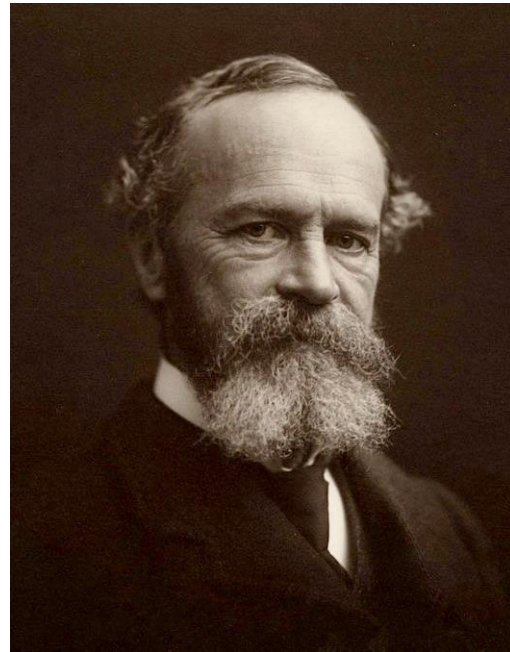
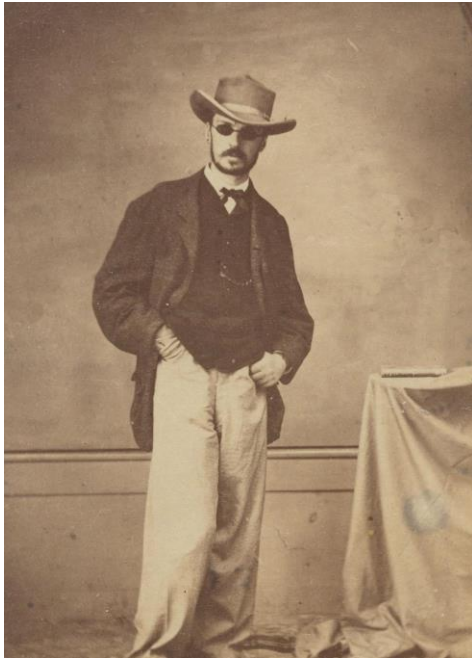


Spring 2019
LSHV 570-01
Prof. Frederick Ruf

Wed. 6:30-9:30
Jan. 16 – April 23

William James: Writings, Letters, Life



*“It makes the most telling difference whether a thinker has a personal relationship to his problems and finds in them his destiny, his distress, and his greatest happiness, or an 'impersonal' one, meaning he is only able to touch and grasp them with the antennae of cold, curious thought.” (Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, section 345)*

William James is one of the seminal thinkers of the late 19th and early 20th Century and his influence is perhaps even stronger today. A founder of American Pragmatism, he influenced thinkers in philosophy, ethics, psychology, and even law, as well as being, in a sense, the originator of the study of religion. In this course, we will read three of his most important works, *The Principles of Psychology* (1890), *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902), and *Pragmatism* (1907), as well as some of his essays. We will also read two lives written of James, Linda Simon’s comprehensive *Genuine Reality: A Life of William James* and Jacques Barzun’s incomparable *A Stroll with William James*. In addition, we will read a collection of James’s letters. Finally we will read some feminist criticism of James, Cornel West’s critique and appreciation of James in *The American Evasion of Philosophy*, and Richard Rorty’s evaluation of him.

The course is designed to develop an understanding of James's thought, but, perhaps more importantly, an understanding of his manner: the incorporation of life into work. That's a crucial aspect of James's pragmatism with its holistic approach to ideas, and it's integral in his manner of writing, as well. Walt Whitman says, "Who hold this poem, holds a man." Nothing is more true of James. The final project of the seminar will be to write an essay in the Jamesian style, with life and thought interwoven.

Week One (Jan. 16)

Introduction

Recommended reading, "The Festival of St. Lazaro and William James: Four Kinds of Fieldwork" by Frederick Ruf

Week Two (Jan. 23)

A Stroll with William James by Jacques Barzun

Week Three (Jan. 30)

Genuine Reality: A Life of William James by Linda Simon

Week Four (Feb. 6)

The Principles of Psychology by William James (selections)

Week Five (Feb. 13)

The Principles of Psychology by William James (selections)

Week Six (Feb. 20)

The Varieties of Religious Experience by William James (selections)

Week Seven (Feb. 27)

The Varieties of Religious Experience by William James (selections)

NO CLASS MARCH 6: SPRING BREAK

Week Eight (March 13)

Pragmatism by William James

Week Nine (March 20)

Pragmatism by William James

Week Ten (March 27)

The Selected Letters of William James by Elizabeth Hardwick

Week Eleven (April 3)

The Selected Letters of William James by Elizabeth Hardwick

Week Twelve (April 10)

“James on Individuality, Reconciliation and Heroic Energies” in *The American Evasion of Philosophy* by Cornel West

Feminist Interpretations of William James, ed. Erin C. Tarver and Shannon Sullivan (selections)

Week Thirteen (April 17)

“The Will To Believe” by William James

“The Sentiment of Rationality” by William James

Week Fourteen (April 23)

Conclusions

Requirements:

1. Each seminar will be guided by five-page seminar papers presented by two members of the class. Depending on numbers, each participant should need to present two to three of these. All other members of the class will prepare a one-page summary of each reading. The first hour will begin with a summary of the reading by all, and the following two hours will be guided by those who write the paper. Those papers should focus on some particular issue in the reading that is of interest to the seminar member and related to the issues of the course, as developed to that point.

Summaries are graded pass/fail

Seminar papers are 50% of course grade

2. The seminar will conclude with a ten-page essay on a topic reached by the end of week ten (and discussed in consultation with the instructor). This essay should be written in the manner of William James, that is, by the interweaving of life with thought.

Term paper is 50% of course grade

Disabilities

If you are a student with a documented disability who requires accommodations or if you think you may have a disability and want to inquire about accommodations, please contact the Academic Resource Center at 202-687-8354 or arc@georgetown.edu.

Turnitin.com

Students acknowledge that by taking this course all required papers can be submitted for a Textual Similarity Review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the terms of use agreement posted on the Turnitin.com site.

Extreme weather, Emergencies, and Instructional Continuity

During inclement weather or other emergencies on a day when we are scheduled to meet face-to-face, check the university's Web site or call (202) 687-7669 for information on whether the university is open. If the university is open, this class will meet. If the university is closed, this class will meet through distance means such as online videoconferencing; check your e-mail for a message from me on how we will proceed in that situation. Due dates for written assignments submitted through Blackboard will not be changed due to campus closings.

The university recently has acquired the capability to send text messages and recorded messages about emergencies to cell phones and other mobile devices. Sign up on MyAccess.

Georgetown Honor System

All students are expected to follow Georgetown's honor code unconditionally. We assume you have read the honor code material located at <http://scs.georgetown.edu/academic-affairs/honor-code>, and in particular have read the following documents: Honor Council Pamphlet, What is Plagiarism, Sanctioning Guidelines, and Expedited Sanctioning Process. Papers in this course will all be submitted to turnitin.com for checking.

Submitting material in fulfillment of the requirements of this course means that you have abided by the Georgetown honor pledge:

In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown Honor System: To be honest in any academic

endeavor, and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.

Plagiarism

In accord with university policy, all incidents of suspected plagiarism or other Honor Code violations will be reported to the Honor Council without fail.

If the Honor Council finds that a student has plagiarized or has violated the Honor Code in any other way, the student may receive a grade of F for the course.

Policy Accommodating Students' Religious Observances

The following is university policy:

Georgetown University promotes respect for all religions. Any student who is unable to attend classes or to participate in any examination, presentation, or assignment on a given day because of the observance of a major religious holiday or related travel shall be excused and provided with the opportunity to make up, without unreasonable burden, any work that has been missed for this reason and shall not in any other way be penalized for the absence or rescheduled work. Students will remain responsible for all assigned work. Students should notify professors in writing at the beginning of the semester of religious observances that conflict with their classes.