

San José State University
Humanities and the Arts/Philosophy Department
Phil. 112-01, American Philosophy, Fall '18

Instructor:	Dr. Dan C. Williamson
Office location:	Faculty Office Building 204
Telephone:	924-4523
Email:	Dan.Williamson@sjsu.edu
Office hours:	MW 12:15-1:15 TTh 12-1; and by appointment
Class days/time:	MW 1:30-2:45pm
Classroom:	SH 241
Prerequisites:	3 units of Philosophy or Upper Division Standing

Faculty Web Page and MYSJSU Messaging

Copies of the course syllabus and major assignment sheets may be found on Canvas, under “files.”

Course Description and Goals

The course cover the eighteenth century beginnings of American philosophy, Transcendentalism, Pragmatism, classic American philosophy, including Emerson, Peirce, James, Santayana, Dewey, and recent developments.

Required Texts/Readings

Leonard Harris, Pratt, and Waters, ed. *American Philosophies: An Anthology*, Blackwell, 2002 (AP)

Menand, Louis, ed. *Pragmatism, A Reader*, Vintage 1997 (PR)

Recommended (Optional)

Menand, Louis, *The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas in America*, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2001

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

Other readings (or recommended readings)

The course will have some materials that will be used; the majority of these are online. I will announce this in class with links. Additionally, I will put on hold *Science and Sentiment* by Morton White, a very informative volume on course reserve for everyone.

Assignments and Grading Policy

Please note the following from the Academic Senate, S12-3, in compliance with Federally mandated standards:

“Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of forty-five hours over the length of the course (normally 3 hours per unit per week with 1 of the hours used for lecture) for instruction or preparation/studying or course related activities including but not limited to internships, labs, clinical practice. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.”

Course Structure:

a. Reading

You should be able to engage the issues by reading the texts thoroughly in advance of the lectures covering the readings. Please come to class prepared and make sure to read the material thoroughly in advance. Everyone in the class will get far more from the course by doing so.

b. Writing

The course has a minimum of 1500 words of written work, per GE requirements. I will be working with you on all written work.

homework: For the purposes of review and increasing your abilities to express moral arguments, some brief homework assignments may be assigned. I have assigned them 50 points. All should be typed and double spaced. No handwritten homework will be accepted.

papers There are two short papers required or one longer paper. The first option: the first paper will be no more than 3 to 4 pages in length. This paper requires the student to present a clear exposition of a philosopher or philosophical topic. The second paper should be longer, minimum 5 pages, doing the same as the first paper with the addition of some independent research into the topic. The research should be based on academically sound

sources. Additional requirements, explanations and due dates for these papers will be available on the course web site at the appropriate time. I will discuss this further in class. There are no re-write options on the papers. The first paper will be lower point value (35) and will serve as the basis for improvement on the more heavily weighted final paper (65). An electronic copy of the same paper you turn in to me should be submitted under this course to Turnitin.com. I will provide the password and code in class.

I strongly urge students to come in during my office hours or by appointment to discuss their paper and the topic under consideration. If enough of you want to do this, we can set up appointments in advance.

midterms Both midterms are in class and have been for other classes a mixture of true/false, multiple choice and short-essay format, unless otherwise noted. The first midterm may be so constructed, but the 2nd midterm may be essay only and **possibly, possibly** take home, due in class the Monday following Thanksgiving. The midterms and final are closed book, unless otherwise noted by the professor. The final is cumulative with an emphasis on everything not already tested in the previous midterms. The midterms will be 50 points each. I will provide review sheets on Canvas under “files” and we will review that in class prior to each midterm and the final.

Final Examination

The final is worth 125 points and will be the same format as the midterms. We will decide on that towards the end of this class. As with the midterms a review sheet will be made available on Canvas under “files.” The final is cumulative and is in class.

active learning I rarely just lecture. I like to engage in discussion with students. Come prepared for discussion. This will help you improve your comprehension of the material

participation I give 25 basic participation points reflecting your overall performance in the class. Make yourself noticed by speaking up, positively and constructively, please.

group activities The course provides the student with the opportunity to explore ideas in our texts in discussion groups on a regular basis. I hand out a separate sheet of guidelines for discussions and presentations. Groups can review what has already been lectured on or on what has not been lectured on that is in our texts or in other materials and topics appropriate to the course. You can develop material for the paper from what you do in a group, they need not be entirely separate. If the course remains small, then we can come up with creative solutions to this together! This activity is worth 50 points.

Grading Information

As above, separate instructions will be available on Canvas for papers, group and as noted for homework and review. These explain what student should be able to do for a grade in each activity.

I grade on points. I provide percentages below. Each assignment will follow something similar to the following:

The assignment is a midterm and is valued at 50 points.

50-45 A
44-39 B
38-33 C
32-27 D
26 and below F

Similarly, the final grade would be calculated thus:

450-427 A 23 pts
426-404 A- 22 pts
403- 388 B+ 15 pts
387-362 B “
361-346 B- “

And following based on 10% for each grade range and then broken down proportionally within each range.

d. Grade Breakdown:

Homework	50	(points per assignment will vary and the total might go higher or lower)	11%
Position Papers	100	(points on individual papers: 35/65)	22% (appx)
Participation	25	5-6%	
Group	50	11%	
Midterms	100	(50 points each)	11/22%
Final	<u>125</u>	27% appx	
	450		

Please see the Classroom Protocol sheet for all information regarding late assignments and other relevant issues. I will accept *some* late work, depending on good reasons. But repeated late assignments could result in a reduction of the grade, excluding midterms and finals. If you can't make a midterm or need to reschedule a final, please check with me for such arrangements. Not taking the final is *not* an option.

Classroom Protocol

A separate protocol sheet will be available on Canvas under “files”.

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>

Briefly, students are expected to behave in a responsible fashion worthy of a college student. It goes without saying that ethical behavior is mandatory and any variation from that is simply not acceptable. For those with special needs, please know that you are welcome in this class and I will do all I can to accommodate your needs.

For more detail and other issues, please consult the “Classroom Protocol” sheet available in Canvas in this class under “files.”

Phil 112-01, American Philosophy, Fall '18

The following is subject to change with fair notice.

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	8/22	Introduction; for next week: “Model of Christian Charity,” John Winthrop, and Jonathan Edwards, “On Free Will,” both online and AP, Part II, Chapter 8
2	8/27, 8/29	Continue and when we’ve finished Edwards and Winthrop see: AP, Part I, Chpts. 2-4, Part II, Chapter 7; Pt. IV, 20 8/31 is the last day to drop; it is the student’s responsibility to drop.
3	9/3, 9/5	Continue 9/3 is a <i>Holiday</i>
4	9/10, 9/12	<i>So, You Want to Have a Revolution?</i> AP, Part IV, 21-23. 9/10 is the last day to add.
5	9/17, 9/19	Continue and begin <i>Transcendentalism:</i> AP, Pt. 1 Chptr 6, Pt. III, Chapter 19, Pt. V Chptr 28 and additional Emerson and Thoreau online. See West’s chapter on Emerson. And AP Pt. VI Chapter 32 and additional Whitman? (online)
6	9/24, 9/26	Continue
7	10/1, 10/3	Continue
8	10/8, 10/10	Continue and Review with some Group Work to be decided., <i>First Midterm this week or beginning of next on Weeks 1-7</i>
9	10/15, 10/17	<i>Pragmatism</i> For the next several weeks read from AP Part II, Chptrs 9-10, 13, Pt.III, 16-17, PR(eader) Selections from Peirce, James and Dewey, from Menand Reader; see West various and see Menand’s <i>Metaphysical Club</i> , not required.
10	10/22, 10/24	Continue.
11	10/29, 10/31	Continue
12	11/5, 11/7	Continue, and work in issues of Race from AP: Douglass, Du Bois and Alain Locke
13	11/12, 11/14	Continue, Group Work?
14	11/19, 11/21	Continue; <i>An essay based 2nd MT before Thanksgiving 11/21 is a “non-instruction day”;</i> no class.
15	11/26, 11/28	<i>Legacies</i> TBA; Hilary Putnam in Menand at least, if not a bit more.
16	12/3, 12/5	Continue group work?
17	12/10	Last Day and review. <i>Final Examination: Wednesday 12/12, 1215-1430</i>

