

PRAGMATISM: CLASSICAL AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY

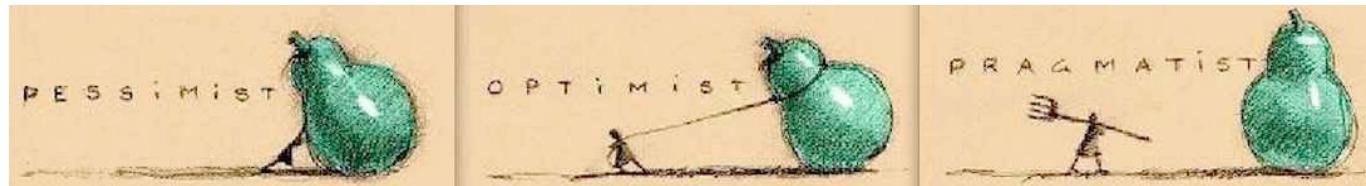
PHIL 4101-001/PHIL 5101-001

FALL 2020

REMOTE: SYNCHRONOUS & ASYNCHRONOUS

SYNCHRONOUS MEETINGS: TUESDAYS, 5 - 7 P.M.

ONLINE PLATFORMS: CANVAS AND ZOOM



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Perhaps the three most important questions for our nation of immigrants have been: Who are we? What do we believe? Should we accept the views of earlier generations? In addressing these questions, American philosophers have both accepted and rejected different pieces of their intellectual heritage (especially Descartes, Hume, Kant, Hegel, among others).

In their most critical moments, American philosophers argue that philosophy must reassert itself as an active, constructive, and ethical force in human life. Doing this means shaking and breaking many traditional philosophical distinctions including those between: mind and body, fact and value, appearance and reality, self and society, probability and certainty, and language and world.

We'll examine important philosophical themes developed and sustained by both classical and contemporary pragmatists, from the 19th through the 21st centuries. Major philosophers will include RW Emerson, Charles Peirce, William James, John Dewey, Alain Locke, and Jane Addams.

See the Fast Guide and Course Schedule Below for more details.

Course Objectives: Ideally, by the end of this course students should gain the following skills:

Familiarization. Gain a good sense of what is at stake in issues of course.

Comprehension. Be able to comprehend the arguments offered by various philosophers.

Critical analysis. Be able to criticize those arguments by pointing out where they lack evidence, make an unreasonable leap, hold a false assumption, etc.

Demonstration of the above through writing.

Verbalization. Be able to summarize and criticize a philosophical position, without notes, using your own words.

Conversation and Debate. Be able to discuss issues in a focused and informed way with others in the class. This will involve listening closely to their points, then responding in a way that moves the discussion ahead.

TEXTS – GO GET THESE NOW!

Required Physical Texts: Available at bookstore and, if you desire, online (see, for example, <http://used.addall.com>). If you buy your book online, make sure (1) that it is the correct edition, and (2) that you have it in time for class.

1. POW: *Pragmatism and Other Writings* (Penguin Classics) by William James (Author), Giles Gunn (Editor, Introduction) ISBN-10: 0140437355 | ISBN-13: 978-0140437355
2. RIP: *Reconstruction in Philosophy* by John Dewey (Beacon Press; enlarged edition, 1971; ISBN: 978-0807015858)

Required Online Texts: There will be readings or resources at one of the following places:

1. At the UCD Canvas site <https://ucdenver.instructure.com> (CANVAS)

Readings: It is expected that you have done the readings before we discuss them. As you read, copy out important points and questions you have onto a separate sheet of paper. (These will help you with your short reflection papers.) You may also want to note problem passages (e.g., with a "?" or "Q.") in your text as you read. These are good points for class discussion. You should come to each class able to discuss the main issues of the reading and you could be asked during class to present the main points to the class.

Very important: please set aside about 10 minutes shortly before synchronous class to look back over (skim-review) the readings and whatever you have written for that day.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS/EVALUATION: MAXIMUM POINTS POSSIBLE: 1000 POINTS

(1) Participation (virtual meetings, synchronous zoom, discussion fora)	200 points or 20%
(2) 8 Short Writings	160 points or 16%
(3) 4 Mini Exams (500 words each, minimum)	400 points or 40%
(4) 1 Mini-plus Exam (1000/1500 words):	240 points or 24%
• graduate students: 1500 words	
• undergraduate students: 1000 words	

Graduate students: besides the different length exams for the final “mini-plus” exam, expectations will be set at a higher level than

undergraduates. If you have questions about this, please let me know.

GRADES:

There are 1000 possible points for this class. I use the plus/minus system. An "A" will be a body of work achieving at or above 930 points; an "A-" will be 900-929 points; a "B+" is 870-899 points, etc. Values for those letters, as well as the policies regarding other grades such as Incomplete, are available in the CU Academic Policies and Regulations section of the handbook. I have set out my standards of what a grade means on my FAQ section of my website.

Participation (200 points)

In an upper division seminar, you can participate by attending synchronous classes, asking questions, explaining ideas, making connections, challenging the claims made by the author or others in the class (in a constructive way!), or working to help others get a point across.

You will be expected to contribute in two different venues — by attending our Tuesday class discussions (synchronous) on Zoom, and also in discussion threads on Canvas.

Your “short writings” (described on this syllabus) can help you participate! You can post your papers for others to read and discuss online, and I’ll also ask people to contribute on zoom with an informal summary of their short writings’ contents. When called upon in class, demonstrate that you know what you wrote and why! Bring as much clarity of thought, effective communication, and ability to field questions as possible.

Virtual one-on-one meetings:

At the start of the semester, I will be requesting 15 minute “virtual meetings” with all of you; this will be very relaxed — a chance for you to tell me about your interests, learning style, and any particular factors which you think could help make your experience in this class a great one! This can be a video or audio chat — your choice.

Zoom Classes: Synchronous Attendance:

Meets every Tuesday during the semester from 5-7 p.m.

Zoom meeting has one unique ID for the semester.

You will need to register just once at the beginning of the semester.

- When: Aug 18, 2020 05:00 PM Mountain Time (US and Canada)
- Register in advance for this meeting:
- <https://ucdenver.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJ0rf-6rrjwjHNKKJgUtZktrORKdIMciYfwm>
- After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

A passcode is required: it is **Dewey2020**

Attending is part of “participation” and everyone is encouraged to put your camera on during the meeting. A virtual background is fine and may enhance your comfort/privacy. Seeing people speak and react facilitates communication in discussion. NOTE: If there are obstacles to you attending synchronous Tuesday night sessions or keeping your camera on, please let me know in advance. I promise to be understanding. If possible, please watch the recorded discussion.

(2) Short Writings (8 total over course of semester, 160 points total)

Purpose: to help you clarify your understanding of the readings, unearth connections, and think critically about the issues.

Follow these instructions carefully, please.

WHAT TO WRITE on short/critical reaction papers:

- Short papers must be about the assigned reading for the coming class discussion or it will not be counted.
- Length should be 1 page, typewritten (250 words or so).
- No book reports — the goal is to focus on an important concept or connection raised by the reading and explore it.
- State in 1st paragraph in 1-2 sentences what the paper is about.
- Refer back explicitly to the reading — make sure it's clear what generated your commentary.
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WHEN TO WRITE short papers:

- You must do 8 critical papers total
- You can only do 1 per class when there is a reading.
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GRADING on short papers:

- 2 possible grades: S - Satisfactory (full credit or 20 points), U-unsatisfactory (half credit or 10 points).
- MAKE-UPS: If you get a Unsatisfactory you may revise and resubmit up to 2 of them. The old grade will be dropped in favor of the revised paper's grade.

(3) Mini exams (minimum of 500 words each, 100 points each, 400 points total)

There will be 4 mini exams of 500 words each. These will be due by 11:59 p.m. on 9/7, 10/5, 11/2, and 11/23. They will cover the unit which just concluded. Further details about this assignment will be forthcoming.

(4) Mini-plus exam (minimum of 1000/1500 words, undergraduate/graduate; 240 points total)

This will be another “mini exam” but slightly longer. It will ask you to synthesize some of the ideas covered in the course. Further details about this assignment will be forthcoming. It will be due by 12/8 @ 11:59 p.m.

Course Policies

Plagiarism/ Academic Dishonesty

Plagiarism is a form of stealing. It occurs when an author uses the words or ideas of others as if they were the author's own original thought. (It may include word-for-word copying, interspersing one's own words with another's, paraphrasing, inventing or counterfeiting sources, submitting

another's work as one's own, neglecting quotation marks on material that is otherwise acknowledged.) Plagiarism is often unintentional. It can be avoided by always acknowledging one's debt to others by citing the exact source of a quotation or paraphrase. Since plagiarism is such a serious violation of academic honesty, the penalty for it will be an automatic F for this course.

Academic dishonesty is the intentional disregard of course or university rules. This may include (but is not limited to) collaborating with others when rules forbid or using sources/experts not permitted by an assignment. The CU handbook has a more complete description of plagiarism and academic dishonesty.

Students called for military duty: If you are a student in the military with the potential of being called to military service and /or training during the course of the semester, you are encouraged to contact your school/college Associate Dean or Advising Office immediately.

Note: All course requirements subject to change at discretion of the instructor.

NEED HELP?

RESOURCES: https://clas.ucdenver.edu/faculty-staff/sites/default/files/attached-files/student_services_and_calendar.pdf

STUDENT SUPPORT

CAREER COUNSELING at LYNXCONNECT

COUNSELING CENTER

DISABILITY RESOURCES & SERVICES

OFFICE OF EQUITY

PHOENIX CENTER AT AURARIA

FREE TUTORING

UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC ADVISING

UPCOMING ACADEMIC CALENDAR

CONTACT INFORMATION AND OFFICE HOURS

Phone : email me if you wish to talk on the phone

Canvas course site: ucdenver.instructure.com

E-mail: david.hildebrand@ucdenver.edu **Website:** davidhildebrand.org

Office Hours: via Zoom, Tuesdays 3- 430 p.m. and by appt. via Zoom.

Zoom Invite Link: <https://ucdenver.zoom.us/j/96129708078>

Purpose of office hours: I strongly encourage you to participate by dropping by during office hours. We can talk about the class readings and lectures, exams and papers, your progress, or just philosophy in general. Note: If you are a student with a disability, I will make myself available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations. Before accommodations will be made, you may be required to provide documentation.

Students with disabilities will be accommodated. Students with disabilities are required to register disabilities with the UCD Disability Services Office, and are responsible for requesting reasonable accommodations at the beginning of the term.

CLASS – THE FAST GUIDE:

Two modes:

1. SYNCHRONOUS TUESDAYS: Zoom meetings on Tuesdays for discussion..
and

2. ASYNCHRONOUS BETWEEN MEETINGS: readings, listening, online discussion — between classes, with a lot of flexibility.

Week-to-Week Flow:

Sunday – lectures and other pre-class material (e.g. outlines) posted

- By 9 p.m. each Sunday night, I will post pre-recorded lectures, slides, videos, and a handout relevant to the upcoming Tuesday's assigned readings.

Monday – Short critical readings due

- By 11: 59 p.m. Monday night, if you've chosen to do 1 of your 8 required short writings for the coming class on Tuesday, it must be posted by the Monday night before that class.

Tuesday – class day; office hours and Zoom meeting

- **3:00 - 4:30 p.m., Tuesdays:** I will hold drop in office hours from 3-4:30 p.m. via phone, zoom, or email. During this window of time, you can expect a fast response.
- **5 p.m. to 7 p.m.** (Break from 6-6: 10 p.m.) Synchronous Zoom classes.
 - These sessions will not contain lecturing by me, but will presume you have done the readings and watched the pre-recorded materials.

Zoom meetings – what will they be like?

- Structured and guided discussions about questions or issues raised by:
- pre-class material
- student short papers
- anything else relevant to the readings or wider issues raised by material.
- NOTE: I will be sure to keep discussions focused and moving to cover topics raised by the readings. While these won't be forced into a particular mold, they will not be "bull sessions," either.

Wednesday - Friday – preparation for next class

- Additional office hours available by appointment will be possible.
- Read and discuss on Canvas upcoming class readings or topics already "in the air."

Episode Guide

Note: there will be 8 short papers due over entire semester

INTRODUCTORY WEEK —

WEEK 0: a bit of Emerson will be discussed...

UNIT 1: PEIRCE

WEEK 1 Rejecting Descartes (Descartes and Peirce)

WEEK 2: Pragmatic Belief in Clear Ideas (Peirce)

Mini exam #1

UNIT 2: JAMES

WEEK 3: Permission to Believe (James)

WEEK 4: Pragmatic Ideas Mean Things because they Do Things (James)

WEEK 5: Experiencing Mind and World Together (James)

WEEK 6: Pragmatic Morality and Pragmatic Existentialism (James)

Mini exam #2

UNIT 3: DEWEY

WEEK 7: Who Was John Dewey? (Dewey)

WEEK 8: Experience as Nature, as Knowledge, as Morality (Dewey)

WEEK 9: Morality Beyond Duty, Consequences, and Character

WEEK 10: Re-Creating Democracy, Over and Over (Dewey)

Mini exam #3

UNIT 4: APPLYING PRAGMATISM TO REAL WORLD ISSUES

WEEK 11: Pragmatist Approaches to Race

WEEK 12: Pragmatist Approaches to Race: Alain Locke

WEEK 13 Pragmatism, Women, and Feminism

Mini exam #4

WEEK 14: Wrap up What is there left to Say?

FINALS Week: 1 Mini-plus Exam

DETAILED COURSE SCHEDULE

Zoom Class	Unit	Theme/Focal Questions	Reading [book or OL]	Assignment
8/18	INTRO: Week 0 A New Direction	General welcome to class, introductions, overview of course; if possible, brief discussion about	Emerson's "The American Scholar" [OL]	Come to class! Get acquainted! Tell a joke!
8/25	UNIT 1: Week 1 PEIRCE	Rejecting Descartes (Descartes and Peirce)	(a) Descartes Meditations 1-3, [OL] (b) Handout: "Cartesian Doctrines Peirce Rejected" [OL] (c) Anderson, "Peirce and Cartesian Rationalism" [OL]	Short writing due by MONDAY 8/25 @ 11:59 p.m. (8 due over semester)
9/1	UNIT 1: Week 2 PEIRCE	Pragmatic Belief in Clear Ideas	(a) Peirce: "Fixation of Belief" [OL] (b) "How to Make Our Ideas Clear" [OL] <i>Recommended:</i> (c) Pihlström "Peirce's Place in the Pragmatist Tradition" from Cambridge Companion to Peirce [OL]	Short writing due by MONDAY 8/31 @ 11:59 p.m. (8 due over semester) Mini exam 1 due by MONDAY 9/7 @ 11:59 p.m.
9/8	UNIT 2: Week 3 JAMES	Permission to Believe	(a) McDermott, Brief Introduction to James [OL] (b) The Will to Believe [POW] (c) The Dilemma of Determinism [OL]	Short writing due by MONDAY 9/7 @ 11:59 p.m. (8 due over semester)

9/15	UNIT 2: Week 4 JAMES	Pragmatic Ideas Mean Things because they Do Things	(a) Pragmatism, Ch 2 "What Pragmatism Means" [POW] (b) Pragmatism, Ch, 7 "Pragmatism and Humanism" [POW]	Short writing due by MONDAY 9/21 @ 11: 59 p.m. (8 due over semester)
9/22	UNIT 2: Week 5 JAMES	Experiencing Mind and World Together	(a) The Stream of Thought [POW] (b) A World of Pure Experience [POW]	Short writing due by MONDAY 9/28 @ 11: 59 p.m. (8 due over semester)
9/29	UNIT 2: Week 6 JAMES	Pragmatic Morality and Pragmatic Existentialism	(a) The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life [POW] (b) What Makes a Life Significant? [POW]	Short writing due by MONDAY 9/28 @ 11: 59 p.m. (8 due over semester) Mini exam 2 due by MONDAY 10/5 @ 11:59 p.m.
10/6	UNIT 3: Week 7 DEWEY	Who Was John Dewey?	(a) John Dewey, Ch 1 [RIP] (b) John Dewey, Ch 2, 3 [RIP] Recommended: (c) Hildebrand, Cambridge Companion to Pragmatism piece on Dewey [OL] (d) Hildebrand, Chapter, "Introduction," from Dewey: A Beginner's Guide [OL]	Short writing due by MONDAY 10/5 @ 11: 59 p.m. (8 due over semester)

10/13	UNIT 3: Week 8 DEWEY	Experience as Nature, as Knowledge, as Morality	(a) John Dewey, Ch 4 [RIP] (b) "Experience and Philosophic Method" (from Experience and Nature) [OL] Recommended: (c) Hildebrand, Chapter, "The Paramount Importance of Experience and Situations" [OL]	Short writing due by MONDAY 10/12 @ 11: 59 p.m. (8 due over semester)
10/20	UNIT 3: Week 9 DEWEY	Morality Beyond Duty, Consequences, and Character	(a) John Dewey, Reconstruction, 6 [RIP] (b) John Dewey, Reconstruction, Ch 7 [RIP] Recommended: (c) Hildebrand, "Morality, " from Dewey: A Beginner's Guide [OL]	Short writing due by MONDAY 10/19 @ 11: 59 p.m. (8 due over semester)
10/27	UNIT 3: Week 10 DEWEY	Re-Creating Democracy, Over and Over	(a) The Lost Individual [OL] (b) The Search for the Great Community [OL] Recommended: (c) Bernstein, "Creative Democracy—The Task Still Before Us" [OL]	Short writing due by MONDAY 10/26 @ 11: 59 p.m. (8 due over semester) Mini exam 3 due by MONDAY 11/2 @ 11:59 p.m.
11/3	UNIT 4: Week 11 APPLIED Pragmatism: Race	Pragmatist Approaches to Race	(a) Eldridge, "Dewey on Race and Social Change" [OL] (b) Glaude, Jr. "Pragmatism and Black Identity: An Alternative Approach in the 21st Century" [OL]	Short writing due by MONDAY 11/2 @ 11: 59 p.m. (8 due over semester)

11/10	UNIT 4: Week 12 APPLIED Pragmatism: Race	Pragmatist Approaches to Race	(a) Alain Locke, "Values & Imperatives" [OL] (b) Alain Locke, "The Contribution of Race to Culture" [OL]	Short writing due by MONDAY 11/9 @ 11: 59 p.m. (8 due over semester)
11/17	UNIT 4: Week 13 APPLIED Pragmatism: Feminism	Pragmatism, Women, and Feminism	(a) Seigfried, "Validating Women's Experience Pragmatically," [OL] (b) Whipps, "Dewey, Addams, and Design Thinking: Pragmatist Feminist Innovation for Democratic Change"	Short writing due by MONDAY 11/16 @ 11: 59 p.m. (8 due over semester) Mini exam 4 due by MONDAY 11/23 @ 11:59 p.m.
11/24	THANKSGIVING BREAK			
12/1	Final Class: Week 14 Wrap Up	Thinking about the axes of pragmatism: Old vs. New, Theoretical vs. Applied	No new readings	Short writing due by MONDAY 11/30 @ 11: 59 p.m. (8 due over semester)
12/8	Finals Due			Mini-plus exam 1 due by MONDAY 12/8 @ 11:59 p.m.