Phil 112: American Philosophy
Spring, 2023

Tuesday and Thursday, 5:20–6:55pm, Earth & Marine B 214

Contact Information
Professor: Abe Stone (abestone@ucsc.edu)
Office: Cowell Annex A-106
Push notification: Notify Abe (http://notifyabel.appspot.com)
Website: https://people.ucsc.edu/~abestone/courses
Zoom class meeting: https://ucsc.zoom.us/j/95037324336?pwd=WTVML2tNaV1PaUEYUVMjJ1Y1T1ElZz09
Office hours: Tuesday 2:00-3:00pm (in person)
Zoom office hours: Mon. 10–11:00am; Tues. 2:00–3:00pm (or by appointment)
Zoom feed of lectures: here

Course Description
We will read numerous texts written in the United States of America (plus
one written in colonial America and one written in Canada), all of which deal,
in one way or another, with the philosophical problems posed by America as
a particular nation supposedly founded on universal principles.

Modality: In general, I will lecture in person in our assigned classroom,
but I intend also to live-stream every lecture over Zoom. Due to the very
inconvenient Jewish holiday schedule this year, however, there will also be
four lectures via Zoom only: two at the regular class time (on Tuesday
4/11 and Thursday 5/25) and two at unusual times (on Monday 4/10 and
Monday 4/17) (see the readings schedule below for further details). I will
also make a recording of every lecture available on YouTube. Office hours
will be via Zoom only.

Course Requirements
Two short essays, 2–3 pages each, due Tuesday, May 2, and Tuesday, May
30 (each worth 20% of the grade). (For the first essay, there will be a choice
of essay questions about the readings up through Thoreau, inclusive; for the second essay, a choice of essay questions about the readings from Royce through Dewey.) One final paper, 4–6 pages, due Wednesday, June 14 (worth 60% of the grade).

Papers are due as an attachment via the “Assignments” tool on Canvas. The assignments will be available online and there will be links to them from the online version of this syllabus as well as from my main course page.

Please do not plagiarize. If you do and I catch you, you will receive no credit for the assignment and may fail the course, and you will also be subject to “disciplinary sanctions” from the University. (In contrast: if you hand in a paper consisting mostly of quotes from or paraphrases of other sources you have consulted, properly cited, you will not get a good grade — a good paper will contain your own interpretations and thoughts — but you will not fail, either.) If you have any questions about what plagiarism is or how to avoid it, you can ask me, or consult the resources listed on the Library website. For possible consequences of plagiarism, see the Academic Misconduct Policy.

Note that all assignments are due by 11:55pm on the due date.

You can find answers to some commonly asked questions about my assignments and grading in my FAQ (https://people.ucsc.edu/~abestone/courses/faq.html).

Attendance at lecture is strongly encouraged, but it is not a course requirement and I will not be taking attendance.

**Texts**


Note there is online access to this text through the Library (see below for the course reserves link), but it is limited to three users at a time.

An older edition is available on the Internet Archive.


The original edition is available on the Internet Archive and Wikisource, and there is also a Librivox recording.

The above texts can be ordered and/or purchased as e-books at the UCSC Bookstore (Akademos). All other reading for the course will be made available through Canvas or through free online resources. The texts I have ordered, as well as hard copy versions of almost all other readings, are on reserve at McHenry.

**Readings**

Tuesday, April 4: (no reading, first class). (Lecture on YouTube.)

Thursday, April 6: **No class** due to the first day of Passover.

Monday, April 10: **3:20–4:55pm, via Zoom only.** Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758), *Dissertation Concerning the Nature of True Virtue* (published posthumously, 1765), selections. (Lecture on YouTube.)

Tuesday, April 11: **Via Zoom only.** Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826), the Declaration of Independence; Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832), “Short Review of the Declaration” (1776); Benjamin Banneker (1731–1806) (and Thomas Jefferson), *Copy of a Letter from Benjamin Banneker to the Secretary of State, with his Answer* (1792); William Apess (1798–1839), short selection from *Indian Nullification* (1835); Harriet Martineau (1802–1878), short selection from *Society in America* (1837); Margaret Fuller (1810–1850), “The Fourth of July” (1845). (Lecture on YouTube.)

Thursday, April 13: **No class**, due to the eighth day of Passover.
Monday, April 17: **3:20–4:55pm, via Zoom only.** Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882), “The American Scholar” (1837). (Lecture on YouTube.)

Tuesday, April 18: Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862), “Civil Disobedience” (1849). (Lecture on YouTube.)


Tuesday, April 25: Josiah Royce (1855–1916), Philosophy of Loyalty (1910), ch. 2. (Lecture on YouTube.)

Thursday, April 27: Royce, Philosophy of Loyalty, ch.’s 3–5 (selections). (Lecture on YouTube.)

Tuesday, May 2: Jane Addams (1860–1935), Democracy and Social Ethics (1902), ch. 1 and selections from ch.’s 2, 5, and 7. **First writing assignment due.** (Lecture on YouTube.)

Thursday, May 4: Voltairine de Cleyre (1866–1912), “Anarchism” (1901); “Anarchism and American Traditions” (1908/9); “The Dominant Idea” (1910). (Lecture on YouTube.)


Tuesday, May 16: John Dewey (1859–1952), *Individualism, Old and New* (1930), ch. 1–5 (pp. 5–49). (Lecture on YouTube.)

Thursday, May 18: Dewey, *Individualism, Old and New*, ch.’s 6–8 (pp. 50–93). (Lecture on YouTube.)

Tuesday, May 23: George Grant (1918–1988), *Lament for a Nation: the Defeat of Canadian Nationalism* (1965), ch.’s 3–5 (pp. 26–66). For background, you may want to look at the Wikipedia article on John Diefenbaker, especially this section and this section. (Lecture on YouTube.)

Thursday, May 25: **Via Zoom only** (due to the first day of Shavuot). Grant, *Lament for a Nation*, ch.’s 6–7, and Afterword (by Sheila Grant) (pp. 67–99). (Lecture on YouTube.)

Tuesday, May 30: V.F. Cordova (1935–2002), *How It Is: The Native American Philosophy of V.F. Cordova*, “Bridges” (pp. 11–45), “Windows on Academics” and “Windows on Native American Philosophy” (pp. 49–60); “They Have a Different Idea about That . . .” (pp. 69–75); “Becoming Human” (pp. 165–70). **Second writing assignment due.** (Lecture on YouTube)

Thursday, June 1: Ta-Nehisi Coates (1975–), *Between the World and Me* (2015), beginning of part I (pp. 1–39, through “Perhaps we should return to Mecca”). (Lecture on YouTube)

Tuesday, June 6: Coates, *Between the World and Me*, end of part I and beginning of part II (pp. 39–114, through “We were right”). (Lecture on YouTube)

Thursday, June 8: Coates, *Between the World and Me*, end of part II and part III (pp. 114–152). (Lecture on YouTube)
Wednesday, June 14: Final paper due.