

**LECTURE BY SCOTT R. STROUD, PH.D.**

Associate Professor of Communication Studies at the University of Texas at Austin

# Ambedkar, Dewey, and the Evolution of Pragmatism in India

Max Weber Centre for Advanced Cultural and Social Studies  
13 July 2023 | 10:15 a.m. | Forschungsneubau (Campus)

## About the topic

Most know that Bhimrao Ambedkar, an architect of the Indian constitution and tireless advocate of Dalit rights, thought highly of his former teacher, John Dewey. But what do we know about the specifics of their relationship? In this talk, Dr. Scott R. Stroud discusses some of the main themes in his recently published book, *The Evolution of Pragmatism in India: Ambedkar, Dewey, and the Rhetoric of Reconstruction* (University of Chicago Press / HarperCollins India, 2023). Ambedkar's educational experiences with John Dewey at Columbia University in 1913-1916 will be detailed, as will Ambedkar's voracious reading of many of Dewey's works long after the young reformer left New York. Expanding on this historical account of their educational and intellectual relationship will be the most thorough accounting to date of Ambedkar's appropriation of Deweyan concepts and methods to forge a new vision of pragmatism. His Navayana pragmatism represents an approach that centers social democracy, the dignity of human personality, and the need to relieve oppression while creating the conditions for fraternity.

## About the speaker

Dr. Scott R. Stroud is an Associate Professor of Communication Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. He writes on various topics in ethics, rhetoric, and philosophy. He is the author of two academic books, *John Dewey and the Artful Life* and *Kant and the Promise of Rhetoric*. He is the co-founder of the first "Center for John Dewey Studies" in India at Savitribai Phule Pune University. His recent book, *The Evolution of Pragmatism in India: Ambedkar, Dewey, and the Rhetoric of Reconstruction* (University of Chicago Press / HarperCollins India, 2023), is the most comprehensive account to date of Bhimrao Ambedkar's encounter with Deweyan pragmatism at Columbia University during 1913-1916 and the ways it shaped his innovative pursuit of social justice in India.

## Information about the event

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**Please register with Diana Blanke:**  
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