



ЦЕНТЪР ЗА ОБУЧЕНИЕ – БАИ

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TEMPLATE FOR A SPECIALIZED DOCTORAL COURSE

Basic Information:

Course Title: **Pragmatism and Semiotics**

Lecturer: **Prof. Dr. Ivan Mladenov**

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Total Teaching Hours: 30

Annotation

One might be confident in saying that the worthiest contribution of American philosophy is the doctrine of Pragmatism. Therefore, the focus of this course will be on Pragmatism, and the ideas of its founder, Charles S. Peirce. The American polymath and prolific scientist, considered by many as the greatest American philosopher, Peirce invented pragmatism as a concept in 1870. He is also the founder of American semiotics, which is simply a terminological portmanteau wrap for its philosophy. The European tradition, which goes back to the work of Ferdinand de Saussure flourished in the 1960s, alongside the names of Roland Barthes, Paul Ricoeur, Julia Kristeva. It is a more linguistically oriented branch, which originally bloomed under the banner of semiology. We will try to apply some avant-garde methods of modern semiotics for conceptualizing the world of ideas.

Course content

Topic / Module 1: The origin and rise of pragmatism by means of Charles Peirce's philosophy; why it is worthwhile to study a century-old philosophical system? Peirce's famous "pragmatic maxim": its development, distortion and contemporary status. Undertaking reality from the pragmatic perspective. The followers of pragmatism and Peirce's attitude towards them. Humanism, Instrumentalism and Conceptualism. From pragmatism to pragmaticism. The consequences of the "maxim" for belief, meaning and truth.

Topic / Module 2: The three-category thinking of Charles Peirce and his division of signs. What was innovative in Peirce's three categories in comparison to the philosophers before him? Explanation of the categories and relating them to his sign-system. Examples of some basic operations with his 10-fold division of signs. (Based on his first essay from "The Essential Peirce", "On a New List of Categories").

Topic / Module 3: The four denials of our faculties, in what sense is Peirce an anti-Intuitivist? How do we see and how do we understand: what fills out by the work of intellect? What follows from the proposition that every thought is a sign? (Based on his second essay from "The Essential Peirce" "Questions Concerning Certain Faculties Claimed for Man").



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Teaching and assessment methods

The course is a combination of discussion and lecture. Discussion will be held, based on primary source readings and written focus questions. Each student is responsible for 5 minutes oral presentation on selected items based on the current topic. Grading will be calculated mostly on the basis of attendance and participation. Mid-term paper and final paper are demanded; they should not exceed 5 pages.

Competencies acquired as a result of training (3–5 points)

The students will receive a glimpse at the latest trends in theory and methodology of pragmatism and semiotics. They will develop their own competence on what is substantial in humanities in general. This will increase their abilities to orient themselves in the realm of ideas, thus improving their skills in creating concepts. The latter will strengthen their positions in decision making in any area of their interests.

Literature:

Brent, Joseph (1993) Charles Sanders Peirce. A Life, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis.

Colapietro, Vincent (1989) Peirce's Approach to the Self. A Semiotic Perspective on Human Subjectivity, State University of New York Press, Albany

De Waal, Cornelis, On Peirce, Wadsworth Philosophical Topics, 2001.

Hookway, Christopher (1985) Peirce Routledge and Kegan Paul: London.

Mounce, H.O. (1997) The Two Pragmatisms, From Peirce to Rorty, Routledge: London and New York.

Murphey Murray G. (1961) The Development of Peirce's Philosophy, Cambridge, Harvard University Press.

Peirce, Charles S. (1931-1966) Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce. Vols. 1-6 edited by Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1931-1935. Vols. 7-8 edited by Arthur W. Burks. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958.

Short, Thomas L. (2007) Peirce's Theory of signs, Cambridge University Press.

Additional information

We need a place and a Ppt-projector