student Services at White Creek Complex, West Campus, 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/>.