

NC STATE

Department of Communication Fall 2017 Course Offerings

COM 598 / CRD 791

Whitehead, Bergson, James
Tuesdays, 6:00 p.m. - 8:45 p.m.



This graduate-level seminar acts as an introduction to the thought of Alfred North Whitehead, Henri Bergson, and William James. We will read some of their major works in particular view of the ways 21st century rhetorical and media studies have turned to the affective, non-discursive, and relational aspects of experience. Although we will ultimately read across our three figures, endeavoring some transversal analysis of their similarities and conflicts, the course will be structured in three separate units, each devoted to one of the titular authors. The goal will be, first, to develop a basic understanding of each figure's unique philosophy and importance, and second, to think and feel through their potential relationships to one another. In each unit we will focus on understanding some key terms (e.g., prehension, duration, effort, etc.) and on discussing their methodological implications and practical applications. By the semester's end, students should come away with a facility applying some of the vocabulary and insights of Whitehead, Bergson, and James to better understand those specific rhetorical and/or media situations of their own particular interest. Learning outcomes will be measured in a term paper or creative project, and in discussion leadership at each weekly meeting.

Tentative List of Readings:

Whitehead, *Modes of Thought*
Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*

Bergson, *Matter and Memory*
Bergson, *Creative Evolution*

James, *Pragmatism*
James, *Essays in Radical Empiricism*