

STETSON UNIVERSITY
Department of American Studies

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Fall 2006
AS 340E-03/PY304E (CRN#: 3595/6)
TuTh 1-2:15
Sampson 225

*American Studies Department and Philosophy Department crosslisting,
American Studies Lives in Context/Great Philosophers:*
William James, Inquiry, and Conviction
an Ethical Decision-Making (E) course

Goals of the Course

This course will examine the life and thought of William James in the contexts of his times. James's upbringing, full of opportunity but uncertain direction, is representative of the process of coming to maturity in modern times since he struggled with vocational uncertainty, existential doubt, and social and sexual pressures. Examining his theoretical innovations provides a ringside seat on the first steps of a number of modern intellectual innovations including the founding of psychology, the creation of the distinctively American philosophy of pragmatism, and the development of a spirituality unconnected to church institutions. The central problem in his thought and a crucial concern in the culture surrounding him was the growing authority of science and its potentially dissolving effect on the ability to believe in things that could not be demonstrated with facts. He constructed attitudes, theories, and beliefs that revived traditional ideals, but adapted them to an age of science. Viewing his ideas in connection to his career and public intellectual life also sheds light on a host of modern social and cultural trends, including the sectional divisions from the Civil War, the rise of the university, the influence of professionalism, the persuasive grip of Social Darwinist outlooks, the power of the corporation, America's turn to imperial ambitions, the on-going smear of racism, changing family and gender relations, and the deepening of ideological polarization. In short, he was an insightful thinker and active participant in the first steps that the United States took toward a culture that is recognizably like the culture in which we live today. This course offers an overview of his story—and a window into the modern American story. You will become engaged with this philosopher and his times through evaluation of theoretical texts, secondary sources, and the instructor's own biographical work in progress; our work will be supported by studies of the science, religion, psychology, literature, and social changes of early modern America. The class time will include a mix of background information and discussions for exchanging, testing, and reinforcing the ideas learned from the reading. Through it all, I place an emphasis on your development of thinking, reading, writing, and speaking skills. Please fill out a card so I can begin to get to know your academic interests right away.

Course Requirements and Grading

--Attendance in class and involvement in discussions	}	20% of final grade
--One research report including contributions of topic to class, and class presentation	}	20%
--Two mid-term Exams	}	20% each
--Final exam	}	20%

I assume academic honesty. It is simply part of life in a learning community. Anything less will be taken seriously at the department and university levels.

Students with *special physical needs or learning disabilities* should let me know and also contact Karen Cole in the Academic Resource Center, 101 CUB (822-7127; academicresources@stetson.edu).

Because you have the privilege of enrolling in a small class with an emphasis on enough interaction to help ensure that everyone understands the material, *your participation is crucial*, during all the class time and especially with presentations. In the course, there are many forms of participation, including careful listening, reviewing notes after class, and of course questions and discussion in class. Writing down observations and questions in a journal can serve as a good study tool; more specifically, you are required to turn in *journal entries* ten times during the semester—plan to have something to show about every week. In addition, we will also use journals, in combination with Blackboard discussion, for “virtual classroom” sessions. Prepare your first journals for the Aug. 31 and Sep. 7 classes. And the material in each person's presentations on their research will become part of the course, so members of the seminar are responsible for all the material presented.

For the research report, I am asking you to read a book on one of the topics we are covering together in class. As part of your research, also examine material related to the subject of the book; at least one of each of these: book review of your book, encyclopedia entry, scholarly journal article, documents, and web page and/or audio and visual material. See the Schedule of Topics and Readings below for due dates of steps on this report. Deliver a 10-to-15 minute oral presentation at the end of the semester, using the Notes on a Book form as a starting point (and as a “take-away” resource for your seminar colleagues); see Blackboard to access this form. The capstone of this project is an 8-to-10 page paper due at the end of the semester (and accepted earlier!).

The mid-term will be essay questions that ask you to analyze the material of the course. *The final exam* will also be in essay format; one part of it will be a "second mid-term" and the other will be comprehensive.

In grading oral and written work, I will emphasize your understanding of the material, the persuasiveness of your argument, and your clarity of presentation. I encourage you to print on used paper or on two sides and to turn in only your paper, stapled, without any folders or binders. Please see the writing handouts the American Studies Web page.

On the American Studies Web Page: The department web page has many documents designed to help you do your best work in the course and in life in general. In particular, see the Learning By Doing page; at the link Work to Learn/Learn to Work (<http://www.stetson.edu/artsci/american/worktolearn.php>), go to a Guide to Learning and Writing, Writing Guides, a Guide to Public Speaking, and a Grading Guide. Then, at the Learn to Work section, there are also a few documents that reach beyond this course and may contribute to your future work: an overview of What Students Can Learn from American Studies and the American Bar Association’s Guide to Legal Education. The rest of the Learning by Doing page (<http://www.stetson.edu/amstudies/doing.php>) has information and links for a variety of internships and other experiential learning opportunities. Also see <http://www.des.emory.edu/mfp/james.html> for primary and secondary sources on James.

On Blackboard: This computerized bulletin board has a copy of the syllabus, the Notes on a Book information, a list of books for review, and other things you will use during the semester. It will be a place to post course information and assignments throughout the semester. Also see: <http://james.pragmatism.org/links.htm>; and <http://www.american-philosophy.org/>.

Books for Purchase

William James, The Writings of William James, edited by John McDermott

Linda Simon, Genuine Reality

Louis Menand, The Metaphysical Club

Stephen Crane, Maggie: A Girl of the Streets

George Cotkin, Reluctant Modernism

On Reserve in Library

Henry Levinson, ch. 1: “James’s Awareness of Religion” in Religious Investigations of William James (pp. 3-24 and 285-287)

Henry James, Senior, “Science in Relation to the Intellect” in Literary Remains of the Late Henry James (pp. 329-345)

Charles Darwin, ch. 4: "Natural Selection" in The Origin of Species (pp. 80-131)

John O’Donnell, Introduction through chapter 6, in The Origins of Behaviorism: American Psychology, 1870-1920 (pp. 1-109)

William James, letters on medical authority, lynching, and on the Philippines

Dmitri Tymoczko, "Nitrous Oxide Philosopher" Atlantic Monthly 277, no. 5 (May 1996): 93-101

Paul Jerome Croce, "Calming the Screaming Eagle" New England Quarterly (March 2003): 5-37

Deborah Coon, “One Moment in the World’s Salvation,” The Journal of American History (June 1996): 70-99
also available online:

<http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=3&did=9803375&SrchMode=1&sid=1&Fmt=6&VInst=PROD&VTy pe=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1146660532&clientId=18003>.

Croce, “Beyond Polarization: William James, Inquiry, and Conviction”

George Lakoff, Moral Politics, ch. 2: “The Worldview Problem for American Politics” (pp. 24-37)

In the American Studies office

There are books there to borrow: American history texts, books on many specific topics, and one encyclopedia that you may find particularly useful, Richard Wightman Fox and James T. Kloppenberg, eds., A Companion to American Thought

Schedule of Topics and Readings

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Requirements</u>
Aug. 24	Introductions	choosing topics for writing a book or reading one
Aug. 29	Native of the James Family	Simon, through ch. 5
Aug. 31	Union and Crusade	Menand, through ch. 3
Sep. 5	Romanticism and the American Religious Marketplace	Levinson and Henry James, Senior
Sep. 7	The Shock of Darwin <i>Submit research topics</i>	Darwin and Cotkin, ch. 1
Sep. 12	Getting Established	Simon, chs. 6-10
Sep. 14	Field Science and Self Discovery	Menand, chs. 4-6 Cotkin, ch. 3 recommended
Sep. 19	The New Mental Science <i>Submit sources for research project</i>	O'Donnell, through ch. 3
Sep. 21	Evolution and Psychology	O'Donnell, chs. 4-6
Sep. 26	Streams of the Constructed Self	James, pp. 9-74
Sep. 28	An Urban World of Struggle	Crane, Cotkin, ch. 4 recommended
Oct. 3	Professionalism and Beyond	Simon, chs. 11-15
Oct. 5		<u>Midterm Exam</u>
Oct. 12	The Incomplete Arch	Simon, ch. 16-end
Oct. 17	The Sentiment of Pragmatism <i>Refine and revise research topics</i>	James, pp. 345-90
Oct. 19	Beyond Dualism	James, pp. 134-36 and 232-52 (pp. 169-214 recommended)
Oct. 23 7pm in Stetson Room:	Richard Hughes on American Mythologies	
Oct. 24	Personal Will and Human Tolerance	James, pp. 629-45 and 717-40
Oct. 26	The More	James, pp. 740-810
Oct. 31	Native-Born Philosophies	Menand, chs. 7-9, Cotkin ch. 2 recommended
Nov. 2	Practical Idealisms	Menand, chs. 10-12
Nov. 7	Philosophy and Culture <i>Updates on research, with selection of presentation date</i>	Menand, 13-end, Cotkin, ch. 5 recommended
Nov. 9	Beyond the Mainstream	Tymoczko and Coon
Nov. 14	War and the Roots of Humanist Conviction	Croce, "Calming the Screaming Eagle"
Nov. 16	Taking a Stand	James letters
Nov. 21	Legacies and Other Resources	Croce, "Beyond Polarization" (Lakoff, ch. 2 recommended)
Nov. 28	seminar roundtable	<i>research presentations</i>
Nov. 30	seminar roundtable	<i>research presentations</i>
Dec. 5	seminar roundtable	<i>research presentations</i>
Dec. 7		<u>written research reports due</u>
Dec__	final exam	