

## PHIL 4480/5480: Pragmatism

Spring 2020, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:05–4:25pm, Ellis Hall 226

### Instructor

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### Course Description

In this course, we discuss American pragmatism in the late 19th and the early 20th centuries as well as pragmatism’s revival in the late 20th century. Our discussion will center on the philosophical issues that animated pragmatism in these periods.

### Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Explain important philosophical questions discussed in the readings.
2. Explain different positions one might take in response to these questions.
3. Think critically about and discuss the questions as well as the proposed positions.

### Prerequisites

3 courses in philosophy

### Required Books

In addition to the readings to be posted on Blackboard, I would like you to have your own access to the following books:

William James, *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy*. (See note below.)

William James, *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking*. (See note below.)

John Dewey, *The Essential Dewey, Volume 1: Pragmatism, Education, Democracy*. Edited by

Larry A. Hickman and Thomas M. Alexander. Indiana University Press, 1998.

Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. Princeton University Press, 1979.

*Note on editions:* The scholarly edition of James’s writings is *The Works of William James* published by Harvard University Press (<https://www.hup.harvard.edu/collection.php?cpk=1162>). The Harvard edition of *The Will to Believe* was published in 1979, but you can also find the Longmans, Green first edition from Dover Publications. The Harvard edition of *Pragmatism* is in paperback (combined with *The Meaning of Truth*), and there is also a cheaper Hackett edition of *Pragmatism*. James’s writings are also available freely online (e.g., at Project Gutenberg), but they are not suitable for scholarly purposes. The scholarly edition of Dewey’s writings is the 37-volume *Collected Works of John Dewey* (<http://siupress.com/series/collected-works-john-dewey>). They are the basis of the 2-volume *Essential Dewey*. You may read directly from Dewey’s *Collected Works*, but the volume of the *Essential Dewey* listed above is convenient for our purposes. Rorty’s *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* is now in the thirtieth-anniversary edition (2009), but it has the same pagination as the original.

## Assignments and Final Grades (Undergraduate)

In addition to the assigned readings, the following assignments are required for the undergraduate students in this seminar:

1. Regular attendance and participation
2. Post-seminar reflections (see below)
3. Take-home exam 1 (750 words) (see below)
4. Take-home exam 2 (750 words)
5. Final take-home exam (1000 words)

These assignments will count roughly equally toward the final grade.

## Assignments and Final Grades (Graduate)

In addition to the assigned readings, the following assignments are required for the undergraduate students in this seminar:

1. Regular attendance and participation
2. Post-seminar reflections (see below)
3. Research project (choose one; see below for details)
  - a. A research paper (3000 words)
  - b. An annotated bibliography (3000-5000 words)
4. A brief presentation on your writing project

These assignments will count roughly equally toward the final grade.

## Assignment Instructions

I assume that some of the assignments listed above are self-explanatory, so here are instructions on selected assignments. Don't hesitate to ask questions about the assignments at any time.

### Post-seminar reflections (for all students)

After each week's seminar meetings, you will email me reflections on the reading and discussion of that week. Consider this to be a continuation of in-class discussion. For example, you can write questions and comments you had in class but did not have a chance to speak. You can also write ideas, comments, or questions that have come up after the seminar. At minimum, you should write one or two thoughtful paragraphs. Your post-seminar reflections are **due by the end of Saturday** after the week's meetings. I will read late reflections too, but they will not count towards your grade.

### Take-home exams (for undergraduate students)

Each take-home exam will have a few short essay questions based on the readings and seminar discussions. You will have at least one week to complete the exam. Each exam is open book and open notes, but you may not collaborate with other people. You will turn in the exams through Turnitin.com, and late exams will be graded with some penalties. See the schedule below for due dates.

### Research project (for graduate students)

Graduate students have two options for their research projects. Both options are explained below, and important instructions are set in bold italics. ***If you choose to write a research paper, it must engage with contemporary philosophical literature on (a) pragmatism and its applications or (b) the history of pragmatism.*** In other words, your paper should be on a topic on pragmatism that scholars

are talking about recently. For example, Elizabeth Anderson's work on moral progress develops a pragmatist epistemology of morality inspired by Dewey's moral theory, and engaging with her pragmatist work will be a case of (a) above. As for (b), many scholars today write on the history of pragmatism, and their topics include interpretations of important but particularly difficult writings by classical pragmatists (e.g., Peirce's unpublished manuscripts), reconsiderations of our historical narratives about pragmatism or classical pragmatists (e.g., the influence of the 19th century idealism on American pragmatism), and expositions and discussions of neglected figures in the history of pragmatism (e.g., women pragmatists). You can find many topics on both (a) and (b) by looking at recent issues of *The Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, which is a journal in American philosophy.

**The maximum length of your research paper is 3000 words, excluding notes and references, and it must have a title and an abstract of not over 150 words.** These requirements follow the paper submission guidelines for the meetings of American Philosophical Association (<https://www.apaonline.org/page/papersubmission>). Your references should follow APA (American Psychological Association) or the Chicago Manual of Style.

**If you choose to write an annotated bibliography, it must be on topics relevant to pragmatism on which there is substantive philosophical literature in the last 50 years (since 1970).** For example, many philosophers have written on pragmatist theories of truth, and there is also substantive discussion of pragmatism and relativism, especially Rorty's relativism. You can find many topics by looking at issues of *The Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* and by consulting encyclopedia articles and introductory books on pragmatism.

**The length of your annotated bibliography must be between 3000 and 5000 words, and it must have a title and a short, accessible introduction of the topics covered.** A useful guideline for annotated bibliographies is found here: <https://guides.library.cornell.edu/annotatedbibliography>. Your references should follow APA (American Psychological Association) or the Chicago Manual of Style. Note that if your annotations are 100 words long on average, you will need to have at least 30 entries to meet the required length.

**Both research papers and annotated bibliographies will be accepted on a rolling basis, and you can submit as many revisions as you can until the last day of classes.** I encourage you to show me your writing from an early stage and receive constant feedback. I will return your draft within a week.

## Course Policies

All students in this course are expected to comply with the following policies.

**Academic Integrity:** Academic integrity and honesty are basic values of Ohio University. Students are expected to follow standards of academic integrity and honesty. Academic misconduct is a violation of the Ohio University Student Code of Conduct subject to a maximum sanction of disciplinary suspension or expulsion as well as a grade penalty in the course. You are expected to be familiar with the information on academic integrity provided at <http://www.ohio.edu/communitystandards/academic/students.cfm>.

**Turnitin:** Students agree that by taking this course all required assignments may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the

purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of Turnitin.com page service is subject to the Usage Policy and Privacy Pledge posted on the Turnitin.com site.

**Classroom Incivility:** You are expected to behave in a civil manner, carefully listen to whoever is talking at a moment, and respect other people in class. I will not tolerate behaviors that are harmful to the learning of students, such as distracting your classmates' attention (e.g., by chatting with someone next to you), disrupting other people's speech, mocking or insulting other people, and showing general disrespect and poor manners toward other people in class. If you harm your classmates' learning in these ways, you will be asked to leave the classroom.

**Grade Disputes:** If you believe that a grade on any specific assignment was in error, or unfair, you should resubmit that assignment, along with a brief cover note detailing those prima facie errors, or disagreement, together with appropriate evidence. The same procedure should be followed regarding the final grade. A request for re-grading or re-assessment is just that: the revised grade may increase, remain unchanged, or decrease. An explanation will be provided to the student in any case. Note that this policy does not apply to grade *calculation* errors, which should be brought to my attention right away.

**No Extra Credit:** There will be no extra credit assignments in this course.

**Exceptional circumstances:** The following are generally considered exceptional circumstances: a medical emergency, the death of a near relative, and a university-related trip (e.g., athletic team commitments). If you are in these circumstances, (i) obtain written documentation from a relevant authority (e.g., doctor, coach, etc.) verifying that you are/were in one of these circumstances, (ii) contact me as soon as you can to set up an appointment, and (iii) show me the documentation. I will then decide how to evaluate classes or assignments that you missed or turned in late, and I will make, by mutual agreement, any necessary makeup assignments or other arrangements.

**24-Hour Email Policy:** I will respond to your email within 24 hours of receipt, unless I'm stranded in the middle of nowhere. If you don't get a response after 24 hours, please resend an email.

## University Resources for Learning

Your success in this course is important to me. I recognize that there are multiple ways to learn and that this multiplicity should be acknowledged in the structure of university courses and the evaluation of their participants. Thus, I encourage you to discuss your learning styles and comprehension requirements with me during my office hours or at another arranged time, if necessary. It is best to do this as early as possible. Every student is entitled to a meaningful and stimulating learning experience, and you are strongly encouraged to use the services provided by the Academic Achievement Center (<https://www.ohio.edu/uc/aac>) and the Student Writing Center (<https://www.ohio.edu/uc/aac/swc>). Disabled students are also strongly encouraged to use the services provided by Student Accessibility Services (<https://www.ohio.edu/uc/sas>), including the provision of note-takers, transcribers, and sign-language interpreters.

## Disclaimer

This syllabus is subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, by mutual agreement, and/or to ensure better student learning. All materials associated with this class that are developed by the instructor are copyrighted in the name of Yoichi Ishida on this date January 14, 2020.

## Schedule

The following is a tentative schedule of readings and assignments. You are expected to have done the assigned reading *before* each class. Some readings are long, and to read them quickly, first try to read for positions rather than arguments.

Wk	Date	Readings (* = on Blackboard; [] = optional)
	Tue, Jan 14	Syllabus*
1	Thu, Jan 16	<b>Descartes*</b> , <i>Discourse on the Method</i> (1637), parts 1–4. <b>Kant*</b> , <i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> (1781/1787), Preface to the Second Edition. <b>Hegel*</b> , <i>Phenomenology of the Spirit</i> (1807), the chapter on “Sense-Certainty.” [ <b>Kuklick*</b> , <i>A History of Philosophy in America</i> , Ch. 6–7.]
2	Tue, Jan 21	<b>Peirce*</b> , “Questions Concerning Certain Faculties Claimed for Man” (1868) and “Some Consequences of Four Incapacities” (1868). [ <b>Haack*</b> , “Descartes, Peirce and the Cognitive Community”] [ <b>Bernstein*</b> , “Charles S. Peirce’s Critique of Cartesianism” in <i>The Pragmatic Turn</i> (pp. 32–52).]
	Thu, Jan 23	<b>Peirce*</b> , “The Fixation of Belief” (1877); “How to Make Our Ideas Clear” (1878); and “The Doctrine of Chances” (1878; skip section V). [ <b>Kuklick*</b> , <i>A History of Philosophy in America</i> , Ch. 8.]
3	Tue, Jan 28	<b>Darwin*</b> , <i>On the Origin of Species</i> (1859), Ch. 14; and <i>The Descent of Man</i> (1871), Ch. 2–3.
	Thu, Jan 30	<b>James</b> , “Great Men and Their Environment” (1880) in <i>The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy</i> (hereafter WB). [ <b>Kuklick*</b> , <i>A History of Philosophy in America</i> , Ch. 9.]
4	Tue, Feb 4	<b>James</b> , “The Dilemma of Determinism” (1884) and skim “On Some Hegelisms” (1882) in WB.
	Thu, Feb 6	<b>James</b> , “The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life” (1891) in WB. [ <b>Bird*</b> , “Moral Philosophy and the Development of Morality” in <i>The Cambridge Companion to William James</i> (ed. Ruth Anna Putnam) (pp. 260–281).]
5	Tue, Feb 11	<b>James</b> , “The Will to Believe” (1896) in WB.
	Thu, Feb 13	<b>James</b> , <i>Pragmatism</i> (1907), “Lecture 1: The Present Dilemma in Philosophy” and “Lecture 2: What Pragmatism Means.”
6	Tue, Feb 18	<b>James</b> , <i>Pragmatism</i> (1907), “Lecture 5: Pragmatism and Common Sense”; “Lecture 6: Pragmatism’s Conception of Truth”; and “Lecture 7: Pragmatism and Humanism.” [ <b>Sprigge*</b> , “James, Aboutness, and His British Critics” in <i>The Cambridge Companion to William James</i> (ed. Ruth Anna Putnam) (pp. 125–144).]
	Thu, Feb 20	<b>Dewey</b> , <i>The Essential Dewey, Volume 1</i> (hereafter ED1), “The Development of American Pragmatism” (1925) (pp. 3–13) and “From Absolutism to Experimentalism” (1930) (pp. 14–21). [ <b>Kuklick*</b> , <i>A History of Philosophy in America</i> , Ch. 10.]

**Exam 1 Due: Saturday, February 22 (Undergraduate)**

7	Tue, Feb 25	<b>Dewey</b> , “The Influence of Darwinism on Philosophy” (1909) (ED1: 39–45) and “The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy” (1917) (ED1: 46–70).
	Thu, Feb 27	<b>Dewey</b> , “Philosophy and Democracy” (1919) (ED1: 71–78) and “Existence, Value and Criticism” (1925) (ED1: 84–101).
8	Tue, Mar 3	<b>Dewey</b> , “The Postulate of Immediate Empiricism” (1905) (ED1: 115–120); “Pure Experience and Reality: A Disclaimer” (1907) (ED1: 121–123); and “Does Reality Posses Practical Character?” (1908) (ED1: 124–133).
	Thu, Mar 5	<b>Dewey</b> , “Nature, Life and Body-Mind” (1925) (ED1: 134–153); and “The Live Creature” (1934) (ED1: 391–400). [ <b>Rorty*</b> , “Dewey’s Metaphysics” in <i>Consequences of Pragmatism</i> (pp. 72–89).]

**Spring Break: Mar 8–14**

9	Tue, Mar 17	<b>Dewey</b> , “Search for the Public” (1927) (ED1: 281–292) and “Search for the Great Community” (1927) (ED1: 293–307).
	Thu, Mar 19	<b>Dewey</b> , “The Inclusive Philosophic Idea” (1928) (ED1: 308–315); “A Critique of American Civilization” (1928) (ED1: 316–322); “Democracy is Radical” (1937) (ED1: 337–339); and “Creative Democracy—The Task Before Us” (1939) (ED1: 340–343).
10	Tue, Mar 24	<b>Addams*</b> , <i>Democracy and Social Ethics</i> (1902), Introduction and Ch. 1. <b>Seigfried*</b> , Introduction to the Illinois Edition of <i>Democracy and Social Ethics</i>
	Thu, Mar 26	<b>Addams*</b> , <i>Democracy and Social Ethics</i> (1902), Ch. 2 and 6. [ <b>Pearce*</b> , “American Pragmatism, Evolution, and Ethics.”]
11	Tue, Mar 31	<b>Rorty</b> , <i>Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature</i> (1979), Ch. 1. [ <b>Kuklick*</b> , <i>A History of Philosophy in America</i> , Ch. 14.]
	Thu, Apr 2	<b>Rorty</b> , <i>Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature</i> (1979), Ch. 2.

**Exam 2 Due: Saturday, April 4 (Undergraduate)**

12	Tue, Apr 7	<b>Rorty</b> , <i>Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature</i> (1979), Ch. 3. [ <b>Williams*</b> , “Epistemology and the Mirror of Nature” and <b>Rorty*</b> , “Response to Michael Williams” in <i>Rorty and His Critics</i> (ed. Brandom) (pp. 191–219).]
	Thu, Apr 9	<b>Rorty</b> , <i>Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature</i> (1979), Ch. 4.

**Presentations on Writing Projects: In Class on April 16 (Graduate)**

13	Tue, Apr 14	<b>Rorty</b> , <i>Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature</i> (1979), Ch. 8.
	Thu, Apr 16	<b>Rorty*</b> , “Solidarity or Objectivity?” (1985) and “The Priority of Democracy to Philosophy” (1988) in <i>Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth</i> (pp. 175–196).
14	Tue, Apr 21	<b>Rorty*</b> , “Hope in Place of Knowledge: A Version of Pragmatism” (1994) in <i>Philosophy and Social Hope</i> (pp. 23–90).
	Thu, Apr 23	<b>Rorty*</b> , “Trotsky and the Wild Orchids” (1993) and “Looking Backwards from the Year 2096” (1996) in <i>Philosophy and Social Hope</i> (pp. 3–20; 243–251). [ <b>Kloppenber*</b> , “Pragmatism: An Old Name for Some New Ways of Thinking?”]

**Writing Project Due: Saturday, April 25 (Graduate)**

**Final Exam Due: Thursday, April 30 (Undergraduate)**