American Philosophy

Phil 112-01 Dr. Dan C. Williamson
MW 1:30-2:45, Sweeney Hall 241

**Required Texts:**


Menand, Louis; *Pragmatism: A Reader*, Vintage (paperback) 1997

**Optional Texts:**

Menand, Louis; *The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas in America*; Farrar, Strauss and Giroux Reprint, 2002

Rorty, Richard; *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*; Cambridge, 1989 (1st ed.)


American Philosophy is not simply a distant copy of European Philosophy. The influence is undeniable just as European Philosophy is influenced by Greek and Roman Philosophies. The course will attempt to both consider those influences in the work of American thinkers as well as diverge into the areas where American Philosophy has left its own unique stamp. Hence, we’ll begin by considering the Puritans, notably the Puritan Divine Jonathan Edwards as well as John Winthrop and his conflicts with Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson. Then we will work our way through the Transcendentalists whose range is everything from metaphysics to morals and the beginnings of ecology and Women’s Rights (Margaret Fuller, above). The course will continue on to the end considering the group with an influence to this day: The American Pragmatists (James, Peirce and Dewey). Given time, the course should also consider contemporary readings of the same thinkers as they apply, especially, to ecology.