



Pragmatism

Course Syllabus

PHIL 41060-001-16324/51060-001-16331
Spring, 2024
TR 2:15-3:30
Bowman 315

Dr. Frank Ryan
Office: 320-E Bowman
Hours: MW 2:30-3:45; TR 2:15-3:30
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Course Design: As America's distinctive "home-grown" philosophy, pragmatism embodies the values of action, problem-solving, and consensus-building within a pluralistic society. The core of this course examines the seminal works of the classical American pragmatists: Peirce, James, and Dewey. Special attention will be devoted to a phenomenology of experience that undercuts the dualisms of mind and matter, subject and object, self and world. After reviewing the revival of pragmatism in the second half of the 20th century led by Quine, Putnam, and Rorty, we'll introduce transactional pragmatism--a neo-classical alternative.

Required Texts: 1) *Pragmatism and Classical American Philosophy, Second Edition*, Ed. John J. Stuhr
2) Other required readings available on the Canvas course site.

Grading: 54% is determined by three unit essay assignments (18% ea.)
6% is determined by a paper abstract
25% is determined by a research paper. The first draft may be revised and resubmitted for a higher grade. Undergraduate students are asked to submit a paper of 5-7 pages in length. Graduate students should submit a substantial paper of 12-15 pages.
15% is determined by seminar contributions.

Important: *Assignments and papers submitted late will be penalized a full letter grade for each class day after the deadline. A late penalty for a first draft carries over to the final draft.*

Grades are calculated according to the standard scale:

≥ 93 = A, 90-92 = A-, 88-89 = B+, 83-88 = B, 80-82 = B-, 78-79 = C+, 73-77 = C, 70-72 = C-, 68-69 = D+, 60-67 = D, ≤ 59 = F

Expectations: This course is theory-intensive. As such, regular attendance and completion of reading assignments is expected for each class. You are encouraged to contribute regularly to class discussions, and to consult your instructor for assistance with any aspect of this course.

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment
		S: Stuhr C: On Canvas	
1/16	The Origins of Pragmatism		
1/18	Posits of Pragmatism--Stuhr <i>Instructions for Paper Topic</i>	S: 1-9	
1/23	Milestones of Pragmatism--Ryan Introduction to Peirce	C: 15-26 S: 43-44	
I. Charles Sanders Peirce			
1/25	Belief, Doubt, and Inquiry	S: 67-71	
1/30	Ways of Fixing Belief	S: 71-76	
2/1	Introspection, Intuition, & Signs	S: 54-59	
2/6	Habits, Signs and the Incognizable	S: 62-67	
2/8	The Categories	S: 97-105	
II. William James			
2/13	Introduction; Thought as Personal	S: 140-144, 161-167	
2/15	The Continuity of Thought	S: 167-172	<i>Unit I Essay Assignment Due</i>
2/20	Mind-Independent Objects	S: 172-178	
2/22	Radical Empiricism	S: 178-184	
2/27	Cognition and Reference	S: 184-193	
2/29	What Pragmatism Means	S: 193-202	
III. John Dewey			
3/5	Biography & Introduction	S: 431-434	<i>Unit II Essay Assignment Due</i>
3/7	The Postulate of Immediate Empiricism	S: 455-460	
3/12	The “How” and What” of Experience	S: 460-465	
3/14	Toward a “Cultivated Naivety”	S: 465-471	
3/19	The Pattern of Inquiry	S: 482-491	<i>Paper Abstract Due</i>
3/21	Consciousness and Mind	C: 226-233	
3/25-3/31	<i>Spring Recess</i>		

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4/2	Focus, Fringe, and Feeling	C: 233-240	
4/4	Objects, Events, and Existence I	C: 240-245	
4/9	Objects, Events and Existence II	C: 245-250	
4/11	Aesthetic Experience	S: 518-530	<i>PAPER FIRST DRAFT DUE</i>
4/16	The Construction of Good	C: 230-240	
4/18	Democracy and Education	S: 491-497	<i>Unit III Essay Assignment Due</i>
IV. Neo-Pragmatism and Transaction			
4/23	Quine on Ontological Relativity	C: 27-45	
4/25	Putnam	C: Putnam 205-228	
4/30	Rorty	C: Rorty 3-7	
5/2	Transactional Pragmatism (Ryan)	C: 263-297	<i>REVISED PAPER DUE</i>

FINAL EXAM SESSION: Tuesday, May 7, 12:45-3:00
PAPER RETURN AND ‘SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION’