Syllabus for PHIL 251.503: Introduction to Philosophy  
Tuesday & Thursday: 12:45-2:00 (PETR 113)  
Spring 2010; Dr. Stephen H. Daniel

In Introduction to Philosophy you will develop the critical-thinking skills needed to write and speak effectively about philosophic method, the mind-body relation, freedom, ethics, political obligation, religious belief, and knowledge. This means being able to identify issues, give arguments for philosophical positions, critique those arguments, and formulate replies to those criticisms.

Textbook: selections from the 3rd and 4th editions of Doing Philosophy by Theodore Schick and Lewis Vaughn. The readings are available for downloading at the Evans Library Course Reserves Website (http://library-reserves.tamu.edu/areslocal/index.htm). I recommend you print the book, gathering pages together in a spiral- or three-ring binder.

Jan.  19  Introduction IV: 2-12  
21  Philosophic method IV: 12-27  
26  H  Mind-Body III: 66-82  
28  Behaviorism III: 82-101  
Feb.  2  Q  Mind-Brain identity III: 101-114  
  4  H  Freedom & determinism IV: 188-212  
  9  Q  Compatibilism IV: 213-229  
 16  H  Libertarianism IV: 230-41  
 18  H  Personal identity IV: 264-81  
 23  H  The Soul & memory IV: 281-300  
 25  H  Continuity theory of self IV: 300-309  
Mar.  2  Mid-semester exam  
  4  Q  Ethical relativism III: 326-38  
  9  H  Ethics & religion III: 338-46  
 11  Mid-semester exam  
 23  Q  Rule utilitarianism III: 361-67  
 25  H  Duty ethics III: 368-79  
 30  H  Political justice & Care III: 379-95  
Apr.  1  Q  Virtue ethics III: 396-407  
  6  Q  God: cosmological argument IV: 458-72  
  8  H  God: teleological argument IV: 472-87  
 13  H  God: ontological & wager args IV: 496-507  
 15  H  The Problem of evil IV: 508-24  
 20  Q  Faith & meaning: IV: 525-38  
 22  H  Knowledge IV: 562-68; Plato III: 537-46  
 27  H  Rationalism: Descartes III: 546-53  
 29  H  Empiricism (Hume) & Kant IV: 585-91  
May  4  [No class: redefined Friday class]  
 12  (Wednesday) Final exam 8-10 a.m.

The semester grade is based on:

- Five quizzes at the beginning of classes marked Q above. Each worth 5 points. Quiz questions will be announced in the previous class.
- Seven 300-word homework essays on questions announced in the previous class. Due at start of classes marked H above. Each worth 5 points.
- 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).
- There is no separate grade for attendance or participation, but demonstration of class preparedness affects the grading of essays.
- Final minimum grades: 90=A, 80=B, 70=C, 58=D.

If you miss an in-class quiz or fail to submit a homework essay on time, you must submit a 300-word essay that answers the assigned questions prior to the next class. 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.

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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 Department 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/.