

Phil 3130

American Philosophy

Professor Daniel Campos

Fall 2016

Section MW2 Class Number 33249

Course Description: "American philosophy" refers to the various philosophical traditions that have emerged in the United States as a result of distinctively American history, culture, and experiences.

Classical American philosophers such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, Josiah Royce, John Dewey, and George Herbert Mead, and subsequent generations of their followers and critics, have engaged the major historical issues of philosophy from distinctive vantage points, and have developed original views such as transcendentalism, pragmatism, and naturalism.

In this course, we will study the historical development of American philosophy, centering our attention in the transcendentalist and pragmatist traditions. We will pay special attention to the ways in which American philosophers have responded to problems that emerged in Modern European philosophy regarding the dualisms or oppositions reason/will, intellect/sense, mind/matter, reality/appearance, transcendence/immanence, theory/practice, belief/action, fact/value, and individual/community. We will see how they have developed philosophical concepts, and in one notorious case, a philosophical system, to completely reconfigure our understanding of philosophy, its tasks and problems.

By the end of the semester, the student should understand American philosophy as a distinctive response to Modernity that is not, however, riding the "postmodern" bandwagon.