History of American Thought

Instructor: Mr. Cooke

Course Description:

My emphasis will be upon basic beliefs held by Americans. More specifically, in this semester I will focus upon science and philosophy for the period since 1860. An original unit will take Darwin as a point of departure, but survey several facets of thought up through 1900. A second unit will focus almost entirely on American philosophy, including several idealists but most of all the three most important pragmatists. The last unit will survey several trends since 1930. I will dip back into the physical sciences, note new philosophical schools, and include material from criticism and religion.

This is a demanding course. Much of the material will be unfamiliar to students, some of it is very technical, and the readings are not easy. But I believe it is a very challenging course, the type that students feel very good about when they have completed it.

Lectures:

Three each week, of 50 minutes each. Also, one weekly discussion session.

Graded Assignments and Examinations:

Two outside essays. Three bluebook exams, or one for each unit.

Grading System:

The one prescribed by the university—A through F.

Required Readings:

I have five source books listed as required, but most students also feel need for more extensive reading, particularly in highly recommended secondary materials.
Reference Works and Texts:

Sidney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*
Paul K. Conkin, *Puritans and Pragmatists*
Marc Corti, *Growth of American Thought*
Elizabeth Flow and Hussey Huskey, *A History of Philosophy in America*
Charles Frankel, ed., *The Golden Age of American Philosophy*
Stow Persons, *American Minds*
Morton G. White, ed., *Documents in the History of American Philosophy*

Unit One: In the Wake of Darwin

I. Required Sources:


II. Helpful Supplements

Barry Adams, *Law of Civilization and Decay*
Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams*
S. E. Barnett, ed., *A Century of Darwin*
Paul E. Hesse, *American Thought in Transition: The Impact of Evolutionary Naturalism, 1865-1900*
John Fiske, *Darwinism*
*Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy*, Vol. 1
C. C. Greene, *Darwinism and the Modern World View*
*R. D. Kennedy, ed., The Death of Adam*
Richard Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism and American Thought*
*G. K. Hall, ed., Evolution and Religion*
Joseph Le Conte, *Evolution, its Nature, its Evidence, and its Relation to Religious Thought*
James McCosh, *The Religious Aspects of Evolution*
Charles S. Peirce, *Philosophical Writings*, ed. by Buxkler
Stow Persons, ed., *Evolutionary Thought in America*
Josiah Royce, *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy*
Cynthia B. Fuset, *Darwin in America, The Intellectual Response, 1865-1912*
E. J. Wilson, ed., *Darwinism and the American Intellectuals*
G. N. Wright, *Philosophical Writings*

Unit Two: Variation of Pragmatism

I. Required Sources:

Max Fisch, ed., *Classic American Philosophers*
William James, *The Will to Believe and Other Essays*
II. Helpful Supplements

John Dewey, Art as Experience

William James, Essays in Pragmatism

Gail Kennedy and Milton Knovitz, eds., American Pragmatism

David W. Marcell, Progress and Pragmatism

Ralph E. Perry, The Thought and Character of William James, 2 vols.

Douglas Bush, The Chicago Pragmatists

Philip Wiener, Evolution and the Founders of Pragmatism

Horton C. White, Social Thought in America

E. J. Wilson, In Quest of Community

Unit Three: The Flux of Modernity

I. Required Sources:

Rexnhold Niebuhr, Moral Man and Immoral Society

Twelve Southerners, I'll Take My Stand

II. Supplements:

A. d'Abro, The Evolution of Scientific Thought from Newton to Einstein

L. K. Barnett, The Universe and Dr. Einstein

Charles C. Alexander, Nationalism in American Thought, 1930-1945

William Barrett, Irrational Man

Sigmund Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents

Werner Heisenberg, Physics and Philosophy

David Hollinger, Morris B. Cohen and the Scientific Ideal

Joseph W. Krutch, Human Nature and the Human Condition

The Measure of Man

The Modern Temper


Walter Lippmann, The Public Philosophy

Henry Y. May, End of American Innocence

Donald Meyer, The Protestant Search for Political Realism, 1919-1941


David Riesman, The Lonely Crowd

George Santayana, The Last Puritan

Life of Reason, 5 vols.

Realms of Being, 3 vols.

Timothy L. S. Sprigge, Santayana, an Examination of His Philosophy

David Van Tassel, American Thought in the Twentieth Century

Alfred N. Whitehead, Science and the Modern World

Horton C. White, ed., Age of Analysis