Office Hours:
   Monday 3:00-3:45
   Tuesday 1:00-1:45
   Thursday 1:00-1:45
   and by appointment.

All students are encouraged to come to my office hours whenever they would like.

Course Description:
This course is an historical survey of American philosophy from the 1890s through the present. The course begins with the hypothesis that a significant strand of the American tradition developed as a philosophy of resistance against ideas inherited from Europe and against a social, political, and economic system whose practices led to oppression through assimilation or exclusion. As a consequence these philosophies share a common interest in the nature of pluralism, agency, and liberation. While the various strands of this tradition of resistance share some concerns and methods, they also differ. This course will use the work of John McDermott to frame the discussion of these various strands by examining the role of experience in these philosophies. He writes: “Historically considered [the American] tradition was faced with an ever-shifting scene, characterized by widespread geographical, political, and social upheavals. These crises were built into the very continuity of the culture, and it was thereby fitting that basic . . . categories of understanding were transformed. The meaning of the reflective experience is to point precisely to the fact that such a transformation had its basis in the willingness of the culture, over a sustained period of time, to listen to the informing character of experience.” We will explore a variety of voices in this tradition, but this course will introduce only a small portion of the tradition. By focusing on a range of major figures and themes, the course may also serve as a starting point for further inquiry into the American tradition and its connection with other philosophical traditions.

Texts:
Erin McKenna and Scott L. Pratt, American Philosophy: From Wounded Knee to the Present (Bloomsbury, 2015)
Other readings on Canvas.
Assignments:
Readings: You are responsible for all of the required readings each week. In addition to these readings, you are expected to pursue secondary readings on the course material in support of your own interests, the précis, and the final paper.

Discussion Leadership and Précis: Each participant will sign up to take special responsibility for one day of the course. On that day, you will be especially well-prepared to answer questions about the readings and introduce topics for class discussion. You will also select one of the primary text readings for the day and write a short précis on the reading. Each précis should summarize the argument of the work and discuss it in relation to an organizing interest (e.g. one of the larger themes of the course such as the idea of pluralism, the process of liberation, or your paper topic). The précis should be 800-1000 words in length. The précis will be worth 10% of your grade and your time as discussion leader will be worth 10%.

Critical Reading Questions (CRQs): Each student will write three CRQ’s. Two of these will be on readings we do as a class. You may choose when to write these, but you may not write one the same day you are scheduled to be discussion leader. They are due to me on Canvas at least 24 hours before the class meeting in which we will be discussing that reading. The third CRQ will be on one of the chapters in America Philosophy that we are not reading as a class. This one is due to me before the Prospectus is due. These are one-page (single spaced) papers in which you raise a question prompted by the reading and then respond and discuss. These are not to be simple factual questions, but questions of implication, interpretation, consistency, and the like.

Paper Prospectus and Annotated Bibliography: On February 22nd, you will submit a prospectus of your final paper with two components: (1) a 2-3 page detailed description of the topic and outline of your proposed argument; and (2) an annotated bibliography of at least five primary or peer-reviewed secondary texts that you intend to consult (in addition to texts assigned for the course). Each annotation should be about 300 words and include a summary of the book or article as well as an indication of its relevance for your project. Your prospectus must receive my approval in order for your final term paper to be accepted. The prospectus will be worth 10% of your final course grade.

Term Paper: Your term paper may be on a topic of your choice and should be 3,500-4,000 words (a little longer than standard “conference” length). In general, papers should focus on materials read for class (including any of the philosophers and topics discussed in American Philosophy). In addition to the required readings, your papers must make use of secondary sources beyond the course readings as well. Since it is important for you to work on papers with a more far-reaching purpose, I encourage you to think of these papers as works-in-progress toward a possible conference paper or journal submission. Your paper will be worth 50% of your grade. Final papers are due on Monday, March 14 at 5:00 in the department office.

Attendance and Participation: Attendance is required. For every unexcused absence after one, you will lose 1/3 of a grade. Class will focus on guided discussions of the material so students need to be on time and prepared to participate. At a minimum this means having completed the reading, thought about the reading, having questions ready, and listening actively (rather than just waiting one’s turn to speak or dominating the conversation).
Grading:

- Précis: 10%
- Discussion Leader: 10%
- CRQ’s: 10%
- Paper Prospectus/bibliography: 10%
- Final paper: 50%
- Participation: 10%

PLEASE NOTE: Failure to complete any assignment results in automatic failure of the class.

Academic Honesty

Students who engage in acts of academic dishonesty, which in this class would mean cheating on an exam or paper, will receive a failing grade for the assignment and may fail the class. For a full description of forms of academic dishonesty, please see: https://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/AcademicMisconduct.aspx

Note that the schedule of readings is subject to change during the quarter. All changes will be announced in advance during class. If you have questions about the assignments, requirements, or subject matter, please let me know. If you have special needs due to a disability, please talk with me as soon as possible so that your needs can be addressed.

Schedule:

Watch McReynold’s American Philosophy film by start of the second week of class:
https://vimeo.com/21268165

January

Hope and Critique

(M) 4 AP, Prologue and ch.1-3 (x-xiv, 1-21)—“Defining Pluralism” (Pokagon, Wells-Barnett, and Fortune), “Evolution and American Indian Philosophy,”
McD, Intro.-Ch.1 (1-36)—“Threadbare Crape: Reflections on the America Strand”

(W) 6 AP, Part I and chs. 4-6 (23-53)—“Feminist Resistance” (Fuller, Cooper, Addams, Gilman,” “Transcendental Origins” (Emerson, Thoreau); “Labor, Empire, and the Social Gospel” (Gladden, Rauschenbusch, Addams)
McD, ch.4 (89-105)—“Spires of Influence: The Importance of Emerson for Classical American Philosophy”

A Response to Change

(M) 11 Addams, Intro.-ch. 2 (ix-xxxiv, 5-47)—“Charitable Effort,” “Filial Relations”; Pluralist article by Marilyn Fischer, “Addams on Cultural Pluralism, European Immigrants, and African Americans” (38-58)
(W) 13 Addams, chs. 3-6 (48-120)—“Household Adjustment,” Industrial Amelioration,” Educational Methods,” “Political Reform”

**Experience and Community**

(M) 18 AP, chs. 7-9 (55-78)—“A New Name for an Old Way of Thinking” (James); “Making Ideas Clear” (Peirce); “The Beloved Community and Its Discontents” (Royce and the Realists)

McD, chs. 5-6 (106-139)—“Josiah Royce’s Philosophy of the Community: Danger of the Detached Individual,” “Possibility or Else! The Philosophy of William James”

(W) 20 James, Preface and Intro. (xv-l); James, pp. 629-660,—“On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings;” “What Makes Life Significant;”

**Experience and Agency**

(M) 25 James, pp. 717-735, 362-390; 449-461—“The Will to Believe,” “The Present Dilemma in Philosophy;” “What Pragmatism Means;” “Pragmatism and Humanism”

(W) 27 AP, chs. 10-12 (79-145)—“War, Anarchism and Sex” (Goldman, Sanger); “Democracy and Social Ethics: John Dewey;” “ Naturalism and Idealism, Fear and Conventionality” (Calkins, Parsons)

**February**

(M) 1 Dewey, LW Vol. 13, Intro and Experience and Education (ix-xviii, 1-62); “The Determination of Ultimate Values or Aims Through Antecedent or A Priori Speculation or through Pragmatic or Empirical Inquiry” (255-270)

(W) 3 McD, ch. 7 (145-160)—“A Relational World: The Significance of the Thought of William James and John Dewey for Global Culture”

**Ontology of Race and Pluralism**

(M) 8 AP, chs. 13-16 (111-145)—“Race Riots and the Color Line” (Du Bois); “Philosophy Reacts” (Alexander, Davidson, Cohen); “ Creative Experience” (Follett); “Cultural Pluralism” (Locke)

(W) 10 Locke, pp. 3-25—“Rendering the Text”; chs. 2-5 (51-102)—“Pluralism and Intellectual Democracy;” “Cultural Relativism and Ideological Peace;” “A Functional View of Value Ultimates;” “Pluralism and Ideological Peace”


(W) 17 Pratt, “The Logic of Home” from *Native Pragmatism* (216-243); Collins, “Rethinking Black Women’s Activism” from *Black Feminist Thought* (139-160)
Relational Individuals

(M) 22 Prospectus and annotated bibliography due

(W) 24 McD, chs. 14-15 and 19 (278-290) and (372-389)—“The Inevitability of Our Own Death: The Celebration of Time as a Prelude to Disaster;” “Experience Grows by Its Edges: A Phenomenology of Relations in an American Vein”

Pragmatism and Feminism


March

(W) 2 CFP, ch. 5 (90-109)—Dieleman, “Solving the Problem of Epistemic Exclusion: A Pragmatist Feminist Approach”
Rorty, “The Dark Side of the Academic Left (4-6) and “Philosophy in America Today” from Consequences of Pragmatism (211-230)

(M) 7 CFP, chs. 6-8 (115-161)—Whipps, “Feminist-Pragmatist Democratic Practice and Contemporary Sustainability Movements: Mary Parker Follett, Jane Addams, Emily Greene Balch, and Vandana Shiva;” Heldke, “Community Gardeners or Radical Homemakers?” Thayer-Bacon, “Education’s Role in Democracy: The Power of Pluralism”

The Spirit of American Philosophy

(W) 9 AP, pp. 327-334 and ch. 32 (349-380)—“Recovering . . . the American Tradition” (Rorty); “American Philosophy Revitalized (Smith, Bernstein, McDermott, West), “The Spirit of American Philosophy in the New Century”

Papers due Monday March 14th by 5:00.