PHILOSOPHIES OF PROGRESSIVISM
SPRING 2003

Gabriel Moran

Course Description

A study in the philosophy, politics and education of the period known as the progressive era. The course concentrates on John Dewey’s philosophy and educational theories as representative of the time. Dewey’s own writings are highlighted as well as some of his disciples and some of his critics.

Course Purposes

1. To provide an historical and philosophical understanding of the progressive movement in the first half of the twentieth century.

2. To do a close reading of several of John Dewey’s philosophical and educational writings

3. To evaluate where reforms of the progressive era have left education today.

Course Sequence

1. Background of Progressive Movement
   Jan. 28: Rodgers, AProgressive Politics@ Cremin, AProgressive Movement@
   Feb. 4: Lasch, AWoman’s Movement@ Menand, AMetaphysical Club@

2. Philosophical and Political Currents, 1890-1930
   Feb 11: Dewey, AEthics@ch. 1
   Dewey, AChristianity and Democracy,@
   Feb. 18: White, AProgressives and World War I@
   Dewey, AOon Japan and China@

3. Educational Writing, 1890-1930
Feb. 25 Dewey, My Pedagogic Creed
Dewey, AChild and Curriculum
Mar. 4: Dewey, ASchools of Tomorrow, ch 1"
Westbrook, AJD: Education: Early,
Discussion of Democracy and Education

4. Philosophical and Political Currents, 1930-1960
Mar 11: Dewey, AAutobiographical Essay, 1930"
Dewey, AArt as Experience, ch 3"
Mar 25: Dewey, ACommon Faith, ch 1"
Westbrook, AJD: Progressivism

5. Educational Writing, 1930-60.
Apr. 1: Dewey, AXperience and Education
Westbrook, JD: Education Later
Apr. 8: Dewey, AUse of Resources
Counts, ADare the School

6. Legacy of Progressivism
Apr. 15: Ryan, ACritics of Dewey
Cremin, APgressive Education Assessed
McCormick, Progressivism Assessed

Apr. 22:
Ravitch, Left Back: Conclusion
Bestor, Educational Wastelands
Mumford, Golden Day

Apr. 29: Review of Dewey
Discussion of Papers

Course Reading

Assigned readings above are online: www.nyu.edu/classes/gmoran
A six page bibliography is also online.

Course Writing
There will be a written exercise at the beginning of each class session. It will be a question on the reading for that week. I will comment on what you write but it will not be graded. File these exercises; the final exam will be based on these questions that you have already answered.

A term paper of 10-15 pages on a philosophical or educational question that John Dewey struggled with. Focus on a single issue from Democracy and Education that brings out the meaning of progressivism. Provide a summary of Dewey’s handling of the question and what alternatives there might be. Indicate how Dewey might have changed his view over time. Cite some writing of his critics.

Title of the paper: Feb 11
First Draft of the paper: Mar 11
Final Draft of the paper: April 15

Course grade is based about equally on the term paper and the final exam

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