

PHIL3615: Pragmatism
2nd Semester, 2007
Dr. David Macarthur

Description

This unit will consider the emergence and recent developments of the distinctive philosophical outlook known as "American Pragmatism". We shall discuss various pragmatist approaches to central philosophical topics such as truth, mind, knowledge, logic, naturalism, apriority, and the fact/value distinction. A central theme will be the philosophical importance of the appeal to practice and the agent's point of view. Readings will include works by William James, C.S. Pierce, John Dewey, Robert Brandom, Donald Davidson, Hilary Putnam, and Richard Rorty.

Aims and Goals

This unit of study will introduce students to key texts from the founders of pragmatism to modern "neo-pragmatists". This course will focus particularly on pragmatist approaches to truth and objectivity. Generically, this unit of study should help to impart new knowledge (especially new ways of looking at philosophy), enhance critical thinking skills, and enhance the ability to speak and write clearly and succinctly.

Learning Commitments

Students are required to attend ALL lectures. Participation is crucial to the development of specific and generic skills listed above. This is a senior class for Philosophy II/III year students. Others must seek my permission to attend.

Prerequisites

12 Junior credit points in Philosophy.

Prohibitions

Phil 3015

Learning Situations

A two-hour lecture and a one-hour tutorial per week. Fisher Special Reserve and general library resources will be available to students. Independent study is an expected part of student preparation, particularly for the essay. Please find instructions for weekly readings below. Advice on further reading can be obtained from the lecturer.

Learner Preparation

Assigned readings should be read (and re-read) *before* the lecture.

Primary Readings

The Course Reader is available from the University Copy Centre.

Secondary Readings

To be advised.

Assessment

2000 word take home exam (50%) due Fri, 14 Sept. at the SOPHI Office.

2500 word essay (50%) due Fri, 2 Nov. at the SOPHI Office

Essay: Essay topics to be handed out in class.

Check the handbook for advice regarding due dates, essay style and manner of submission.

Plagiarism

Students should be aware of University policy on plagiarism and academic dishonesty. For more information consult the University's website. The

University's policy may be downloaded from

<http://www.arts.usyd.edu.au/school/sophi/poplagiarism.html>

Details of penalties for late work

All late work must be referred to the course coordinator (contact details see below). In those cases where work is accepted late (without a satisfactory excuse), marks may be deducted, to ensure fairness to students who do get their work in on time.

Appeals

Students seeking a review of assessment marks should ask the unit coordinator.

Staff Contact Information

1. Lecturer: Dr. David
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2. Senior UG Coordinator: Dr Michael
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Consultations: By Appointment