

## Syllabus

### Course Description

This course will focus on the writings of the American philosopher Richard Rorty (especially his book *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*) and the British essayist and novelist George Orwell (especially his novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*). The aim of the course will be to compare and contrast Rorty's and Orwell's respective conceptions of the relation between preservation of freedom, fostering of community, and regard for truth. We will then go on to explore these issues as they arise in the writings of a number of other philosophers (most notably Cora Diamond, Hilary Putnam, and Peter Winch) and literary figures (most notably Milan Kundera, Czeslaw Milosz, and Vaclav Havel).

### Prerequisites

There are no formal prerequisites for this course.

### Books

The following six books are for sale at the Seminary Co-Op Bookstore and are required for the course:

<u>Author</u>	<u>Book</u>	<u>Publisher</u>
Richard Rorty.	<i>Contingency, Irony and Solidarity</i>	Cambridge
George Orwell	<i>Nineteen Eighty-Four</i>	NAL
George Orwell	<i>The Orwell Reader</i>	Vintage
Vaclav Havel	<i>Open Letters</i>	Vintage
Milan Kundera	<i>The Book of Laughter and Forgetting</i>	Vintage
Czeslaw Milosz	<i>The Captive Mind</i>	Vintage

The following two books are for sale at the Seminary Co-Op Bookstore and are recommended (but not required) for the course:

Richard Rorty                      *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth*                      Cambridge

Richard Rorty                      *Truth and Progress*                      Cambridge

**Also required for this course** are two coursepackets of readings. The rest of the readings for this course will be made available in xerox form through these two coursepackets. They will be for sale at the Humanities Copy Center in Classics 11. The table of contents for each coursepacket is attached to this syllabus. The first coursepacket will go on sale Thursday, January 6; the second will go on sale Thursday, January 20.

### **First Reading Assignment**

For Monday, January 10<sup>th</sup>, read Richard Rorty's essay "Solidarity or Objectivity" in the first coursepacket.

### **Course Requirements**

A five-page midterm paper (30%) and a ten-page final paper (70%).

## First Coursepacket of supplementary readings

### Table of Contents

1. Richard Rorty, "Solidarity or Objectivity"
2. Richard Rorty, "Pragmatism, Davidson and Truth"
3. Richard Rorty, "Putnam and the Relativist Menace"

## Second Coursepacket of supplementary readings

### Table of Contents

1. George Orwell, "Looking Back on the Spanish War"
2. Jeremy Bentham, *The Panopticon Writings*, selection
3. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, selection
4. Cora Diamond, "Truth: Defenders, Debunkers, Despisers"
5. Cora Diamond, "How Old Are These Bones?"
6. Hilary Putnam, *Realism With a Human Face*, selection
7. Hilary Putnam, *Reason, Truth and History*, selection
8. Peter Winch, "Language, Belief, and Relativism"
9. Donald Davidson, "A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge"
10. Terrence Des Pres, "On Governing Narratives"
11. Zbigniew Herbert, *Report From a Besieged City*, selection
12. Czeslaw Milosz, "Six Lectures in Verse"
13. Anna Akhmatova, "Requiem", Prologue
14. Lionel Trilling, "Orwell on the Future"
15. Peter Van Inwagen, *Metaphysics*, selection
16. H. O. Mounce, *The Two Pragmatisms*, selection
17. Judith Shklar, "Nineteen Eighty-Four: Should Political Theory Care?"
18. Caleb Thompson, "Philosophy and Corruption of Language"
19. Richard Rorty, "Reply to Conant"