

American Philosophy

Philosophy 329

Fall 2015, MWF 11:30–12:25, BA 225

Instructor: P.D. Magnus

Office HU 257

Office hours M 10:30–11:25, W 1:00–2:00, and by appointment

Campus phone 442-4223

e-mail pmagnus(at)albany.edu

Texts: The course readings are mostly articles which are available on the course Blackboard page.

I strongly encourage you to print these and bring them with you to class.

In addition: William James, *Pragmatism*, Hackett Publishing. ISBN 0-915145-07-7

Requirements: There will be three in-class exams, five short response papers, and one longer essay. For the discussion paper, you will need to write a draft and make revisions. For grading, course elements will combine in this way:

22%	Exam #1
22%	Exam #2
22%	Exam #3
10%	response papers
4%	essay, rough draft
20%	essay, final

Class participation: Participation in class discussion is required. Exemplary participation will add to your grade, up to two-thirds of a letter grade.

Reading response papers: You are responsible for writing five reading response papers during the term. Each should be about one typed page, extracting the central thesis of the reading. It should explain the main thing that the author is trying to claim and their main argument for it. It should *not* mention everything from the reading, but should instead identify the key issue.

These may be written for any five readings, but must be turned in *before* we have discussed the readings in class.

Essay: 5–8 pages on an assigned topic. A rough draft will be due at the end of week 11 (Nov 6). The paper will be returned to you with comments and the final draft will be due at the beginning of the last week (Dec 7). You should turn in the rough draft along with the final.

Policies

Academic honesty: Students are encouraged to discuss issues from the course with each other and with others outside of class. However, you are responsible for your own ideas. Papers should include citations to any works cited or consulted, as well as acknowledgments of helpful interactions. Cheating will not be tolerated.

Late papers: Response papers must be turned in by the beginning of class on the day we discuss material. Late response papers will not be accepted.

Absences: Students who will need to miss class for religious observance, away games, or for other foreseeable reasons should discuss these issues with the professor at the beginning of the term. If an emergency results in your absence, you should contact the professor as soon as possible. Make-up exams will be given only for documented, excused absences.

Schedule

The schedule on the next page is approximate. Topics will require some revision along the way, but the due dates and dates of exams will not change.

Date	Topic	Reading
W, aug26	Introduction	
F, aug28	New England transcendentalism	Theodore Parker, 'Transcendentalism'
M, aug31	//	
W, sep2	//	Ralph Waldo Emerson, 'Self reliance'
F, sep4	//	Ralph Waldo Emerson, 'The Over-soul'
M, sep7	Labour Day	NO CLASS
W, sep9	How to overcome doubt	C.S. Peirce, 'The Fixation of Belief'
F, sep11	//	
M, sep14	Rosh Hashanah	NO CLASS
W, sep16	Pragmatism, the beginning	C.S. Peirce, 'How to Make Our Ideas Clear'
F, sep18	//	
M, sep21	Scientism	Wm. Clifford, 'The Ethics of Belief'
W, sep23	Yom Kippur	NO CLASS
F, sep25	//	
M, sep28	Contra scientism	Wm. James, 'The Will to Believe'
W, sep30	//	
F, oct2	Practicalism	Wm. James, 'Philosophical Conceptions...'
M, oct5	Review day	
W, oct7	EXAM I	
F, oct9	James' pragmatism	Wm. James, <i>Pragmatism</i> , Ch. I
M, oct12	//	Ch. II
W, oct14	//	Ch. III
F, oct16	//	Ch. V
M, oct19	//	Ch. VI
W, oct21	//	Ch. VII
F, oct23	//	Ch. VIII
M, oct26	//	
W, oct28	//	
F, oct30	Many pragmatisms	A.O. Lovejoy, '13 Pragmatisms'
M, nov2	//	
W, nov4	Dewey's pragmatism	John Dewey, 'What Pragmatism Means By Practical'
F, nov6	//	— draft essay due —
M, nov9	//	
W, nov11	Review day	
F, nov13	EXAM II	
M, nov16	The pragmatist tradition	C.I. Lewis, 'Pragmatism and Current Thought'
W, nov18	//	
F, nov20	A parallel tradition	Wm. Montague, 'The Story of American Realism'
M, nov23	//	
WF, nov25&27	Thanksgiving	NO CLASS
M, nov30	The a priori	C.I. Lewis, 'The Pragmatic Element in Knowledge'
W, dec2	//	
F, dec4	The web of belief	W.V.O. Quine, 'Two dogmas of empiricism'
M, dec7	//	— essay due —
W, dec9	conclusion	
Th, dec17	EXAM III (at final exam time)	10:30–12:30