

**PHIL 3304: AMERICAN PRAGMATISM**  
**Spring 2015**

Instructor: Dr. Tanya Jeffcoat

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Office Hours: 1-2 MWF and by appointment

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Course Section (28107), time and location: 2:00-2:50 MWF, Irby 102

**Text:** Pragmatism and Classical American Philosophy, 2nd ed., John Stuhr, ed., Oxford UP, 2000. ISBN: 978-0-19-511830

**Recommended Texts:**

*The Essential Peirce*, Indiana University Press, 1992/1998. (2 vols.)

*The Essential Dewey*, Indiana University Press, 1998/2009. (2 vols.)

John McDermott: *The Drama of Possibility*, Fordham University Press, 2007.

*The Philosophy of John Dewey*, Chicago UP 1973

*The Writings of William James*, Chicago UP, 1977

*The Basic Writings of Josiah Royce*, Chicago UP, 1990

Leonard Harris: *Philosophy Born of Struggle*, Kendall/Hunt, 1983

Lewis Gordon: *An Introduction to Africana Philosophy*, Cambridge UP, 2008

Thomas Kasulis: *Intimacy or Integrity*, U of Hawai'i Press, 2002

**Course Description:** American Pragmatism will focus upon classical figures such as C.S. Peirce, William James, and John Dewey, but will also include more contemporary figures such as Richard Rorty, Hilary Putnam, Cornel West, and John McDermott. During the course, we will examine pragmatic approaches to epistemology, metaphysics, political philosophy, ethics, religion, and aesthetics. This course can count as the 3-credit requirement for the "History of Philosophy" area or 3 elective credits.

**Learning Outcomes:**

The goals of American Pragmatism are:

- \* To develop a basic understanding of the applications of philosophy and philosophical thinking.
- \* To understand the some of the major philosophical positions in American Pragmatism.
- \* To sharpen students' awareness of the world, society and human relationships in the context of philosophy.
- \* To instill an appreciation of the intersections between philosophy and real-world experiences.

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- \* Apply critical thinking skills to reading and writing.
- \* Explain and compare philosophical perspectives.
- \* Confidently participate in discussions of challenging texts and ideas.
- \* Develop an appreciation of the critical thinking skills required for functioning actively in the world.

**EVALUATION:** Grading will be based in large part on your participation in class discussions, which means that you should come to each class prepared by reading the articles in advance and being able to discuss the articles with your classmates. In most cases, you should read each article at least twice to be able to understand and effectively discuss the material. You will also need to discuss the articles relevant to your paper, which you will present at the end of the semester.

**Discussion and Homework (30%):**

You will write a few one- to two-page, single-spaced summaries of articles and distribute these to your classmates. These will facilitate discussion and serve as study guides for the mid-term and final.

For each article you read, you will need to answer the following. Write out your answers and bring them to class.

- a. What is the article about? (e.g., What is it arguing? What did it find out?)
- b. Why is the article important?
- c. What did you like most about the article? What did you like least?
- d. What are the implications of this article for future research, study, and/or writing?
- e. If you were the author, what would you do next?

**Mid-term and Final (30%):**

These will be take-home, essay exams. Each answer should be fully developed and completely respond to the question. The final is not comprehensive.

**Portfolio (10%):**

The portfolio is the process by which you produce your final paper. You will receive a detailed breakdown of the portfolio process. Due dates are found on the last page of the syllabus.

**Paper (25%):**

The paper is a product of the portfolio process. You will receive a style guide that details the specific paper requirements. The paper is due at the time of the final. You will present your work in progress during week 12 and have the opportunity to revise in light of comments received from your instructor and peers.

**Group work:**

You will also be given a few group assignments, and you should work cooperatively in your group.

**Grade Breakdown:**

Discussion and homework	30%
Portfolio	10%
Paper	25%
Mid-term (essays)	15%
Final (essays)	15%
Group Work	5%

Grades will be on a 10 point scale:

A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	0-59%

**Electronic Devices:** The use of all electronic information devices (except laptops) in the classroom (cell phones, headphones, etc.) is prohibited unless permission is granted by the instructor.

**Excused Absences:** I will only excuse an absence or tardiness if it results from a medical emergency, debilitating illness, family emergency, or participation in university sanctioned events. I require documentation or an alternative form of verification. It is up to the student to get an absence excused. I will presume all absences to be unexcused until the student presents proof to the contrary. Determination of whether an absence is excused or not is at the discretion of the instructor.

**Academic Integrity statement:**

The University of Central Arkansas affirms its commitment to academic integrity and expects all members of the university community to accept shared responsibility for maintaining academic integrity. Students in this course are subject to the provisions of the university's Academic Integrity Policy, approved by the Board of Trustees as Board Policy No. 709 on February 10, 2010, and published in the *Student Handbook*. Penalties for academic misconduct in this course may include a failing grade on an assignment, a failing grade in the course, or any other course-related sanction the instructor determines to be appropriate. Continued enrollment in this course affirms a student's acceptance of this university policy.

**Americans with Disabilities Act statement:**

The University of Central Arkansas adheres to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you need an accommodation under this Act due to a disability, please contact the UCA Office of Disability Support Services, 450-3613.

**Building Emergency Plan statement:**

An Emergency Procedures Summary (EPS) for the building in which this class is held will be discussed during the first week of this course. EPS documents for most buildings on campus are available at <http://uca.edu/mysafety/bep/>. Every student should be familiar with emergency procedures for any campus building in which he/she spends time for classes or other purposes.

**Title IX disclosure:**

If a student discloses an act of sexual harassment, discrimination, assault, or other sexual misconduct to a faculty member (as it relates to “student-on-student” or “employee-on-student”), the faculty member cannot maintain complete confidentiality and is required to report the act and may be required to reveal the names of the parties involved. Any allegations made by a student may or may not trigger an investigation. Each situation differs and the obligation to conduct an investigation will depend on those specific set of circumstances. The determination to conduct an investigation will be made by the Title IX Coordinator. For further information, please visit: <https://uca.edu/titleix>. *\*Disclosure of sexual misconduct by a third party who is not a student and/or employee is also required if the misconduct occurs when the third party is a participant in a university-sponsored program, event, or activity.*

**All students should familiarize themselves with all policies included in the *Student Handbook*, particularly the Sexual Harassment Policy and Academic Policies.**

**Course Schedule (subject to change as necessary):**

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due:
1/8/15 (Friday)	Introduction	Introduction to course	In-class writing assignment
1/12/15 (Monday)	History	Lecture on History/Context; Responding to Modern Philosophy	
1/14/15 (Wednesday)	History	Stuhr Introduction	
1/16/15 (Friday)	History	“American Scholar” 17-27	
1/19/15 (Monday)		<b>MLK HOLIDAY</b>	
1/21/15 (Wednesday)	History	“Self-Reliance,” 27-40	
1/23/15 (Friday)	History	“Metaphysical Club” handout	
1/26/15 (Monday)	History	“Fixation of Belief” 67-77	
1/28/15 (Wednesday)	History	James Intro, 140-151	

1/30/15 (Friday)	History	"Types of Philosophical Thinking," 151-161	Choose a Topic
02/02/15 (Monday)	History	"From Absolutism" handout	
02/04/15 (Wednesday)	Mind/Body	"The Stream of Thought," 161-181"	
02/06/15 (Friday)	Mind/Body	EN, CH. 7 handout	Topic Summary Due
02/09/15 (Monday)	Mind/Body	EN, continued	
02/11/15 (Wednesday)	Individual/Nature	"Time and Individuality" handout	
02/13/15 (Friday)	Individual/Nature	HNC handout (ch. 1)	
02/16/15 (Monday)	Individual/Nature	"Human Eros" handout	
02/18/15 (Wednesday)	Analysis/Critical Inquiry	"How to Make Our Ideas Clear," 77-88	<b>Exam One</b>
02/20/15 (Friday)		<b>CENTRAL APA</b>	<b>Work on Papers</b>
02/23/15 (Monday)	Analysis/Critical Inquiry	"How We Think"	Review of Sources Due
02/25/15 (Wednesday)	Analysis/Critical Inquiry	"Two Dogmas of Empiricism"	
02/27/15 (Friday)	Analysis/Critical Inquiry	Rorty handout	
03/02/15 (Monday)	Individual/Society	"Creative Democracy"	
03/04/15 (Wednesday)		<b>SAAP CONFERENCE</b>	<b>Work on Papers</b>
03/06/15 (Friday)		<b>SAAP CONFERENCE</b>	<b>Work on Papers</b>
03/09/15 (Monday)	Individual/Society	"Lost Individual," 498-504	Paper Abstract Due
03/11/15 (Wednesday)	Individual/Society	"Search for the Great Community," 504-518	
03/13/15 (Friday)	Individual/Society	Rorty <i>Philosophy and Social Hope</i> reading	
03/16/15 (Monday)	Individual/Society	"Democracy is Radical," "Latina Lesbians"	Revised Abstract Due
03/18/15 (Wednesday)	Individual/Society	<i>Race Matters</i> reading	
03/20/15 (Friday)	Individual/Society	Royce "Provincialism" 316	
03/23/15 (Monday)		<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	
03/25/15 (Wednesday)		<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	
03/27/15 (Friday)		<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	
03/30/15	Aesthetics	"The Live Creature"	Paper 1 <sup>st</sup> Drafts Due

(Monday)			
04/01/15 (Wednesday)	Aesthetics	“The Live Creature and ‘Ethereal Things’”	
04/03/15 (Friday)	Aesthetics	“‘Ethereal Things,’” cont.	
04/06/15 (Monday)	Aesthetics	“Having an Experience”	Paper Tutorials Begin
04/08/15 (Wednesday)	Aesthetics	Alexander reading	
04/10/15 (Friday)	Aesthetics	Shusterman reading	
04/13/15 (Monday)	Aesthetics	“Anaesthetic Experience”	
04/15/15 (Wednesday)	Faith/Reason	“The Will to Believe,” pp. 230-241	
04/17/15 (Friday)	Faith/Reason	CF Reading	
04/20/15 (Monday)	Faith/Reason	“Faith and Its Object,” 530- 538	
04/22/15 (Wednesday)	Faith/Reason	Cornel West reading	
04/24/15 (Friday)		<b>STUDY DAY</b>	

FINAL EXAM: May 1<sup>st</sup>, 10-12, **FINAL PAPER DUE**