Office Hours:
   Tuesday 12:30-1:45
   Thursday 12:30-1:45
   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. John McDermott 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.”

This tradition, while critical of established views and practices, is more focused on reconstruction than deconstruction. Rooted in a desire to understand particular experiences, and imagine ways those experiences could be transformed to make future experiences better or more fulfilling in any number of ways, this is a tradition that holds the problems of the world front and center. We will explore a variety of voices in this tradition, but this course will introduce only a very small portion of the tradition. By focusing on a few 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:
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 leading discussion on one day. 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 social individual, freedom, or your paper topic). The précis should be 800-1000 words in length. The précis will be worth 5% of your grade and your time as discussion leader will be worth 5%.

**Reading Paper:** Each student will write four Reading Papers, one on each major figure (Addams, Dewey, James, Locke). 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 12 hours before the class meeting in which we will be discussing that reading. These are one to two-page (single spaced) papers in which you provide a sympathetic reading of the assigned material and then develop a point further, connect an idea to some other philosopher, or apply an idea to an issue.

**Paper Prospectus and Annotated Bibliography:** On Thursday, November 9th, 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). Some journals for this tradition include *The Pluralist, The Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society, William James Studies, Dewey Studies*, and the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*. 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. 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 Friday, December 8th at 8:00 am on Canvas.**

**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 5%
- Discussion Leader 5%
- Reading papers 5% each (20%)
- 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:**
**The Spirit of American Philosophy**
**September:**
(T) 26 Smith reading on Canvas; Dewey, *Freedom and Culture*, chs. 1-3

(R) 28 Dewey, *Freedom and Culture*, chs. 4-7

**Pragmatism, Truth, and Reality**
**October:**
(T) 3 James, Gunn’s Introduction and *Pragmatism*, Lectures I-IV

(R) 5 James, *Pragmatism*, Lectures V-VIII

(T) 10 James, “Is Life Worth Living?” and “On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings”

**The Social Individual**
(R) 12 Addams

(T) 17 Addams
(R) 19 SPEP—Writing day

(T) 24 Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action*

(R) 26 Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action*

**Ontology of Race and Pluralism**

(T) 31 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”

November:


(T) 7 Pratt, “The Logic of Home” from *Native Pragmatism* (216-243); Collins, “Rethinking Black Women’s Activism” from *Black Feminist Thought* (139-160)

(R) 9 Prospectus and annotated bibliography due. Faculty panel.

**Saturday the 11th: Northwest Reading Group in American Philosophy, in Yachats**

**Pragmatism and Feminism**

(T) 14 Addams


(T) 21 CFP, ch. 5 (90-109)—Dieleman,“Solving the Problem of Epistemic Exclusion: A Pragmatist Feminist Approach”

   Rorty, “Truth Without Correspondence to Reality,” on Canvas

(R) 23 Thanksgiving

(T) 28 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”

(R) 30 McDermott, on Canvas

**Final papers dues on Friday, December 8th by 8 am—on Canvas.**