

**PHIL 240: American Philosophy  
SUNY Oneonta  
Spring, 2008**

**Instructor: John Hartmann  
FITZ 219  
MWF 1-1:50pm**

**Office: Fitzelle 132  
Office Hours: TBA  
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**Course Description:**

This course presents an overview of the history of American philosophy, with a particular emphasis on American pragmatism. We will pay special attention to epistemological issues in American thought as well as the question of religion and faith after Darwin.

**Required Texts for Purchase:**

James, William, John Dewey, John M. Capps, and Donald Capps. James and Dewey on Belief and Experience. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005. ISBN 0252072065. \$20.00.

Peirce, Charles S. Philosophical Writings of Peirce. New York: Dover, 1955. ISBN 0486202178. \$12.95.

Rorty, Richard. Philosophy and Social Hope. New York: Penguin Books, 1999. ISBN 0140262881. \$16.00.

Recommended (not required):

Kuklick, Bruce. A History of Philosophy in America, 1720-2000. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. ISBN 0199260168. \$19.95.

All other course readings will be made available electronically.

**Grading Information:**

Grades will be determined according to the following percentages: Participation – 20%; One midterm exegetical paper – 30%; Final project – 50%: 2 page exegesis of one secondary article used in your final paper (10%), and a 8-10 page final paper (40%).

There will be two papers assigned for this class.

The exegetical midterm paper (4-6 pp) will be on an assigned topic. It will count for 30% of the final grade for the class.

There is also a final project worth 50% of your final grade.

(A) The final paper will be 8-10 pages in length, will deal in some way with the texts assigned during the semester, and will be on a topic of the student's choosing. It will count for 40% of the final grade, is due during the final exam period, and no late final papers will be accepted.

(B) Note that the student *is required* to make use of secondary sources, such as refereed articles or books, as well as the primary texts in writing the final paper. The student will have to turn in a 2 page exegesis of one work of secondary literature (chosen in consultation with the professor) two weeks before the final paper is to be turned in. You are required to post it to the class Google Group as well to receive credit. This is worth 10% of your final grade.

- Late papers will be assessed half a letter grade (A → A-, B- → C+) penalty for each day that they are late, not including weekends. (This does not include the final – again, *no late final papers will be accepted.*)
- Also, *I do not accept papers via email submission.* You must give me a cleanly printed (double spaced, 12 point font, etc.) copy of your paper.

The final 20% of your grade depends upon your participation. This involves both in-class and online participation. For each class meeting, one student will be responsible for posting his or her class notes to the course Google Group, and this will count towards the participation grade. Each student is also expected to contribute to class discussion, both in-class and online.

Please note that no incompletes will be given in this course.

### **Attendance Policy**

This is an upper division course. Presumably you've all been in college long enough to know that you need to come to class to do well. I will not be taking attendance, but rest assured that your presence or absence is duly noted.

### **Plagiarism**

I will not tolerate plagiarism in any form. This includes 'borrowing' from websites, neglecting to cite sources, having others write your paper for you, and so forth. You are responsible for the integrity of your work, and for making sure that you properly cite all sources. In this class, there is no such thing as 'unintentional plagiarism.' If you are caught plagiarizing, you will fail for the semester, and you may be referred to the Dean for further sanctions. This is a non-negotiable policy.

See §II.2 of the Code of Student Conduct<sup>1</sup> for more details.

### **Classroom Disruptions**

I expect all students to come to class prepared to think and work. Ringing cell phones and other disturbances do not aid in the cultivation of a thoughtful classroom. Thus, you must turn off your cell phone when you come to class.

Other behaviors such as having conversations during class, or reading the newspaper, are disrespectful to me and to your fellow classmates. I will ask you to leave the classroom if I feel your disruptiveness is a detriment to the learning process.

### **Students with Special Needs / ADA Accommodation**

Students who are affiliated with SDS are encouraged to tell me (privately or via e-mail) *as soon as possible* of their status and particular situation. I will handle each case individually and in light of guidance from SDS. However, I will not accept non-documented claims, nor will I consider claims that suddenly emerge at exam time. It is incumbent upon the student to inform me of any special needs at the beginning of the semester.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.oneonta.edu/development/judicial/code.asp>

<b>PHIL 240 v.1.1</b> <i>MWF 1-1:50</i>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
<b>Week 1: 1/14-20</b>	No classes	Intro, syllabus, short video	Winthrop, "Christian Charity," Reagan
<b>Week 2: 1/21-27</b>	Edwards, "Sinners..."	Edwards, "Freedom of the Will"	Edwards, "Freedom of the Will"
<b>Week 3: 1/28-2/3</b>	Edwards, Woolman	Parker, "Transcendentalism" (pdf)	Emerson, Divinity School Address (pdf)
<b>Week 4: 2/4-10</b>	Darwin (no reading)	Intro to Peirce, "Some Consequences..." (PWP 228-250)	Peirce, "Fixation of Belief" (PWP 5-22)
<b>Week 5: 2/11-17</b>	Peirce, "How to Make our Ideas Clear" (PWP 23-41)	No New Readings (NNR)	No class (Foucault Circle)
<b>Week 6: 2/18-24</b>	Break	Break	Break
<b>Week 7: 2/25-3/2</b>	Peirce, "Arche. of Theories" (PWP 315-323)	Peirce, "Doctrine of Necessity" (PWP 324-338)	Peirce, "Law of Mind" (PWP 339-353); midterm prompt handed out
<b>Week 8: 3/3-9</b>	Intro to James, selections from Principles (pdf)	James, "What Pragmatism Means" (CC 133-143)	James, "Will to Believe" (CC 95-110)
<b>Week 9: 3/10-16</b>	James, selections from <i>Varieties</i> (CC 111-132)	NNR	James, World of Pure Exp (CC 144-161); <b>midterm paper due</b>
<b>Week 10: 3/17-23</b>	James, Pluralistic Univ (CC 162-166)	NNR	James, "Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life" (pdf)
<b>Week 11: 3/24-30</b>	Break	Break	Break
<b>Week 12: 3/31-4/6</b>	Intro to Dewey, "Development of American Prag" (pdf)	Dewey, "Influence of Darwinism..." (CC 179-188)	Dewey, "Postulate of Immediate Empiricism" (CC 189-195)

<b>Week 13: 4/7-13</b>	Dewey, "What I Believe" (CC 215-225)	Dewey, selections from <i>A Common Faith</i> (CC 226-250)	NNR
<b>Week 14: 4/14-20</b>	Dewey, selections from <i>Exp and Nature</i> (CC 251-267)	NNR	Dewey, selections from <i>Art as Experience</i> (CC 268-283)
<b>Week 15: 4/21-27</b>	Dewey, "Creative Democracy..." (pdf)	Hook, "Pragmatism and the Tragic Sense of Life" (pdf)	Rorty, ch 2
<b>Week 16: 4/28-5/4</b>	Rorty, ch 3	Rorty, ch 4	Rorty, TBA
<b>Week 17: 5/5-11</b>	Rorty, TBA (Hick/Hart db?)	No classes	No classes

Course Final: Final Paper, due in finals period