Course Syllabus

Contemporary Pragmatism
HU 4700, Spring 2011
Fisher, Room 133, TTH—2:05 – 3:20 pm
Professor David W. Rodick, Ph.D.

Purpose: To view the contemporary philosophical movement known as “neo-pragmatism” through a close reading of Richard Rorty’s epoch-making work Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature. The course will conclude with an examination of Rorty’s controversial and provocative interpretations of Wittgensten, Dewey, Heidegger, and Derrida.

Required Texts:
_________, Consequences of Pragmatism (University of Minnesota Press, 1982). Referred to as CP.


Requirements: Class Attendance and Participation (30%)
  3 discussion papers of 4-5 pages each (40%)
  Oral Final Examination (30%)
  Graduate students will also write a term paper on a previously agreed upon topic.

MTU grading standard will be utilized:
  A: 93-100; AB: 88-93; B: 83-88; BC: 78-83; C: 73-78; CD: 68-73; D: 60-68; F: 0-60.

Tentative Class Schedule / Roadmap

Jan 11: Review Syllabus; Course Introduction; What is Neo-Pragmatism?
Jan 13: Who is Richard Rorty? Short Film Clips. Discuss Obituary.
Jan 18: Discuss “Philosophy in American Today” Chapter 12 in CP.
Jan 20: “The World Well Lost” Chapter One in CP. Also PMN: Table of Contents, Preface and Introduction.
Jan 25: PMN: Chapter I – Invention of Mind
Jan 27: PMN: Chapter I – Invention of Mind
Feb 1: PMN: Chapter II – People Without Minds
Feb 3: PMN: Chapter II – People Without Minds
Feb 8: PMN: Chapter III – The Idea of a “Theory of Knowledge”
Feb 18: PMN: Chapter IV – Privileged Representations
Feb 22: PMN: Chapter IV – Privileged Representations
Feb 24: PMN Chapter V – Epistemology and Empirical Psychology
Mar 1: PMN Chapter V – Epistemology and Empirical Psychology
Mar 3: PMN Chapter VI – Epistemology and the Philosophy of Language
Mar 15: PMN Chapter VII: From Epistemology to Hermeneutics
Mar 17: PMN Chapter VII: From Epistemology to Hermeneutics
Mar 22: PMN Chapter VIII: Philosophy without Mirrors
Mar 24: PMN Chapter VIII: Philosophy without Mirrors
Mar 29: Wittgenstein: Chapter 2 in CP
Mar 31: Dewey: Chapter 5 in CP
Apr 5: Heidegger: Chapter 3 in CP
Apr 7: Heidegger: Chapter 3 in CP
Apr 12: Derrida: Chapter 6 in CP
Apr 14: Derrida: Chapter 6 in CP
Apr 19: Legitimacy of Rorty’s Reading of Contemporary Philosophy

Administrative Information

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Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursday, 3:30-4:30pm and by appointment.

Academic Dishonesty (University Policy)
According to University policy, “Academic Dishonesty is prohibited and includes the following violations: Plagiarism—copying another’s work or ideas and calling them one’s own or not giving proper credit or citation. Cheating—intentional use of any unauthorized study aids, equipment, or another’s work during an academic exercise. Fabrication—intentional falsification or invention of any information or citation during an academic exercise without proper authorization. Facilitating academic dishonesty—allowing or helping another individual to plagiarize, cheat, or fabricate information. Penalty: not less than
academic integrity warning, not more than expulsion.”
(http://www.admin.mtu.eduldos/rights/regulations.html)
This policy (stated above) will be followed in this course. At a minimum, graded work
that involves plagiarism, cheating, or fabrication (as defined above) will receive a grade
of zero, and no opportunity will be afforded to make up the work. Computer software may
be used to detect plagiarism.

Disabilities
Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with certain medical and psychological
disabilities. You should notify the course instructor at the beginning of the semester if you wish
to request such accommodations.

Professional Courtesy
- Make every attempt to arrive on time;
- Notify me in advance if you must leave class early;
- No texting; It indicates that you are not interested or engaged.
- No side conversations. It is annoying to me and to other students. Please direct your
  comments to the entire class.
- Exhibit behavior appropriate for university-level education.

Please make a sincere attempt to make this class a vital part of your educational
experience!