

Philosophy 306

American Philosophic Thought

Spring 2008

Dr. Graybosch

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Texts:

1. Students should purchase our package of readings. Consult the topical outline and course calendar for the reading schedule.
2. Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*. first edition 1855. Any reprint of the first edition will do. You can usually find cheap used Penguin editions on Amazon.com. Also, I have put a link to an online text version in our reading list.
3. Charles Bukowski, *Post Office*.
4. Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*

A note on the books.

I enjoy using literature in this philosophy class. Among the books I used in the past are *Fight Club* and *On the Road*. I have used *Post Office* and *Leaves of Grass* in the past. But I have not used the Philip Dick book before. I think it would fit well in the syllabus reading list after the material on freedom of the will. But I'm going to start with it this time. Please begin reading this little book.

Sometimes we might want to substitute a film for a book. Don't do it with Philip K. Dick. All the films made from his stories are enjoyable but they are very different from the books.

There is a decent film of *Post Office* which strangely has the title of a different Bukowski book, factotum. But you will want to read Bukowski. He is fun.

This is an Area C, upper division, General Education theme course. American Philosophic Thought is a part of American Culture and Identities Theme A.

Exams

There will be three expository essay exams. The exams will be in class and I will post essay questions one week before the tests. Your exams will be on 3/4, 4/8, and 5/20 during finals week from 6 to 8 pm. If you are a distance learner it would help me if you would put your name and real world mailing address inside the paper. This way I will not have to match file names with author names and then search for addresses in order to return papers. Each exam is worth 25 points.

Paper 25 points

4-5 pages in which you describe the view of aesthetic beauty held by Edwards and/or Emerson and then explain to what extent the work of Dick, Whitman, or Bukowski

embodies the selected view(s) of aesthetic beauty. I must have your paper on 5/6 at class time.

Attendance:

You are allowed three absences; this includes absences supposedly approved by various university authorities. There are no excused absences. After three absences I may deduct one grade level (5%) from your final cumulative grade for each additional absence. If there is some unforeseen event that prevents regular class attendance such as a serious illness contact me at the outset so that I can make arrangements for you to complete the class. If you contact me after an extended absence I will not make any special arrangements. Instead I will urge you to withdraw or post a U. If you decide to withdraw from this class please complete the necessary paperwork.

Readings

OVERTURE

Philip Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* AKA *Blade Runner*.

True Religion and the Sense of Beauty

Jonathan Edwards, "The Nature of True Virtue", and "Religious Affection."

Kenneth Merrill, "The American Enlightenment: Ethan Allen and Thomas Paine."

Ethan Allen, "Of Miracles."

Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Nature."

William K. Clifford, "Selection from The Ethics of Belief."

William James, "The Will to Believe."

William James, "Selection from A Pluralistic Universe: God is Finite."

Josiah Royce, "Job"

John Dewey, "Faith and It's Object."

Morality and Individualism

Thomas Jefferson, "Letters to Peter Carr and Thomas Law."

Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Self-Reliance."

William James, "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life."

Sidney Hook, "Pragmatism and the Tragic Sense of Life" and "Choosing Death."

Freedom of the Will

Henry David Thoreau, "Selections from Walden."

Jonathan Edwards, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God", and "Freedom of the Will."

William James, "The Dilemma of Determinism."

Racism, Sexism, and Civil Disobedience

Thomas Jefferson, "Selection from Notes on the State of Virginia", "Letters to Edward Carrington and Henri Gregoire."

Henry David Thoreau, "Resistance to Civil Government."

Margaret Fuller, "The Great Lawsuit."

Martin Luther King, "Letter from Birmingham Jail."

Political Philosophy, Community, and Religious Freedom

Thomas Jefferson, "Political Philosophy", "Religion", "Short Selection from Autobiography", "Letter to Nehemiah Dodge."

James Madison, "Federalists 10 and 51."

Josiah Royce, "Philosophy of Loyalty."

John Dewey, "Lost Individual."

Noam Chomsky, "A Propaganda Model."

American Beauty

Walt Whitman, "Leaves of Grass."

<http://etext.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/Whi1855.html>

Charles Bukowski, Post Office

Getting a Living

Henry David Thoreau, "Selections from A Week on the Concord and Merrimack River", "Selection from Cape Cod", "Life Without Principle."

William James, "On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings", and "What Makes a Life Worth Living?"

John McDermott, "Why Bother: Is Life Worth Living?"