

## PHI 202: American Philosophy

### Section 01 Fall 2011

Professor: Jacoby Adeshei Carter  
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Classroom: 224T  
Class Hours: MW, 10:50 - 12:05pm  
Office Hours: *By appointment*

### Course Description

This course is a look at the history of philosophy as it has been practiced in the Americas: Latin America, North America (United States) and the Caribbean. The course will pay close attention to the uniquely American philosophical movement known as pragmatism, but the course may also study some intellectual precursors to pragmatism such as transcendentalism, and intellectual figures such as Thoreau, and Emerson. Moreover, the course may involve the study of philosophical works and figures that are often left out of the history of American philosophy, such as David Walker, José Martí, Martin R. Delaney, Sylvia Winter, Frantz Fanon, and W.E.B. DuBois. The course may also include some contemporary texts or issues in American philosophy. 3 hours, 3 credits. *Prerequisite:* ENG 101

More than this, I intend for this class to be a *sustained philosophical conversation* about philosophical issues and questions. Each of us should view ourselves as equal participants in this conversation. To be sure, I will lead the conversation most often, but at times the conversation will be led by one of you. I want for this course to be *an honest attempt by each of us to take seriously the material we read, the issues we discuss, and the problems which arise, both in the text that we read and in our own consideration and discussion of the material. We should all approach the class, and the particular content of the class with a serious consideration of both the texts and the relevance of the texts in helping each of us negotiate our way through the philosophical challenges inherent in our own lived experiences.*

### Course Requirements

#### Discussion Starters twenty percent (20 %) of total grade.

Each student will be responsible for five (5) discussion starters. The purpose of these discussion starters is to stimulate critical analysis and discussion of the material we cover in class, and to challenge each student to critically evaluate the course material. The discussion starter is intended to help you develop the skills necessary for doing philosophy well. A discussion starter is a 1 page, typed, single-spaced, short summary (3-5 sentences) followed by a set of critical comments and questions on the readings for that day. The student's comments and questions should constitute the bulk of the discussion starter. *Your discussion starter should not merely summarize the readings for that class period.* You are expected to either develop a critical question or comment. If you raise a question or make a comment, you should attempt to answer that question or respond to that comment on behalf of the philosopher we are reading. Discussion starters and in-class questions and comments will constitute the student's class participation grade which is 20% of the overall course grade.

Class participation consists in maintaining an active presence throughout the course and regular discussion starters. This course will involve daily seminar-style discussions and lecture, where students will be expected to have completed the assigned reading for that day, and to engage the instructor and each other in discussion. **Make no mistake, in order to do well in this class you must ask questions and make comments every day.** Thus, attendance is very important, for if you are not in class, you can neither contribute to, nor benefit from, the class discussion. Please note that regular unexcused absences will negatively affect your grade. Lastly, you will be graded on the quality, not necessarily the quantity, of your class participation.

#### Group Presentation twenty percent (20 %) of total grade.

Each student will be responsible for forming and working with a group of 3-5 other students in

the class to make a presentation on a text other than those required for the class that is approved by the professor. The group presentation grade will be divided into two equal parts. Each part will be further divided into two equal parts. The first part is the individual grade. Half of this grade will be the average scoring of the student by her/his group members on a scale of 0-25 points. Each group member is required to provide a 150-200 word type written assessment of every other member of the group along with their score on the group member's individual performance, and a justification for the score given. The other half of the individual grade will be done by the instructor on the strength of the student's written and oral presentations. The student will again receive a score ranging from 0-25 points. The second part is the group grade. Every student in the class is responsible for writing a 250-300 word evaluative summary of the group presentations, which is to include a score for the presentation ranging from 0-25 points and some justification for why the score was given, due the class period following the conclusion of the group's presentation. If a student fails to complete this assignment on time, s/he will be penalized one (1) point from the individual portion of her/his group presentation grade for every day past the due date that the assignment is not completed. Should a student completely miss a group's presentation s/he will be subject to a five (5) point deduction from her/his individual portion of the group presentation grade. Each group will be provided with a grade ranging from 0-25 from the instructor. In all, this comes to 100 possible points for the entire group presentation.

During the group presentations the student's in the presenting group(s) will be responsible for leading the class through their chosen text. The members of the group will be responsible for delegating responsibilities for presenting the material so that we do not have unnecessary duplication of the material to be covered. All groups must then submit to the instructor a breakdown of the book the groups will present on, along with each student's responsibilities in the presentation at least one (1) week (that is seven (7) calendar days) prior to the scheduled presentation date. Each student is required to submit a type written draft/outline of the portion of the material s/he is responsible for, at least one (1) page in length, in Times New Roman 12 point font to turnitin.com at least three (3) days before the group's scheduled presentation. If a student fails to submit the draft/outline by 11:55pm three (3) days before the group's scheduled presentation s/he will be penalized five (5) points from the individual portion of the group presentation for everyday that the draft/outline is late. Each group is required to submit a type written draft/outline at least three (3) pages in length in Times New Roman 12 point font to turnitin.com the day before their scheduled presentation. Each group is responsible for providing a hard copy of their presentation to every member of the class on the day of the presentation.

The group presentation is meant to provide the other students in the class with a careful and insightful guide through the philosophical concepts, problems and arguments contained in each book we cover. **That said, your presentation should not be a mere summary of the reading.** To be sure, the presentation should be instructive and exegetical, but you will be graded most heavily on how well your group manages to critically engage with the text. By critical engagement, I mean a demonstrated understanding of the central argument of the text, an understanding of the key concepts and principles involved in that argument, an understanding and analysis of important distinctions involved in the argument and a clear understanding of what hangs on those distinctions, and a clear articulation of a criticism of the central argument of the text. The group is expected to provide clear and concise definitions of important philosophical concepts contained in the text, along with lucid and illuminating explanations of the concepts using analogies and examples. Students are expected to explicate the important philosophical issues, themes and problems contained in their assigned portion of the text. Perhaps most importantly, students are required to extricate the important arguments contained in the text that their group is responsible for and render those arguments correctly into standard form and lead the class through an evaluation of those arguments.

#### **Leading Class Discussion (20 %) of total grade.**

Each student—in conjunction with the professor—will be responsible for leading a discussion of the assigned reading for two class sessions. The student leader will be responsible for formulating questions, or prompts that encourage critical engagement with the text and answering questions concerning the text posed by members of the class. The student is expected to demonstrate a detailed and critical understanding of the assigned reading, as evidenced by an accurate and coherent analysis and

interpretation of the text, the ability to comprehend and respond to questions (both critical and interpretive) about the text, and the ability to raise critical questions of her own concerning the text and respond to them. *(Note: All analyses and interpretations are not created equal. The mere fact that an interpretation is your own does not make it accurate and coherent, nor insightful).*

Paper Assignment twenty percent (20 %) of total grade.

Each student will be responsible for writing a paper on assigned topics which we cover in the course. The paper should be no shorter than five (5) typed, double-spaced pages, and written in Times New Roman twelve (12) point font and no longer than eight (8) typed, double spaced pages written in Times New Roman twelve (12) point font. Each paper will require the student to critically engage with the text. Again, by critical engagement, I mean a demonstrated understanding of the central argument of the text, an understanding of the key concepts and principles involved in that argument, an understanding and analysis of important distinctions involved in the argument and a clear understanding of what hangs on those distinctions, and a clear articulation of a criticism of the central argument of the text. As the time for writing the papers approaches, I will provide further explanation of the requirements and expectations for the paper assignments. The paper will constitute twenty percent (20 %) of the student’s grade.

So, the overall grade breakdown for the course is as follows:

Discussion Starters	100 points (5 @ 20pts each)	20 %
Group Presentation	100 points	20 %
First Class Discussion	100 points	20 %
Second Class Discussion	100 points	20 %
Paper	100 points	20 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>500 points</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Classroom Policies and Procedures

Attendance Policy

**Tardiness** – Every three (3) times a student arrives late to class will equal one (1) unexcused absence. Every class period will begin with a quiz or short writing assignment. If a student is tardy without a legitimate and documented excuse and fails to complete an assignment given at the beginning of class as a result, s/he will not be permitted to make up that assignment.

**Absences** – Every three (3) unexcused absences will result in a five (5) point deduction from the student’s total grade. Such a deduction is equivalent to a half letter grade deduction. For example, If a student had an A-/90 and accumulated three (3) unexcused absences, a five (5) point deduction would lower the student’s grade to an 85/B. If a student fails to complete an assignment due to an unexcused absence, there will be a ten (10) point deduction from the grade the student earns after making up the assignment for every weekday past the scheduled due date for the assignment that the student fails to schedule a make up (to be completed within five (5) days of the due date) with the instructor. Once five weekdays have elapsed from the scheduled due date, a student is no longer permitted to make up the assignment and will receive a zero (0) for that assignment.

Classroom Etiquette

**Leaving/Entering during class** – Once a student has entered the classroom s/he is not permitted to leave until the class period has ended unless authorized to do so by the instructor. If a student should leave the classroom for any reason after the class period has begun without authorization, the student will upon the first infraction be issued a verbal warning in class at the time that the infraction occurs, or warned outside of class; thereafter, each infraction will result in a one (1) point deduction from the student’s participation grade. Each time a student violates this policy after the initial infraction and subsequent warning, the one (1) point deduction will be made without notification to the student.

**Electronic devices** – The use of electronic devices during class time is prohibited. All electronic devices must be turned off and stored out of the professor’s sight. Should a student make use of an electronic

device of any kind, in any way, during class time without permission from the professor, the student will lose one (1) point from her/his participation grade for every infraction past the first, which will constitute the student's sole warning. If a student's electronic device goes off during class, the student will lose one (1) point from her/his participation grade. If, at any time, the professor observes a student's electronic device (whether or not it is in use), one (1) point will be deducted from the student's participation grade. For example, if a student has headphones in her/his ears for a device such as an iPod, or a Bluetooth headset, even if the device in question is not in use, the student will lose one (1) point from her/his participation grade.

**Talking** – If a student engages in conversation or talking of any sort while the professor or any other member of the class has the floor, that student will be assessed a one (1) point penalty to her/his participation grade.

Should a student commit any of the above named infractions after having lost all of their possible participation points the one (1) point penalty will be assessed to the student's overall grade for the course. A student may request a current total of absences, tardiness, or classroom conduct infractions in person during the professor's office hours.

#### Submission Guidelines

All writing assignments for this class (with the exception of in-class writing assignments) must be submitted to the professor via turnitin.com. To be clear, this policy is not optional. All papers must be submitted to the professor through turnitin.com. Students are encouraged to sign up for turnitin.com before the second class period. All written assignments are due by 11:55pm on the due date. Late submissions will be penalized according to the method described above. Note: Students in the past have experienced various problems using Turnitin.com many of which would have been avoided had they not waited until the last possible minute to submit their papers. You are encouraged to submit your papers sooner rather than later to stave of the possibility of having your submission come in late as the result of avoidable complications.

Class ID: 4283051  
Password: philosophy

#### Policies regarding late work and missed exams

Unless otherwise specified, all work is due at the beginning of class on the due date indicated in this syllabus. If you are unable to turn in an assignment when it is due, you must provide acceptable documentation such as a doctor's written confirmation that you were too ill to complete the work on time, or a written confirmation that a family emergency had you engaged in such a way that completion or attendance was impossible, or some other justification for why you were unable to turn in the assignment when it was due. Absences required by the athletic department and other college related extra-curricular activities reasons must be cleared ahead of time, with appropriate plans made with me for completing any assignments due on that date. Unless otherwise stated, all late work will be penalized 10 points (one letter grade) for each class meeting it is late.

**NO EXTRA CREDIT WORK WILL BE ASSIGNED OR ACCEPTED. PERIOD.**

#### Policy on academic honesty

It is my sincere hope that we make it through the entire semester, and that each of you make it throughout your entire academic and professional careers without being academically dishonest. I will be clear upfront about the expectations and requirements of both the college and myself. I require that all written work be your own. If you use someone else's words or ideas, these sources MUST be appropriately cited. This includes both VERBATUM copying as well as PARAPHRASING another person's ideas. When presenting another's ideas provide some form of citation (and make sure to use quotation marks when appropriate. I am not strict on the formalities of style – whether it be MLA style, APA style or some other version – as long as I can find where your citation is from). If it is not clear to you what counts as plagiarism, it is your responsibility to seek clarification from me beforehand. My policy is simple: if there is conclusive evidence that you have plagiarized (by claiming any other person's

work as your own – even so much as a single phrase or sentence) You will be referred to the office of the Vice President for Student Development and your case will be handled under the Student Disciplinary Procedures in Article 15 of the Bylaws of the CUNY Board of Trustees, copies of which are available in the Library.

John Jay College’s policy on plagiarism and cheating can be found at the following address: <http://doit.jjay.cuny.edu/jjcemail/>

It reads as follows:

**College Policy on Plagiarism and Cheating:**

Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's ideas, words, or artistic, scientific, or technical work as one's own creation. Using the ideas or work of another is permissible only when the original author is identified. Paraphrasing and summarizing, as well as direct quotations, require citations to the original source. Plagiarism may be intentional or unintentional. Lack of dishonest intent does not necessarily absolve a student of responsibility for plagiarism. It is the student's responsibility to recognize the difference between statements that are common knowledge (which do not require documentation) and restatements of the ideas of others. Paraphrasing, summarizing, and direct quotation are acceptable forms of restatement, as long as the source is cited. Students who are unsure how and when to provide documentation are advised to consult with their instructors. The Library has free guides designed to help students with problems of documentation.

Students are prohibited from using books, notes, and other reference materials during examinations except as specifically authorized by the instructor. Students may not copy other students' examination papers, have others take examinations for them, substitute examination booklets, submit papers written by others, or engage in other forms of academic dishonesty.

**Reading Schedule**

I will try my best to stick to the schedule below, but it is tentative and may be modified during the course of the semester. As it stands, we have a lot of material to cover, and in an attempt to make the course sensitive to the interests of the students, I want to leave us the flexibility to make alterations to the syllabus. We may wish to spend more or less time than I have scheduled on some of the issues we confront in the course. Ultimately, the decision about what to include or not include, and how much time we will spend on any topic or figure that we cover in class will rest with the professor.

**WEEK ONE:**

29	MON	***Hurricane Irene***
31	WED	Course Introduction

**SEPTEMBER**

**WEEK TWO:**

5	MON	*** Labor Day College is closed- no classes scheduled***
7	WED	Dewey “The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy” Locke “Values and Imperatives”

**WEEK THREE:**

12	MON	Locke “Pluralism and Intellectual Democracy” pp. Dewey “Democratic Ends Need Democratic Methods” pp. Dewey “The Basic Values and Loyalties of Democracy” pp. Dewey “The Search for the Great Community” pp.
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- 14 WED Dewey "Democracy and Human Nature" pp.  
 Dewey "Creative Democracy-The Task Before Us" pp.  
 Locke "Color: The Unfinished Business of Democracy" pp.  
 Dewey "Morals and the Conduct of States" pp.  
 Locke "A Functional View of Value Ultimates" pp.

WEEK FOUR:

- 19 MON Dewey, "Culture and Human Nature"  
 Locke "Cultural Relativism and Ideological Peace"  
 Cherubin "Culture and the *Kalos*: Inquiry, Justice, and Value in Locke and Aristotle" pp. 7 - 19

- 21 WED Carter "New Moral Imperatives for World Order: Alain Locke on Pluralism and Relativism"  
 Henry "Introduction" pp. 1-18  
 Henry "The African Philosophical Heritage" pp. 21-48

WEEK FIVE:

- 26 MON Pappas "Introduction" pp. 1-15  
 Donoso "John Dewey in Spain and in Spanish America" pp. 19-39  
 Dewey "Ethical Principles Underlying Education" pp. 97-109  
 Dewey "The Democratic Conception in Education" pp. 110 - 120  
 Cunha and Garcia "Pragmatism in Brazil: John Dewey and Education" pp. 40-52  
 Collins "" pp.

- 28 WED \*\*\*No classes scheduled\*\*\*

OCTOBER

WEEK SIX:

- 3 MON Flores "John Dewey and the Legacy of Mexican Pragmatism in the United States" pp. 69 - 88  
 Silva "The Axiological Turn in Early Twentieth Century American Philosophy: Alain Locke and José Vasconcelos on Epistemology, Value, and the Emotions" pp. 31-55  
 Henry "C. L. R. James, African, and Afro-Caribbean Philosophy" pp. 47-67
- 5 WED Torregrosa "The Pragmatism of Eugenio d'Ors" pp. 100-111  
 Harris "Conundrum of Cosmopolitanism and Race: The Great Debate between Alain Locke and William James" pp. 57-73  
 Henry "Frantz Fanon, African, and Afro-Caribbean Philosophy" pp. 68-89

WEEK SEVEN:

- 10 MON Columbus Day College is closed

- 12 WED Henry "Wilson Harris and Caribbean Poeticism" pp. 90 – 114  
 Quintanilla "Pedro Zulen and the Reception of Pragmatism in Peru" 112–119  
 Farr Beyond Repressive Tolerance: Alain Locke's Hermeneutics of Democracy and Tolerance in Conversation with Herbert Marcuse and H.G. Gadamer pp. 97–110

WEEK EIGHT:

- 17 MON Henry "Afro-American Philosophy: A Caribbean Perspective" pp. 144 -  
 Pappas "The Latino Character of American Pragmatism" 170  
 Pan-Africanism and Philosophy: Race, Class, and Development 197  
 Orosco "Pragmatism, Latino Intercultural Citizenship, and the Transformation of American Democracy" pp. 227–244  
 Eze "Ethnocentric Representations and Being Human in a Multiethnic Global World: Alain Locke Critique" pp.

- 19 WED Pappas Was Risieri Frondizi a Hispanic Pragmatist? 156–169  
 Sanchez Leopoldo Zea, Stanley Cavell, and the Seduction of "American" Philosophy" pp. 185–195  
 Browning "Dewey and Ortega on the Starting Point" pp. 135–155

WEEK NINE:

- 24 MON Medina "Pragmatic Pluralism, Multiculturalism, and the New Hispanic" pp. 199–226  
 Weinfeld What Difference Does the Difference Make?: Horace Kallen, Alain Locke and the Birth of Cultural Pluralism pp.  
 Henry "Habermas, Phenomenology, and Rationality: An Africana Contribution" pp. 167–194

- 26 WED Franklin "Unlikely Allies: Nietzsche, Locke, and Counter-Hegemonic Transformation of Consciousness  
 Campos "Understanding Immigration as Lived Personal Experience" pp. 245–261

WEEK TEN:

- 31 MON Henry "Pan-Africanism and Philosophy: Race, Class, and Development" pp. 197 – 220  
 Locke "Race, Culture and Democracy"  
 MacMullan "Global Citizenship through Reciprocity: Alain Locke and Barack Obama's Pragmatist Politics" pp.

- 2 WED Strong "Dewey and Martí: Culture in Education" pp. 274–283  
 Martí "Our America"  
 Locke "The Negro in the Two Americas"  
 Henry "Caribbean Marxism: After the Neoliberal and Linguistic Turns" pp. 221

NOVEMBER

WEEK ELEVEN:

- 7 MON Henry "Caribbean Marxism: After the Neoliberal and Linguistic Turns"  
221  
Locke "The Concept of Race as Applied to Social Culture"  
Locke "The Negro in the Three America"
- 9 WED Henry "Caribbean Historicism: Toward Reconstruction" 247  
Locke "The Contribution of Race to Culture"

WEEK TWELVE:

- 14 MON Locke "The Negro's Contribution to American Culture"  
Locke "The Negro's Contribution to American Art and Culture"
- 16 WED Locke *The Contribution of the Negro to the Culture of the Americas*

WEEK THIRTEEN:

- 21 MON Locke *The Contribution of the Negro to the Culture of the Americas*
- 23 WED Locke *The Contribution of the Negro to the Culture of the Americas*  
\*\*\*Paper Due\*\*\*

WEEK FOURTEEN:

- 28 MON Group Presentation
- 30 WED Group Presentation

DECEMBER

WEEK FIFTEEN:

- 5 MON Group Presentation
- 7 WED Group Presentation

WEEK SIXTEEN

- 12 MON Group Presentation
- 14 WED Group Presentation