

Fall 2010

## PHIL 370: History of American Philosophy

meets MWF, 1—1:50 p.m. in Hayes Hall, Room 113. *Instructor:* Dr. Tadd Ruetenik. *Office hours:* 11 a.m.—noon TH, 10 a.m.—noon F, in 117 McMullen, (563) 333-6435, SAU *email begins with:* rueteniktaddl

This course is an examination of the development of American philosophy. It will consider positions such as empiricism, idealism, naturalism, and pragmatism, and show the relevance of these positions in the development of diversity and commonality as themes in American thought. Special emphasis will be placed on the development of American religious philosophy from colonial times to the present, and on the issues of race and gender that inform American social, political, and religious thought.

### **Texts (all others available online):**

Philosophy Americana, by Doug Anderson. ISBN: 0-8232-2551-8

American Vertigo, by Bernard-Henri Lévy. ISBN: 978-2286020347

Hope on a Tightrope, by Cornel West. ISBN: 978-1401921866

### **Requirements:**

- 3 essay exams (20 points each)
- 1 take-home essay exam (20 points)
- 1 group presentation (10 points)
- 1 attendance at Labor Project event (10 points)

**Exams:** These are essay exams focusing on both readings and lecture/class discussions, and will be composed and submitted to Blackboard during the class period. A study guide will be made available prior to the exam. There will be one take-home exam near the end of class, which also will be submitted to Blackboard.

**Group presentation:** During select class periods, a group of two students will lead discussion on the assigned reading. The purpose of this presentation is not to summarize the selection (since everyone in class already will have read it) but to highlight things that you found particularly interesting, and things that you believe will instigate productive debate among class members. The presentations will involve two or three students who read the text carefully, help each other understand its meaning, and developing a plan for how to lead discussion on it. Images, short videos, and powerpoints are not required, but not discouraged either.

**Labor Project Event:** America's most noteworthy contribution to philosophy is pragmatism, and pragmatism is a philosophy of work. Thus, it is appropriate that we attend one of the many public lectures associated with this year's Labor Project. Students are required to attend one of the following:

7 p.m. September 9 in the Rogalski Center: "Workers of the World," by David Brady.

7 p.m. October 20 in the Rogalski Center: Baecke Lecture, "Get to Work: The Rights and Wrongs of Women's Attitudes toward paid work in the Market Economy," by Linda Hirschman.

7 p.m. October 26 in the Rogalski Center: Ambrose Women for Social Justice Lecture, "Mommy Needs a Job!": Women Navigating the Public Workforce System," by Mary Gatta.

7 p.m. November 9 in the Rogalski Center: Geiger Lecture, "Workers, Labor Unions, and the Making of Meat: Iowa's History in a Global Context," by Bill Warren.

For credit, students should either find the instructor at the lecture, or, if the instructor is not at that particular lecture, provide to the instructor, during the next class period, a brief verbal reaction to some of the points made at the lecture.

**Grading Scale:** For the final grade: A = >89; B+ = >86; B= >79; C+ = >76; C = >70; D = >60; F = <60. Missing more than five class sessions (whether "excused" or "unexcused") will result in a 5-point (per absence) deduction in final grade. Missing up to five classes, though not advisable, will incur no penalty.

Actions that violate University policies regarding academic honesty will result in 0 points for assignments, and the student might incur additional penalties.

Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities at 333-6275 as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

**Calendar** (all assigned readings are to be done prior to class indicated)

**8/25** (Intro)

**8/27** "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," by Jonathan Edwards.

<http://www.jesus-is-lord.com/sinners.htm>

**8/30** "Personal Narrative," by Jonathan Edwards.

[http://mith2.umd.edu/eada/html/display.php?docs=edwards\\_personalnarrative.xml](http://mith2.umd.edu/eada/html/display.php?docs=edwards_personalnarrative.xml)

**9/1** "A Model of Christian Charity," by John Winthrop.

<http://religiousfreedom.lib.virginia.edu/sacred/charity.html>

9/6 **No class (Labor Day)**

9/8 “Self-Reliance,” by Ralph Waldo Emerson.

<http://www.rwe.org/complete-works/ii---essays-i/ii-self-reliance> Presentation: **Maggie Cebulski, Colin Long**

[Optional: 7 p.m. 9/9 in the Rogalski Center: “Workers of the World,” by David Brady.]

9/10 “Plato; Or, the Philosopher,” by Ralph Waldo Emerson.

<http://www.rwe.org/complete-works/iv---representative-men/plato-or-the-philosopher>  
Presentation: **Michael Galgin, Elvira Masinovic**

9/13 “Resistance to Civil Government,” by Henry David Thoreau.

<http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/transcendentalism/authors/thoreau/civiltext.html>  
Presentation: **David Van Duerm, Maxwell Cook**

9/15 “Walking,” by Henry David Thoreau.

<http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/transcendentalism/authors/thoreau/walking>  
Presentation: **Luke Foster, Daniel Waddell**

9/17 **Exam 1**

9/20 “How to Make our Ideas Clear,” by Charles Sanders Peirce.

[http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/How\\_to\\_Make\\_Our\\_Ideas\\_Clear](http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/How_to_Make_Our_Ideas_Clear) Presentation: **Cassie Boorn, Charles Taffe**

9/22 “The Fixation of Belief,” by Peirce.

[http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The\\_Fixation\\_of\\_Belief](http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Fixation_of_Belief) Presentation: **Ryan Piper, Angela Buckley**

9/24 “The Stream of Thought,” by William James.

<http://webSPACE.ship.edu/cgboer/jamesselection.html> Presentation: **Kiajuana Lawton, Jolene Walter**

9/27 Philosophy Americana. Introduction

9/29 Philosophy Americana. Chapter 1

10/1 Philosophy Americana. Chapter 5

10/4 Philosophy Americana. Chapter 6.

10/6 Philosophy Americana. Chapter 7.

10/8 Philosophy Americana. Chapter 12.

10/11 Philosophy Americana. Chapter 15.

10/13 **Exam 2**

10/15 **No class (Fall Break)**

10/18 American Vertigo. En Route; Chapter 1.

**10/20** In class presentation on reconciliation in American history, by Native American musician and author Bill Miller.

[Optional: 7 p.m. **10/20** in the Rogalski Center: Baecke Lecture, “Get to Work: The Rights and Wrongs of Women’s Attitudes toward paid work in the Market Economy,” by Linda Hirschman.]

**10/22** American Vertigo. Chapter 2.

**10/25** American Vertigo. Chapter 3.

[Optional: 7 p.m. **10/26** in the Rogalski Center: Ambrose Women for Social Justice Lecture, “Mommy Needs a Job!”: Women Navigating the Public Workforce System,” by Mary Gatta.]

**10/27** American Vertigo. Chapter 4.

**10/29** American Vertigo. Chapter 5.

**11/1** American Vertigo. Chapter 6--7.

**11/3** American Vertigo. Reflections I.

**11/5** American Vertigo. Reflections II.

**11/8** American Vertigo. Reflections III and IV.

[Optional: 7 p.m. **11/9** in the Rogalski Center: Geiger Lecture, “Workers, Labor Unions, and the Making of Meat: Iowa’s History in a Global Context,” by Bill Warren.]

**11/10** “The Moral Equivalent of War,” by William James.

<http://www.des.emory.edu/mfp/moral.html> Presentation: **Ryan Brophy, Emily Hightight**

**11/12** “Introduction to Newer Ideals of Peace,” by Jane Addams.

[http://www.brocku.ca/MeadProject/Addams/Addams\\_1907/Addams\\_1907\\_1.html](http://www.brocku.ca/MeadProject/Addams/Addams_1907/Addams_1907_1.html)  
Presentation: **Lance Green, Lance Dillie**

**11/15 Exam 3**

**11/17** “The Democratic Conception in Education,” by John Dewey.

[http://www.ilt.columbia.edu/publications/Projects/digitexts/dewey/d\\_e/chapter07.html](http://www.ilt.columbia.edu/publications/Projects/digitexts/dewey/d_e/chapter07.html)  
Presentation: **Jeffrey Melin, TBA**

**11/19** Hope on a Tightrope. Chapters 1—2

**11/29** Hope on a Tightrope. Chapters 3—4

**12/1** Hope on a Tightrope. Chapters 5—6

**12/3** Hope on a Tightrope. Chapters 7—8

**12/6** Hope on a Tightrope. Chapters 9—10

**12/8** Hope on a Tightrope. Chapters 11—12 + afterword.

**12/10** conclusion; course evaluation

**12/13** No class finals week. **Submit Take home Exam by 5 p.m.**