

EFND 8040 Pragmatism and Education: Course Syllabus

Instructor: Judith Preissle

Spring 2005

3 credit hours; call number 71-232

Monday 7:55-9:50 pm; Aderhold 601

Bulletin description: Educational writings of William James, Charles S. Peirce, and John Dewey. Prerequisites, corequisites, and cross-listings: none.

Course overview: What does it mean to be a pragmatist? An educational pragmatist? A philosophical pragmatist? This course explores the views of U.S. thinkers associated with American pragmatism: William James, John Dewey, W.E.B. Du Bois, Jane Addams, and Charles Peirce. Their ideas are compared to the work of more recent scholars such as Cornel West and Richard Rorty. Students will explore the implications and applications of pragmatism to educational practice and research. (Note: this is a revision of a course not offered for some time; it has benefitted from input from Dr. Derrick Alridge in Social Foundations of Education, Dr. George Stanic in Elementary Education, and Dr. William Wraga in Educational Administration and Policy.) We will read a lot (100 pages a week), talk a lot, and write some.

Course Objectives: As a learner in this course you will read and reflect on works in pragmatism and education. At the end of the course you will be able to

1. Specify the different ways pragmatism has been defined. What is philosophical pragmatism and how does it compare with everyday uses of the term? What is the history and development of philosophical pragmatism? How do pragmatists' positions on ethics and epistemology compare and contrast with those of other philosophical traditions?
2. Identify the influence of pragmatism on educational thought and practice. How does pragmatism compare and contrast with alternative philosophies of education? What assumptions and assertions do pragmatists make about education? What are the strengths and limitations of pragmatic views of education?
3. Recognize the major figures in pragmatism and compare and contrast their positions.
4. Analyze the influence of pragmatism on various traditions in educational research, especially research in your area of concentration.
5. Formulate ways that pragmatic thought may contribute to your own educational practice and research.

Topical Outline:

1. Definitions of pragmatism and philosophical pragmatism. These include such themes as life is continuous change and transition; theory and practice, experience and knowledge, facts and values, are inextricably interrelated
2. History of pragmatic thought
3. Pragmatism and ethics
4. Pragmatism and epistemology
5. Pragmatism and education: what education is and ought to be; what policies should guide education
6. Major historical figures: John Dewey, William James, Charles S. Peirce, Jane Addams, Louise M. Rosenblatt; current contributors: Richard Rorty, Cornell West, Charlene Haddock Siegfried
7. Strengths and limitations of pragmatism for educational practice and research

Readings (the classic pragmatists):

Addams, Jane

1902 "Educational Methods" (from *Democracy and Social Ethics*) to be posted on WebCT

Dewey, John

1916 *Democracy and Education* (available in our bookstores)

Du Bois, W.E.B.

1903 "On the Training of Black Men" (from *The Souls of Black Folk*) to be posted on WebCT

1906 "The Hampton Idea" collected in Herbert Aptheker (Ed.) *The Education of Black People: Ten Critiques* (NY: Monthly Review Press, 2001, pp. 5-15) to be posted on WebCT

Peirce, Charles S.

1877 "The Fixation of Belief" online at <http://www.peirce.org/writings/p107.html>

1878 "How to Make Our Ideas Clear" online at <http://www.peirce.org/writings/p119.html>

1905a "What Pragmatism Is" online at

<http://members.door.net/arisbe/menu/library/bycsp/whatis/whatpragis.htm>

1905b "Issues of Pragmaticism" to be posted on WebCT

James, William

1892 *Talks to Teachers on Psychology and to Students on Some of Life's Ideals* (available in our bookstores)

1906 "What Pragmatism Means" online at

<http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/us/james.htm>

1907 "Pragmatism's Conception of Truth" online at

<http://www.d.umn.edu/~dcole/phillang/WilliamJamesPragmatismLecture6.htm>

Readings (the pragmatist interpreters—all in our bookstores except online citation):

Berthoff, Ann E.

1988 “Democratic Practice, Pragmatic Vistas, ” an interpretation of Louise M. Rosenblatt, *Reader*, Number 20, online at <http://www.hu.mtu.edu/reader/online/20/berthoff20.html>

Biesta, Gert J.J., and Burbles, Nicholas C.

2003 *Pragmatism and Educational Research*

Menand, Louis

2001 *The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas in America*

West, Cornel

1989 *The American Evasion of Philosophy: A Genealogy of Pragmatism*

Readings (guide to discussion; select either one):

Rabow, Jerome, Michelle A. Charness, Johanna Kipperman, and Susan Radcliffe-Vasile

1994 William Fawcett Hill's Learning Through Discussion. Third ed. Thousand Oak, CA: Sage. Available on reserve at OIT in Aderhold 232

Hill, William Fawcett

1977 Learning Thru Discussion. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage. Available on reserve at OIT in Aderhold 232

University of Georgia Academic Honesty Policy:

All of us are expected to abide by the standards for academic honesty adopted by the university. Learning to appropriately quote and paraphrase and to cite and attribute sources is a skill that is key to honest and creative scholarship. I expect all students to review the guidelines at the website http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/academic_honesty/culture_honesty.htm. If you have questions about what would be considered violations of the standards, please raise them in class or ask me.

“All academic work must meet the standards contained in “A Culture of Honesty.” Each student is responsible to inform themselves [sic] about those standards before performing any academic work” (from page 1, Course Syllabus Policy, Academic Affairs Policy Statement Number 13, University of Georgia).

Accommodations for Qualified Individuals with Disabilities:

University of Georgia policy is to make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities. Please let me know if you have a disability request.

Need for Editorial Assistance:

Requirements for the course depend on substantial writing. Students who need editorial assistance, such as some individuals who are not native English speakers, are encouraged to make such arrangements. A good place to start is the UGA Writing Center:

<http://www.english.uga.edu/~writingcenter/home.html>.

Nature of This Course:

Philosophy addresses who people are, the nature of the world and how it is known, ethics and moral decision making, logic, aesthetics, and other topics on which people disagree. People have strong feelings, values, and beliefs that affect how they consider human experience, meaning, knowledge, and standards of judgment. Although diversity of opinions is central to the scholarly inquiry encouraged in this course, everyone is expected to accurately represent the variety of views discussed. We may agree to disagree, but we must be able to express the viewpoint with which we disagree. Sound scholarship depends, then, on respectful listening and sometimes respectful disagreement.

Instructor:

I can be reached by telephone at 542-6489, by e-mail preferably through the WEBCT site, but also at preissle@coe.uga.edu, and in my office, River's Crossing 303, before classes and by appointment. Preissle is pronounced price-lee with the accent on the first syllable. I work in the College of Education's qualitative and ethnographic research program as well as in the social foundations of education program, and I am an affiliated faculty member of the women's studies program. My degrees are an A.B. in history from Grinnell College in 1964 and an M.A. (University of Minnesota) in 1971 and an Ed.D. (Indiana University) in 1975, concentrating in anthropology and education. My scholarly interests and publications focus on sociocultural theory, gender studies, classroom social life, immigration and education, ethics and epistemology, and qualitative research design. My personal interests include books, music, gardening, birding, miniature schnauzers, and ballroom dancing.

Course Projects:

1. Course development: this is the first time this course has been offered, and my practice is to include student input into course development as much as possible. The course development project is a group assignment (pairs or larger groups) that invites students to contribute refined course objectives, activities, resources, and other ideas for the next time the course is offered. We will talk about this as we go along.
2. Course project: every student is required to submit a 10-15 page paper at the end of the term, applying concepts we have studied in the course. You may, for example, develop one of the preceding course objectives into a position paper, drawing from the materials assigned for the course.
3. Alternative course project: if you are working on an applied project, thesis, dissertation, or other research project that is relevant to the course, and if you wish to propose an alternative to the preceding course project, please negotiate with me.

Course Requirements:

1. I expect regular attendance and will take excessive absences (more than 6 hours of unexcused absences in a 3 credit-hour course) into account in the final course grade.
2. I expect people to come to class prepared and to contribute constructively to class discussions and activities. Frequent lack of preparation and either dominating or avoiding classroom contributions will also be taken into account in the final course grade. Every student will take at least two turns leading discussion on the assigned material each day, using the guidelines from William Fawcett Hill's Learning Through Discussion.
3. All students are required to use the WebCT services that support this course. Some course material will be available only on the course WebCT site. We will be emailing one another for individual and group purposes using this site. Assignments are to be submitted on the WebCT site.
4. Course projects—see directions in preceding section.
5. Grades will be based on the following activities:

Class attendance and participation	20
Course development	10
Project overview	20
Final course project	50
 Total Points	 100

Grading follows the University of Georgia policy:

100-90% = A	79-70% = C	below 60% = F
89-80% = B	69-60% = D	

Course Schedule*:

1/10/05	Introduction and Overview
1/17/05	Martin Luther King, Jr., Holiday—no class meeting
1/24/05	Menand, Preface and Chs. 1-5 Hill or Rabow Biesta and Burbules, Ch. 1
1/31/05	Menand, Chs. 6-7 West, Introduction and Ch. 1
2/7/05	Menand, Chs. 8-9 West, Ch. 2

Peirce, 1877, 1878

Identify project topic

- 2/14/05 Menand, Chs. 10-11
James, Introduction, Preface, and Chs. 1-5 of Talks to Teachers
Select group and subject for course development (these efforts may be submitted anytime up to April 18)
- 2/21/05 Menand, Ch. 12
West, Ch. 3
- 2/28/05 Menand, Ch. 13
James, Chs. 6-11 of Talks to Teachers
- 3/7/05 Guest Speaker: Dr. Derrick Alridge on W.E.B. Du Bois
Menand, Ch. 14
Du Bois, 1903, 1906
Submit project overview
- 3/14/05 Spring Break—no class meeting
- 3/21/05 Menand, Ch. 15 and Epilogue
West, Ch. 4
Dewey, Preface and Chs. 1-4
- 3/28/05 James, Chs. 12-15 of Talks to Teachers
Dewey, Chs. 5-7
- 4/4/05 James, Talks to Students
Dewey, Chs. 8-11
- 4/11/05 Biesta and Burbules, Ch. 2
Peirce, 1905a and 1905b
Dewey, Chs. 12-15
Final projects accepted anytime starting on this date
- 4/18/05 Biesta and Burbules, Ch. 3
James, 1906, 1807
Addams, 1902
- 4/25/05 Biesta and Burbules, Ch. 4
West, Ch. 5
Dewey, select from one of Chs. 16-26

5/2/05 Biesta and Burbules, Ch. 5
 West, Ch. 6
 Berthoff, 1988

5/4/05 **Projects Due–no class meeting**

**“The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary”* (from page 1, Course Syllabus Policy, Academic Affairs Policy Statement Number 13, University of Georgia).