

COURSE SYLLABUS
Moravian College
Spring 2013

PHI 311 American Pragmatism
MW (11:45 AM-12:55 PM)
Classroom: Comenius 304
Instructor: Dr. Bernie Cantens
Office: Comenius 107
Phone/E-Mail: (610) 861-1589/bcantens@moravian.edu
Web Page: <http://berniephilosophy.com/>
Office Hours: MW 9:00-10:30

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

A study of classical American Philosophy with emphasis on the works of Charles S. Peirce, William James, and John Dewey.

Course objectives

The objectives of this course are the following: (1) to introduce students to the origins of American Pragmatism through the writings of Charles Sanders Peirce (1860' and 1870's); (2) to introduce students to the common philosophical doctrines of American Pragmatism through the writings of Peirce, James, and Dewey; (3) to introduce students to the pluralistic nature of American Pragmatism through the writings of Peirce, James, and Dewey; and (4) 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 Peirce's early Pragmatism; (3) describe the fundamental philosophical concepts of James's Pragmatism; (4) describe the fundamental philosophical concepts of Dewey's Pragmatism; (5) identify the philosophical concepts that distinguish the different versions of Pragmatism; (6) explain Peirce's version of Pragmatism as elaborated in his later writings; (7) explain the development and influence of pragmatism in the 20th century; (8) recognize how pragmatism affects other disciplines.

Assessment

5 Assignments (25 Points)

1 Reflection Papers and Presentations (25 points)

Students will complete 1 philosophical essay 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. The students will be graded according to four criteria: (1) Whether the introduction has a clear and explicit thesis and 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 (50 Points)

There will be two exams throughout the semester. Each exam is worth 25% of the final grade. The exam will be composed of essays and short answers.

Exam 1: February 25, 2013

Exam 2: April 29, 2013

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.

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 website <http://berniephilosophy.com> . 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.

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 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:

Assignments 25%
 Exam 1 25%
 Paper 25%
 Exam 2 25%

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 Jan. 14	I. INTRODUCTION: What is American Philosophy?	ASSIGNMENTS DUE ON WED.
	CHARLES SANDERS PEIRCE	
Jan. 16	Peirce: The Fixation of Belief (1877) pp. 107-12	
Week 2 Jan 21	NO CLASS	
Jan. 23	Peirce: The Fixation of Belief (1877) pp. 107-12	Assignment 1 (Intro)
Week 3 Jan. 28-30	Peirce: The Consequences of Four Incapacities (1868) pp. 69-105.	
Week 4 Feb. 4-6	Peirce: How To Make Our Ideas Clear (1878) pp. 127-150.	Assignment 2 (Fixation)
Week 5 Feb.11-13	Peirce: Pragmatism and Pragmaticism (1902, 1905 and 1907) pp. 151-167.	
Week 6 Feb. 18-20	Peirce: The Categories (1867/1903) pp. 177-208.	Assignment 3 (The Consequences)
Week 7 Feb. 25	Midterm	

Feb. 27	NO CLASS	
March 4-6	SPRING BREAK	
	WILLIAM JAMES	
Week 8 March 11-13	James: Pragmatism's Conception of Truth (1906) pp. 309-327.	
Week 9 March 18-20	James: What Pragmatism Means (1906) pp. 289-308.	Assignment 4 (Conception of Truth)
Week 10 March 25-27	James: The Will to Believe (1896) pp. 221-146.	Assignment 5 (What Pragmatism Means)
	JOHN DEWEY	
Week 11 April 1-3	Dewey: School Conditions and the Training of Thought (1910) pp. 331-340. Dewey: Truth and Consequences (1911) pp. 341-361.	
Week 12 April 8-10	Dewey: Quest for Certainty (1929) pp. 379-394.	PAPER
Week 13 April 15-17	Dewey: Common Sense and Scientific Inquiry (1938) pp. 443-463.	
Week 14 April 22-24	Dewey: Philosophy and Democracy (1919) pp. 363-378.	Assignment 6 (Quest for Certainty)
April 29, Mon 1:30 PM	FINAL EXAM	

