



**Syllabus for PHIL 251.502: Introduction to Philosophy**  
 Tuesday & Thursday: 2:20-3:35 (CHEN 112, but possibly YMCA 115)  
 Fall 2014; 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).

<p><u>Sept.</u> 2 <a href="#">What is Philosophy? 1-13</a>            4 <a href="#">Activity of Philosophy, Readings 1-7, 26-31</a>            9 *Knowledge &amp; Skepticism 42-57 (½ pt ea.)            11 Huemer on Skepticism: <i>Readings</i> 47-57            (14) *<b>Empiricism 57-65</b>            16 Berkeley <i>Readings</i> 278-80, 290-96            18 Hume 65-67 &amp; <i>Readings</i> 284-90            23 Rationalism 67-74, Kant <i>Readings</i> 555-57            25 Free will/hard determinism 77-88            (28) <b>Essay 1: Compatibilism 88-97</b>            30 Libertarianism 97-102</p> <p><u>Oct.</u> 2 Strawson on freedom, <i>Readings</i> 318-27            7 Sartre on freedom: <i>Readings</i> 195-206            9 *Personal identity 104-125            14 Mind-body dualism 126-39            16 Physicalist theories 139-48, 152-54            21 Against Functionalism 148-51; Jackson, "Qualia" <i>Readings</i> 127-36            23 <b>Mid-semester exam</b> (in class)</p>	<p><u>Oct.</u> 28 God: religious experiences, cosmological argument 156-69            30 *Design argument 169-76; Hume's critique, <i>Readings</i> 93-99</p> <p><u>Nov.</u> 4 Ontological/wager arguments 176-85            6 Pascal, James, Kierkegaard, <i>Readings</i> 350-63            (9) <b>Essay 2: Problem of evil 185-95</b>            11 Ethical relativism/divine command 197-211            13 Utilitarianism 211-19            18 Act/rule utilitarianism, <i>Readings</i> 352-65            20 Kantian/duty ethics <i>Readings</i> 486-99            (23) <b>Essay 3: Virtue Ethics, Readings 1-11</b>            25 Nietzsche on morality, <i>Readings</i> 378-85            27 [No class: Thanksgiving holiday]</p> <p><u>Dec.</u> 2 *Rawls &amp; Nozick on Justice, <i>Readings</i> 379-87            4 Epictetus: meaning of life, <i>Readings</i> 607-16            9 Nagel on the absurdity of life, <i>Readings</i> 825-34            17 (Wed) <b>Final exam 1:00-3:00 p.m.</b> (in class)</p>
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- The **semester grade** is based on:
  - three 500-word essays on [questions](#) (10 pts each); due at Assignments on [eCampus](#) Sunday midnight.
  - answers to questions on readings on marked (\*) days; turn in before class or **by Sunday midnight** (23 pts)
  - mid-semester exam (two questions, 10 pts each) and final exam (three questions, 10 pts each)
- There is no separate grade for attendance or participation, but both can affect your mastery of the material. [Student Rule 7](#) notes that you are expected to attend all classes.
- You should prepare answers to reading questions before each class (using the [questions in the reading packets](#)) to prepare to discuss in class central claims, arguments, and objections.
- If you miss the mid-semester or final exam, contact Dr. D immediately. My expectation of the quality of essays rises 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): Tues/Thurs 11:00-2:00. **Phone:** 845-5619 (office), 324-4199 (cell); **Email:** [sdaniel@tamu.edu](mailto:sdaniel@tamu.edu). **Web:** [philosophy.tamu.edu/~sdaniel/](http://philosophy.tamu.edu/~sdaniel/).

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 [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/>.