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 (available at bookstores and online); and (2) selections from Readings on the Ultimate Questions (3rd ed), ed. by Nils Rauhut, and the Hume and Kierkegaard readings from Pojman and Vaughn’s Philosophy: The Quest for Truth (all downloadable at the Evans Library Course Reserves website http://library-reserves.tamu.edu/areslocal/index.htm). To print and bind the readings at the least cost, go to Notes-n-Quotes (across University Blvd from Blocker).

Jan. 18 What is Philosophy? 1-13
20 Philosophical tools 15-40
25 Knowledge 42-48
27* Skepticism 48-57; Readings 32-41
Feb. 1 Empiricism 57-67
3* Rationalism 67-75
   Essay 1: Readings 47-57 (due Feb. 6)
8 Free will/hard determinism 77-88
10* Compatibilism 88-97
15 Libertarianism 97-102; Readings 106-14
17* Personal identity 104-113
   Essay 2: Readings 172-82 (due Feb. 20)
22 Body theories 113-16; Readings 165-71
24* Soul theory 116-18; Readings 152-61
Mar. 1 Memory theory 118-25
3 Mid-semester exam
8 Mind-body dualism 126-39
10* Critique of dualism, Readings 202-14
   Essay 3: Readings 249-61 (due Mar. 27)
29 God: arguments & religious experience 156-64
31* Cosmological arg 164-69; Readings 292-301
   Essay 4: Kierkegaard Read 166-71 (due Apr. 10)
Apr. 5 Design argument 169-76; Hume reading 93-99
7* God: ontological & wager arguments 176-85
   Essay 5: Readings 237-385 (due Apr. 24)
12 Problem of evil 185-95; Readings 341-51
14* Ethical relativism 197-207
19 Divine Command 208-11, Readings 385-88
21* Utilitarianism 211-19
   Essay 5: Readings 249-61 (due Mar. 27)
29 God: arguments & religious experience 156-64
31* Cosmological arg 164-69; Readings 292-301
   Essay 4: Kierkegaard Read 166-71 (due Apr. 10)
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14* Ethical relativism 197-207
19 Divine Command 208-11, Readings 385-88
21* Utilitarianism 211-19
   Essay 5: Readings 237-385 (due Apr. 24)
26 Kantian Ethics 220-26
28* Virtue Ethics 226-32
May 3 [No class: redefined Friday class]
11 (Wednesday) Final exam 8-10 a.m.

The semester grade is based on

- Twelve Thursday homeworks (begin Jan. 27): 200-word essays on questions about Tuesday/Thursday readings (4 points each). Send to TA as email attachments before Thursday class.
- Five 500-word homework essays on questions based on readings (10 pts each). Send to TA as email attachments by midnight Sunday.
- Mid-semester exam: in-class response to two previously announced questions (20 points).
- Final exam: in-class response to three previously announced questions (30 points).
- No separate grade for attendance or participation, but both affect the grading of essays and exams. If you miss the mid-semester or final exam, contact Dr. Daniel immediately. Expectations of the quality of essays rise if essays are submitted past the deadlines; grades are assessed accordingly.
- Minimum grades: 130=A, 115=B, 100=C, 85=D.