

COURSE SYLLABUS

Spring 2011

PHI 311 American Pragmatism
TR (8:55 PM-10:05 AM)
Classroom: Zinzendorf 100

Instructor: Dr. Bernie Cantens
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Office Hours: T R 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM
W 11:00AM -12:00 PM

Text

Pragmatism Old and New Edited by Susan Haack with associate editor Robert Lane. Prometheus Books: New York, 2006.g

ISBN – 13:978-159103459-3 / ISBN – 10: 159102359-9 / 741 pages.

Course Description

This course presents a comprehensive view of Classical American Philosophy from 1860's to the end of the 20th Century. It begins with the writings of Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914), founder of American Pragmatism, and William James (1842-1910). The course also studies the influence of Pragmatism on contemporary philosophy in the US and abroad through the works of John Dewey (1859-1952), George Herbert Mead (1863-1931), Ferdinand Canning, Scott Schiller (1864-1937), Frank Plumpton Ramsey (1903-1930), Morton G. White (1917-), Willard van Orman Quine (1908-2000), Nelson Goodman (1906-1998), Hilary Putnam (1926-), and Richard Rorty (1931-2007).

Course objectives

The objectives of this course are the following: (1) to introduce students to the origins of American Pragmatism through the writings of Peirce and James; (2) to introduce students to the philosophical fundamentals of American Pragmatism; (3) to introduce students to the pluralistic nature of American Pragmatism; (4) to expose students to the writings of the most prominent 20th century pragmatists; (5) to introduce students to the influence and development of American Pragmatism in the 20th Century; and (6) to present to students the interdisciplinary aspect of pragmatism.

Learning Outcomes

The following outcomes are expected of the students who complete this course. Students should be capable of the following: (1) explain the origins of American Pragmatism; (2) describe the fundamental philosophical concepts of American Pragmatism; (3) distinguish among the various historical strands of Pragmatism; (4) identify the philosophical concepts that distinguish the different versions of pragmatism; (5) explain Peirce's version of Pragmaticism as elaborated in his original writings; (6) explain James's version of Pragmatism and should be familiar with his

writings; (7) explain the development and influence of pragmatism in the 20th century; (8) recognize how pragmatism affects other disciplines.

Assessment

2 Reflection Papers and Presentations (40 points)

Students will complete two philosophical essays of 7 to 10 pages on a topic directly related to this course. The kind of paper expected is a “top-down, thesis-governed” essay (see hand out). The students will be graded according to four criteria: (1) Whether the introduction has (i) a clear and explicit thesis and (ii) an overview of the whole essay; (2) Whether the paper is well organized and demonstrates a logical flow of ideas; (3) Whether there are well constructed and developed arguments and/or well developed critical explanations of philosophical problems and solutions that support the thesis; and (4) Whether the writing skills, such as word use, sentence structure, grammar, and punctuation are correct.

2 Exams (40 Points)

There will be two exams throughout the semester. Each exam is worth 20% of the final grade. The exam will be composed of essays and short answers.

Exam 1: February 22, 2011

Exam 2: May 2, 2011

2 Presentations (10 Points)

Students will give two in-class power point presentations about the life and works of two American philosophers.

Extra Credit

Students will have the opportunity of earning up to a maximum of 3 extra credit points. Students who attend 3 philosophy club meetings, or other selected meetings with philosophical content (must be approved by professor beforehand), will earn 3 extra credit points. If you only attend 1 or 2 meetings you will receive no extra credit.

Chronological Order of Assignments and Exams

February 22, 2011 Exam 1	(20 points)
March 3, 2011 Reflection Paper 1	(20 points)
April 14, 2011 Reflection Paper 2	(25 points)
May 2, 2011 (1:30 PM) Exam 2	(25 points)
Presentations: to be schedule on the first week of class.	(10 points)

Learning Methods

Multimedia This course will combine traditional classroom lecturing with multimedia presentations. Some lectures will be supplemented with power point presentations and Internet information. All course materials, such as syllabus, review questions, term paper information, etc., are posted on my web site <http://berniephilosophy.com> site. This will give the students direct access to most of the materials at their convenience.

Class Dynamic Class participation is expected of all students enrolled in this course. Questions and class discussions are encouraged as an effective vehicle to motivate the student’s interest in

the subject matter. *If there are few questions and little discussion taking place in the classroom, the professor reserves the right to choose individual students to answer questions or give their view and arguments on a particular issue.* Therefore, careful daily reading of the text and handouts is essential for success in this course.

Attendance Policy:

Attendance is mandatory. Students will lose 1 point for every unexcused absence up to a possible 5 points. Students can make up lost points in unexcused absences by actively participating in class discussions. Unexcused absences included only the following: (1) sickness with a doctors' note, (2) death in the family, or (3) some other extraordinary event.

Academic Dishonesty Policy

See Student Handbook pp. 32 – 38

Student Behavior:

See Student Handbook pp. 38 – 40

Course Requirements

Reading of required text on a daily basis is essential to succeed in this course. Students are expected to be ready for class. This means that he or she should read the assigned chapters before the professor introduces it. Class participation, note taking, and discussion are highly encouraged. The study of philosophy does not only consist of memorization; students must also read analytically and reflect critically on the reading. When studying difficult material, it is often necessary to read it several times before a proper understanding is achieved. Do not be disappointed if you do not understand a philosophical text on your first reading.

Grading/Measures of evaluations:

Reflection Paper:	20%
Exam 1:	20%
Exam 2:	25%
Reflection Paper:	25%
Presentation:	10%

A=100-93; A- =92-90; B+=89-87; B=86-84; B- = 83-80; C+=79-77; C = 76-70; D=69-60; F=<59

PROGRAM AND READING ASSIGNMENTS
Lists of Readings, assignments, Exams and Dates:

Week 1	I. INTRODUCTION: What is American Philosophy? Peirce: The Categories (1867/1903) pp. 177-208.
Week 2	II. PRAGMATISM: HOW DID IT ALL BEGIN? Peirce: The Categories (1867/1903) pp. 177-208. Peirce: The Consequences of Four Incapacities (1868) pp. 69-105.

Week 3	Peirce: The Fixation of Belief (1877) pp. 107-12 Peirce: How To Make Our Ideas Clear (1878) pp. 127-150.
Week 4	James: What Pragmatism Means (1906) pp. 289-308. James: The Will to Believe (1896) pp. 221-146.
Week 5	Peirce: Pragmatism and Pragmaticism (1902, 1905 and 1907) pp. 151-167.
Week 6	EXAM 1
Week 7	III. PRAGMATISM, METAPHYSICS AND TRUTH James: Pragmatism's Conception of Truth (1906) pp. 309-327.
Week 8	Dewey: Truth and Consequences (1911) pp. 341-361. Dewey: Common Sense and Scientific Inquiry (1938) pp. 443-463.
Week 9	Dewey: School Conditions and the Training of Thought (1910) pp. 331-340. Dewey: Quest for Certainty (1929) pp. 379-394.
Week 10	Schiller: The Making of Truth (1907) pp. 487-509. Ramsey: Belief, Truth, and Inference (1926) pp. 511-516.
Week 11	Putnam: Is There Anything to Say about Reality and Truth? (1987) pp. 621-633. Rorty: Pragmatism, Relativism and Irrationalism (1979) pp. 635-655.
Week 12	IV. PRAGMATISM, ETHICS AND SOCIAL-POLITICAL THOUGHT James: The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life (1891) pp. 247-272. Dewey: The Construction of Good (1929) pp. 395-422.
Week 13	Dewey: Philosophy and Democracy (1919) pp. 363-378.
Week 14	Mead: Mind, Self and Society (1934) pp. 465-476 Mead: The Social Self (1913) pp. 477-485.
Week 15	V. 20th CENTURY AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY

	White: The Analytic and the Synthetic an Untenable Dualism (1950) pp. 559-574. Quine: Natural Kinds (1969) pp. 575-597. Goodman: Words, Works, Worlds (1975) pp. 599-620.
May 2 Monday (1:30PM)	FINAL EXAM