The Rise and Fall of Progressivism  
E55.2079  Spring 2007  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 18: Introduction
   Jan. 25: Rodgers,  "Progressive Politics"
   Cremin, "Progressive Movement"
   Karp, "Political Origins of Progressivism"
   Feb. 1: Lasch, "A Woman’s Movement"
   Menand, "Metaphysical Club"
   Martin, Education of John Dewey
   McGeer, "Sex and Feminism"

2. Philosophical and Political Currents, 1890-1930  
   Feb 8: Dewey, "Ethics"ch. 1
   Dewey, "Christianity and Democracy"
   Feb. 15: White, "Progressives and World War I"
   Barry. World War I
   Hofstadter, "Progressivism and War"
   Dewey, "Force and Coercion"
Bourne, Twilight of Idols

3. Educational Writing, 1890-1930
   Feb. 22: Dewey, My Pedagogic Creed
         Dewey, Child and Curriculum
         Egan, Getting It Wrong from the Beginning
   Mar. 1: Dewey, Schools of Tomorrow, ch 1
         Westbrook, JD: Education: Early,
         McGee, Education and Children=Welfare
         **Discussion of Democracy and Education

4. Philosophical and Political Currents, 1930-1960
   Mar 8: Dewey, Autobiographical Essay, 1930
         Dewey, Ethics, Conclusion
   Mar 22: Dewey, Common Faith, ch 1
         Westbrook, Dewey vs. Niebuhr
         Dewey, Religion and Our Schools
         Humanist Manifesto

5. Educational Writing, 1930-60.
   Mar 29: Dewey, Experience and Education
         Westbrook, JD: Education Later
   Apr. 5: Dewey, Use of Resources
         Counts, Dare the School
         Graham, Progressive Education

6. Legacy of Progressivism
   Apr. 12: Ryan, Critics of Dewey
         Cremin, Progressive Education Assessed
         McCormick, Progressivism Assessed
         Ross, Social Control
   Apr. 19: Ravitch, Left Back: Conclusion
         Bestor, Educational Wastelands
         Mumford, Golden Day

   Apr. 26: 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 8
First Draft of the paper: Mar 8
Final Draft of the paper: April 13

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

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**CLASS PARTICIPANTS:**