



## American Philosophy

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

### ***Required Texts:***

Harris, Leonard, et. al., eds.; *American Philosophies, An Anthology* 1<sup>st</sup>. ed. Blackwell  
Philosophy Anthologies, 2001

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 (1<sup>st</sup> ed.)

West, Cornel; *The American Evasion of Philosophy: A Genealogy of Pragmatism*. University of  
Wisconsin Press, 1989.

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.