

CMS 390J: Pragmatism and Rhetoric

University of Texas at Austin
Spring 2010

Instructor: Dr. Scott R. Stroud
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Class Time: M 6-9 pm
Classroom: CMA A3.108
Class Website: on Blackboard

Office: CMA 7.132
Office Hours: M 2-5pm, F 1-2pm
and by appointment

Course Description:

This graduate seminar will examine what pragmatism has to offer those engaged in the study of rhetoric. The classical pragmatists often praised communication and community, but they seemed to leave it up to us to produce detailed pragmatic views of rhetorical theory and criticism. We will examine the thought of the classical pragmatists in an attempt to figure out what pragmatism would mean for theories of rhetoric and communication, ideal senses of community, the art of rhetoric, as well as method in the study of rhetoric. Here the thought of Charles S. Peirce, William James, and John Dewey will assume particular prominence. Additionally, we will look at the work of some contemporary pragmatists, in communication studies and beyond, to see how they engage issues in rhetoric and communication.

Students will be expected to emerge from this course with a grasp of the basic problematics driving classical and modern pragmatism, as well as how these relate to issues in rhetoric and communication studies. Students will produce an academic research paper at the end of this course instantiating the skills necessary for rigorous argumentation and independent research.

Required Texts:

John J. McDermott (Ed.), The Writings of William James: A Comprehensive Edition, University of Chicago Press, 1978, **WWJ**.

Larry Hickman & Thomas M. Alexander (Eds.), The Essential Dewey, Volume 1: Pragmatism, Education, Democracy, Indiana University Press, 1998, **ED1**.

Larry Hickman & Thomas M. Alexander (Eds.), The Essential Dewey, Volume 2: Ethics, Logic, Psychology, Indiana University Press, 1998, **ED2**.

John Dewey, Art as Experience, Perigee Trade, 2005, **AE**.

John Dewey, The Public & Its Problems, Swallow Press, 1954, **PP**.

John Dewey, Experience and Nature, Dover Publications, 2000, **EN**.

Robert Danisch, Pragmatism, Democracy, and the Necessity of Rhetoric, University of South Carolina Press, 2007, **PNR**.

Course Reader (available at Jenn's Copy across from CMA), CR.

Assignments:

Participation	15%
Reading Response Papers	25%
Discussion Presentation	10%
Research Paper Proposal	5%
Research Paper	45%

Grading:

93-100% = A	87-89% = B+	77-79% = C+	67-69% = D+	59 and below = F
90-92% = A-	83-86% = B	73-76% = C	63-66% = D	
	80-82% = B-	70-72% = C-	60-62% = D-	

Assignment Descriptions:

This class is a seminar. As such, I expect you to listen attentively while I discuss certain points and to engage in productive, on-topic comments while we are discussing various issues and readings. Come to class having done the reading and ready to talk about what you understand and what you don't. My observations of your role in the classroom community will constitute your *participation grade*.

For each class session (save our first meeting), please prepare a *reading response* paper. These should be 1-2 pages in length (12 pt font, double-spaced, 1" margins, with just your name at the top). I will not prepare discussion questions in advance of each class. Instead, I want you to begin to sense the important issues and moves in each piece on your own. Your response paper can be your critical response to any part of the assigned reading(s) for that class. Another way to think of these would be as chances to connect a topic in the reading to some issue in rhetorical theory or practice. I will evaluate these papers based upon their engagement with substantive points in the reading, as well as the depth of critical thought displayed (albeit for a paper of this length). What we don't want to do on these papers, say, is to link James' essay to something you witnessed on our family vacation, to write about our emotional reaction to his point, etc. Argue something. You argue something, don't burn up all your space by throwing quotations or airy introductions in there. Try to argue something interesting or important. Also, keep the sort of formal voice you would have in an academic piece—these are not article length pieces, but the sort of critical thinking and argument should be of the same cloth.

Over the course of the semester, each student will be a "discussion leader" for one session. There will be (at most) one student discussion leader per section. For that week, this student will not need to prepare a reading response paper. Instead, they will lead a 45 minute *discussion presentation*. You will choose some subset of the assigned readings for that day, present thoughts on it, and lead a discussion about it. This will involve you presenting some main points of the reading(s) and then critically analyzing them. If you want to link the reading(s) in question to larger concerns in rhetoric or to other class readings, that is fine. Also be prepared to stimulate class discussion for a while. We will start the process of picking days for presentations in the first class session.

Each student will write a *research paper* (15-25 pages) dealing with a significant issue involving pragmatism and rhetoric. This paper must include research outside of assigned course materials and

must involve critical reflection and argument. You must inform me (in a 1-2 page document) of your proposed topic for feedback on its suitability. This is your chance to link discussed ideas in pragmatism to your own areas of study in rhetoric or to expand on something that only received a bit of treatment in the course. More details concerning this paper will follow in class. It would be a good idea to share drafts of your paper with your classmates to get their feedback on it, although I will not require this. Ideally, your final paper should be ready for submission to a regional or national conference in communication studies. To help reach this goal, each student will briefly (7-10 minutes) present their paper on our final meeting (probably during final exam week). Your completed research paper will be due May 14 by 5pm.

Notes to Syllabus:

-Due dates: assignments must meet the due dates or be subject to a 20% penalty if turned in within a week (after that, a zero must be recorded).

-The university policy on plagiarism will be strictly enforced. Using the text or ideas of someone else in your papers or presentations without clearly citing them is the stealing of those words or ideas, and significant cases will result in an "F" for the course (less significant cases will result in an "F" on the assignment). Using written work you prepared for other courses is also not allowed. As graduate students, I expect that none of you will resort to cheating on papers or presentations in this course.

Disability Statement:

Students with disabilities who require special accommodations need to get a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Office of the Dean of Students (471-6259 voice or 471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). This letter should be presented to the instructor in each course at the beginning of the semester and accommodations needed should be discussed at that time. Five business days before an exam the student should remind the instructor of any testing accommodations that will be needed.

Blackboard:

This course uses Blackboard, a Web-based course management system in which a password-protected site is created for each course. Blackboard is available at <http://courses.utexas.edu>. I will use Blackboard to distribute handouts, as well as to post any additional information or comments. Also, I encourage you to post questions or comments on the "discussion board" part of Blackboard. This can only be read by students in this class and it can count as "participation" to some extent if you sign your comments (anonymous posts can't be linked to a student name, obviously). I'll try to respond to these comments and questions in a timely manner.

Course Calendar

The listed readings are subject to change with adequate notice.

(1) January 25 Pragmatism and Charles S. Peirce on Communication

Larry Hickman, "Why American Philosophy? Why Now?" *European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy*, 1(1), 2009, 1-3.

Louis Menand, "An Introduction to Pragmatism," Pragmatism: A Reader, Vintage, 1997.

Douglas Anderson, "Some Preliminary Remarks on the Origins of Pragmatism," Philosophy Americana, Fordham UP, 2006.

Peter Simonson, "Varieties of Pragmatism and Communication: Visions and Revisions from Peirce to Peters," In D. K. Perry (Ed.), American Pragmatism and Communication Research. LEA, 2001.

Larry Hickman, "Classical Pragmatism: Waiting at the End of the Road," Pragmatism as Post-Postmodernism: Lessons from John Dewey, Fordham UP, 2007.

Charles S. Peirce, "The Fixation of Belief," In N. Houser & C. Kloesel, The Essential Peirce, Volume 1 (1867-1893), Indiana University Press, 1992.

Charles S. Peirce, "What is a Sign?" (1894), "Sundry Logical Conceptions" (1903), "Nomenclature and Divisions of Triadic Relations, as Far as They are Determined" (1903), "New Elements" (1904), "Ideas, Stray or Stolen, about Scientific Writing" (1904), in N. Houser & C. Kloesel, The Essential Peirce, Volume 2 (1893-1913), Indiana University Press, 1992.

(2) February 1 William James on Pragmatism, Truth, and Rhetoric

William James, "The Present Dilemma in Philosophy," "What Pragmatism Means," "Pragmatism's Conception of Truth," "Pragmatism and Religion," Pragmatism, 1907. **WWJ** 362-389, 429-442, 461-472

William James, "The Will to Believe" (1896), "Faith and the Right to Believe" (1911), **WWJ** 717-741.

Robert Danisch, "William James on Contingency, Plurality, and Belief: Toward a Pragmatist Philosophy of Rhetoric," Pragmatism, Democracy, and the Necessity of Rhetoric, University of South Carolina Press, 2007, **PNR** Chapter 1.

(3) February 8 William James on Habit, Consciousness, and Radical Empiricism

William James, "Habit" (1893), "The Stream of Thought" (1890), "Does Consciousness Exist?" (1904), "A World of Pure Experience" (1904), **WWJ** 9-21, 21-74, 169-183, 194-214.

Chris Russill, "The Road Not Taken: William James's Radical Empiricism and Communication Theory," *Communication Review*, 8, 2005, 277-305.

Gregory J. Shepherd, "Pragmatism and Tragedy, Communication and Hope: A Summary Story." In D. K. Perry (ed), American Pragmatism and Communication Research, LEA, 2001.

(4) February 15 William James on the Ideal, Orientation, and Ethics

William James, "On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings" (1899), "What Makes a Life Significant" (1899), "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life" (1891), **WWJ** 610-660.

William James, "The Gospel of Relaxation," Talks to Teachers on Psychology and to Students on Life's Ideals, 1899.

Renee Tursi, "William James's Narrative of Habit," *Style*, 33, 1999, 67-86.

Charlene Haddock Seigfried, "Devising Ends Worth Striving For: William James and the Reconstruction of Philosophy," In L. Langsdorf & A. R. Smith (eds.), Recovering Pragmatism's Voice, SUNY, 1995.

William J. Leonhirth, "William James and the Uncertain Universe." In D. K. Perry (ed), American Pragmatism and Communication Research, LEA, 2001.

M. C. Otto, "On a Certain Blindness in William James," *Ethics*, 53, 1943, 184-191.

Issac E. Catt, "The 'Cash Value' of Communication," In L. Langsdorf & A. R. Smith (eds.), Recovering Pragmatism's Voice, SUNY, 1995.

(5) February 22 John Dewey on Experience, Value, and Activity

John Dewey, "From Absolutism to Experimentalism" (1930), **ED1** 14-21.

John Dewey, "The Postulate of Immediate Empiricism" (1905), **ED1** 115-119.

John Dewey, "Experience and Philosophic Method," "Experience as Precarious and as Stable," "Nature, Ends and Histories," "Existence, Value and Criticism," Experience and Nature, 1925, **EN** Chapters 1-3, 10

(6) March 1 John Dewey's Concepts of Inquiry, Reflective Thinking, and Habit

John Dewey, "Analysis of Reflective Thinking," How We Think, 1933, **ED2** 137-144.

John Dewey, "The Pattern of Inquiry," Logic: The Theory of Inquiry, 1938, **ED2** 169-179.

John Dewey, "The Existential Matrix of Inquiry: Cultural," Logic: The Theory of Inquiry, 1938, **ED2** 78-87.

John Dewey, "Introduction," "The Place of Habit in Conduct," Human Nature and Conduct: An Introduction to Social Psychology, 1922, **ED2** 19-49.

John Dewey, "Moral Judgment and Knowledge," "The Moral Self," Ethics, 1932, **ED2** 328-354.

Robert Danisch, "John Dewey on Communication and the Practical Arts: A History of Philosophy and a Return to Rhetoric," Pragmatism, Democracy, and the Necessity of Rhetoric, University of South Carolina Press, 2007, **PNR** Chapter 2.

(7) March 8 John Dewey on Inquiry, Community, and the Public

Walter Lippmann, "The World Outside and the Pictures in Our Heads," "The Entering Wedge," "Intelligence Work," "The Appeal to the Public," "The Appeal to Reason," Public Opinion, Free Press, 1922/1966.

John Dewey, "Review of *Public Opinion*" (1922).

John Dewey, "Eclipse of the Public," "Search for the Great Community," The Public and Its Problems, 1927, **PP** Chapters 4 and 5.

John Dewey, "Democracy is Radical" (1937), "Creative Democracy – The Task Before Us" (1939), **ED1** 337-343.

John Dewey, "Education as a Necessity of Life," "The Democratic Conception in Education," Democracy and Education, Dover, 1916/2004.

Walter R. Fisher, "Narration, Reason, and Community." In R. H. Brown (ed.), Writing the Social Text: Poetics and Politics in Social Science Discourse, Aldine de Gruyter, 1992.

March 15 - Spring Break - No Class - Be Pragmatic

(8) March 22 John Dewey on Art and Aesthetic Experience

John Dewey, "Experience, Nature and Art," Experience and Nature, 1925, **EN** Chapter 9

John Dewey, Art as Experience, Perigee, 1934/1980, **AE** Chapters 1-6, 9-12, 14.

Richard Shusterman, "The End of Aesthetic Experience," *Journal of Aesthetic and Art Criticism*, 55, 1997, 29-41.

(9) March 29 John Dewey and the Art of Communication

John Dewey, "Nature, Communication and Meaning," Experience and Nature, 1925, EN Chapter 5.

Nathan Crick, "John Dewey's Aesthetics of Communication," *Southern Journal of Communication*, 69, 2004, 303-319.

Scott R. Stroud, "John Dewey and the Question of Artful Communication," *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 41, 2008, 153-183.

Nathan Crick, "'A Capital and Novel Argument': Charles Darwin's Notebooks and the Productivity of Rhetorical Consciousness," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 91, 2005, 337-364.

Joli Jensen, "Art as Experience: John Dewey's Aesthetics," "Conclusion: The Value of Expressive Logic," Is Art Good for Us? Beliefs about High Culture in American Life, Rowman & Littlefield, 2002.

(10) April 5 Richard Rorty, Neopragmatism, and Rhetoric

Richard Rorty, "Pragmatism as Romantic Polytheism," "Pragmatism and Romanticism," "Analytic and Conversational Philosophy," Philosophy as Cultural Politics: Philosophical Papers, Volume 4, Cambridge, 2007, 26-41, 105-130.

Richard Rorty, "Private Irony and Liberal Hope," Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity, Cambridge, 1989.

Richard Rorty, "Introduction: Pragmatism and Philosophy," Consequences of Pragmatism, Minnesota, 1982.

Arthur P. Bochner and Joanne B. Waugh, "Talking-With as a Model for Writing-About" Implications of Rortyeen Pragmatism." In L. Langsdorf & A. R. Smith (eds.), Recovering Pragmatism's Voice, SUNY, 1995.

Janet S. Horne, "Changing the Subject: Rorty and Contemporary Rhetorical Theory." In L. Langsdorf & A. R. Smith (eds.), Recovering Pragmatism's Voice, SUNY, 1995.

(11) April 12 Pragmatism, Meliorism, and Rhetoric

James A. Mackin, Jr., "Rhetoric, Pragmatism, and Practical Wisdom." In R. A. Cherwitz (Ed.), Rhetoric and Philosophy, LEA, 1990.

James O. Pawelski, "Mitigation and Construction: Toward a Balanced Meliorism." Paper presented at the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy Annual Meeting, March 9-11, 2006, San Antonio.

Scott R. Stroud, "What Does Pragmatic Meliorism Mean for Rhetoric?" *Western Journal of Communication*, 74, 2010, 43-60.

James O. Pawelski, "William James, Positive Psychology, and Healthy-Mindedness," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, 17, 2003, 53-67.

Tadd Ruetenik, "Social Meliorism in the Religious Pragmatism of William James," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, 19, 2005, 238-249.

Edward Schiappa, "The Impossible Dream of Representational Correctness," "Beyond Representational Correctness: Five Suggestions," Beyond Representational Correctness, SUNY, 2008.

Daniel Sommer Robison, "A Critique of Meliorism," *International Journal of Ethics*, 34, 1924, 175-194.

Barbara Ehrenreich, "Positive Psychology: The Science of Happiness," "Postscript on Post-Positive Thinking," Bright-sided: How the Relentless Promotion of Positive Thinking has Undermined America, Metropolitan, 2009.

****Research paper proposal due by Thursday, April 15th at 5pm via email****

(12) April 19 Kenneth Burke and Pragmatism

Kenneth Burke, "The Virtues and Limitations of Debunking," "The Nature of Art under Capitalism," "Intelligence as a Good," "Liberalism's Family Tree," "Monads—On the Make," The Philosophy of Literary Form, University of California Press, 1973.

Kenneth Burke, "On Interpretation," Permanence and Change, University of California Press, 1954.

David L. Hildebrand, "Was Kenneth Burke a Pragmatist?" *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, 31, 1995, 632-657.

Paul Stob, "'Terministic Screens,' Social Constructionism, and the Language of Experience: Kenneth Burke's Utilization of William James," *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 41, 2008, 130-152.

Scott Wible, "Professor Burke's 'Bennington Project,'" *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, 38, 2008, 259-282.

Paul Stob, "Kenneth Burke, John Dewey, and the Pursuit of the Public," *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 38, 2005, 226-247.

(13) April 26 Pragmatism, Criticism, and Rhetoric

John Dewey, "Criticism and Perception," Art as Experience, AE Chapter 13.

- Raymie E. McKerrow, "Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Praxis," *Communication Monographs*, 56, 1989, 91-111.
- Robert Hariman, "Critical Rhetoric and Postmodern Theory," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 77, 1991, 67-70.
- Maurice Charland, "Finding a Horizon and Telos: The Challenge to Critical Rhetoric," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 77, 1991, 71-74.
- Raymie E. McKerrow, "Critical Rhetoric in a Postmodern World," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 77, 1991, 75-78.
- Kent A. Ono & John M. Sloop, "Commitment to *Telos* – A Sustained Critical Rhetoric," *Communication Monographs*, 59, 1992, 48-60.
- Scott R. Stroud, "John Dewey and the Question of Artful Criticism."
- David Henry, "Text and Theory in Critical Practice," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 78, 1992, 219-222.
- Michael Leff, "Things made by Words: Reflections on Textual Criticism," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 78, 1992, 223-231.
- Barbara Warnick, "Leff in Context: What is the Critic's Role?" *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 78, 1992, 232-237.
- Celeste M. Condit, "The Critic as Empath: Moving Away from Totalizing Theory," *Western Journal of Communication*, 57, 1993, 178-190.

(14) **May 3** **Pragmatism and Interpretation**

- Steven Knapp & Walter Benn Michaels, "Against Theory," *Critical Inquiry*, 8, 1982, 723-742.
- E.D. Hirsch, Jr., "Against Theory?" *Critical Inquiry*, 8, 1982, 742-747.
- Jonathan Crewe, "Toward Uncritical Practice," *Critical Inquiry*, 8, 1982, 748-759.
- Steven Mailloux, "Truth or Consequences: On Being Against Theory," *Critical Inquiry*, 8, 1982, 760-766.
- Hershel Parker, "Lost Authority: Non-sense, Skewed Meanings, and Intentionalist Meanings," *Critical Inquiry*, 8, 1982, 767-774.
- Steven Knapp & Walter Benn Michaels, "A Reply to Our Critics," *Critical Inquiry*, 9, 1983, 790-800.
- Stanley Fish, "Consequences," *Critical Inquiry*, 11, 1985, 433-458.

Richard Rorty, "Philosophy without Principles," *Critical Inquiry*, 11, 1985, 459-465.

Steven Knapp & Walter Benn Michaels, "A Reply to Richard Rorty: What is Pragmatism?" *Critical Inquiry*, 11, 1985, 466-473.

Richard Rorty, "Texts and Lumps," "Inquiry as Recontextualization: An Anti-Dualist Account of Interpretation," Objectivist, Relativism, and Truth, Cambridge, 1991.

Richard Shusterman, "Beneath Interpretation," Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art, 2nd Ed., Rowman & Littlefield, 2000.

(15) May _____ Research Presentations

****Final Papers due May 14 by 5pm in my mailbox (CMA 7.114)****