

PHI 3800 U02: Aesthetics – Fall 2018 Philosophy

Instructor: Dr. Elizabeth Scarbrough

Class: Wednesdays 2-4:45

Location: OE 100

Office Hours: T/Th 3:45-4:45 W 1-2, DM340B

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Course Description:

This class is an introduction to aesthetic theory. While we will spend a considerable amount of time discussing paintings and other objects you would see at a museum, we will also discuss the aesthetics of film, nature, and human beauty. Some of the many questions that will be asked in this class include:

- I. **Beauty:** What is beauty? Is beauty objective reality, or is it merely "in the eye of the beholder" -- i.e. a subjective psychological response that reveals nothing about the real world?
- II. **Art:** What is art? How do we distinguish an art object from other artifacts? What role does/should art play in society? Who should get to choose public art? Why do fakes and forgeries bother us so much?
- III. **Emotions/ Film:** What's the role of the emotions in art? In film? Why do we get scared when we watch a horror movie (if we know it is fake)? Why do we still find these movies scary after multiple viewings? Why do we enjoy feeling scared, repulsed, etc.?
- IV. **Nature:** Is our aesthetic experience of nature different in kind than our experience of art? Do we do something (morally/aesthetically) inappropriate if we view nature the way we view a beautiful landscape painting? Can aesthetic arguments be made to protect nature?
- V. **Human Beauty:** When we say a person is beautiful, what do we mean? Physical beauty? A beautiful soul? How is our perception of human beauty shaped by our culture? By erotic desire? How does gender, race, and sexual orientation inform our concept of human beauty? Is our concept of beauty historically contingent or evolutionarily based?
- VI. **Jokes:** How does humor work? Is it an appropriate object of aesthetic attention? Are any jokes "off limits?" How do racist jokes function?

Learning Objectives:

Your skills will be developed and tested in three ways:

- (1) **Reading Comprehension:** involves close reading all the assigned texts;
- (2) **Philosophical Writing:** involves completing a variety of written assignments designed to teach you how good philosophical writing differs from other familiar types of writing;
- (3) **Class Discussion:** involves actively, respectfully engaging with your peers and instructor about philosophically complex, abstract theories that have implications for how we should make choices and live our lives.

Success in this course requires you to prepare yourself for class discussion by reading critically, to defend your own views with reasons and

arguments, and to give a good faith effort to develop your philosophical skills, both verbally and in writing.

Aesthetics Specific Learning Objective: It is the aim of this class to equip the student with the tools necessary to make informed and intelligent judgments about art and culture.

Required Texts:

Arguing about Art: Contemporary Philosophical Debates
3rd Edition, Neill & Ridley editors

-(You will not need your book until WEEK 7 but please procure a cheap copy of the text before WEEK 7).

-All other texts available via PDF on Canvas. You must bring these texts to class either as physical copies or on your laptop (not on phones).

Evaluation Criteria:

Late work will be penalized at -1 point a day (or part of a day) unless you have made prior arrangements with me. You may not make up exams, in-class presentation or participation grades without prior consent of instructor or documented illness/emergency. In cases of *documented* illness or emergency, contact me as soon as possible to make arrangements.

100 points possible in the course

Attendance and Participation 15 points: You are required to attend class sessions. Attendance includes being awake, alert, and prepared. If you miss more than **1** unexcused class, your final grade will be penalized 3 pts per class you miss. You are being graded on the quality of your contribution to the class.

Discussion Leader 5 points: You will be required to be a discussion leader for one of the articles assigned for this course. You should come prepared with questions to ask your fellow students, and prepared with some examples of artworks / aesthetic experiences to relate to your assigned article. This will require you to document your artworks/ aesthetic experiences in a powerpoint / prezi /etc. that you can share with the class. Detailed instructions to be given in class.

Team Projects 6 points: There will be three “team” projects during the course of the class. You will be graded individually for your contribution to the project but you are expected to work as a group. Groups will be assigned and you will have a different group for each of the three assignments. Each project is worth 2 points.

Writing Assignments 55 points total comprising the following:

-Weekly Journal Questions and Reflections 24 points:
Attendance includes being prepared with questions. You will be required to write in your on-line journal (on Canvas). You will be required to write 8 journal reflections (in our 15 week semester). Each journal entry should contain the following three things: (1) a brief (5 sentence) rehearsal of the main argument in the text, (2)

two questions about the text, and a brief statement (2-4 sentences) of your opinion. Journal entries are turned in on blackboard by the start of class. These are designed to encourage class participation and are designed to help you write your papers. Each journal is worth 3 points. Late journals will be accepted at -1 per day.

-Final Paper Project Proposal 6 points: You will be required to write a 1 page, double spaced, final paper project proposal. This proposal should include what text(s) you plan to discuss (and a brief literature review), why you think this topic is important, and your thesis statement. You will have to present this project proposal in class. Project proposal due Nov 2nd, in-class presentation Nov 7th.

-Final Paper Outlines 5 points: You will have to hand in an outline of your final paper on Nov 22nd (Wednesday before Thanksgiving). You will have the opportunity to workshop your outlines in class. If you want feedback from me on your outline, you must make an appointment with me in office hours in weeks 13 & 14. You will receive +2 EC points for coming to speak with me about your outline in office hours. You must book at appointment for “paper draft discussion” at escarbro.appointy.com.

-Final Paper 20 points: There will be one assigned final paper. This paper should be 8-15 pages in length, typed and double-spaced and turned in the Monday after the last day of class. It will take the form of a critical examination of a text selection to be given in class. You must demonstrate not only an understanding of the article, but also include a critical appraisal as well. More information about the format of these papers and outlines will be given in class.

Midterm and Final 10 points each (20 points total): There will be two in-class examinations. Each will be worth 10% of your final grade. The final quiz will be cumulative and will occur during our examination period. The midterm and final will be composed of short answer essay questions. The midterm will be take-home while the final will be in-class. FINAL ROOM AND TIME TBD

Grading Scale: A = 93-100%, A- = 90-92%, B+ = 87-89%, B = 83-86%, B- = 80-82%, C+ = 77-79%, C = 73-76%, C- = 70-72%, D+ = 67-69%, D = 63-66%, D- = 60-62%, E = 59% and below

Missed Classes: You can miss one class without penalty. After that, your participation score will go down 3 points per absence.

If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to obtain lecture notes from another student.

You may not make up in class exams, participation credit, individual or group presentations without prior consent of instructor or documented

illness/emergency.¹ In cases of *documented* illness or emergency, contact me as soon as possible to make arrangements.

- Class Etiquette: I expect you not to disrupt me, or other students, during class. If you are disruptive, I will ask you to leave the class. Disruptions may include texting on your phone, surfing the internet, talking with other students (not about course material), reading the paper, watching videos, doing work for other classes, etc. Disruptions will lower your participation grade. Additionally, I expect you to treat other students (and their opinions) with respect. This includes not recording your fellow students (or me) with consent.
- Grading Policy: You are graded on the merit of your work (not your effort). If you believe you have been graded unfairly, I am willing to look over your work again, but be aware that I will re-evaluate it and provide you with a new grade. This means that there is a chance that your grade may go down because I may decide that I was too generous the first time.
- Late written work will be penalized at 1 point a day (or part of a day) unless you have made prior arrangements with me.
- Academic Misconduct: Academic misconduct includes cheating, plagiarism, and unauthorized collaboration with other students on assignments. *Academic dishonesty disadvantages honest students, and is clearly unfair to hardworking students. Instructors have a duty, therefore, to protect honest students, and to insure that they are not disadvantaged by dishonest students.* For more information, see FIU's Academic Misconduct policy (Section 2.44). There are serious consequences for academic misconduct, including suspension and expulsion from the university. **All students suspected of plagiarism will be reported to the Office of Academic Misconduct and receive a "0" on their assignment.**
- Safe Zone Statement: I am part of the Safe Zone Ally community here at FIU. This means I am part of a network of trained FIU faculty/staff/students who are available to listen and support you in a safe and confidential manner. As a Safe Zone Ally, I can help connect you with resources on campus to address problems you may face that interfere with your academic and social success on campus as it relates to issues surrounding sexual orientation/gender identity. My goal is to help you be successful and to maintain a safe and equitable campus.
- Commitment to Disability Access: It is my moral and legal obligation to provide students with disabilities accommodations to help them succeed in my classroom. I take this responsibility seriously. You need not disclose to me your disability, but I can work with you to provide accommodations to help you succeed. You may also choose to work with the Disability Resource Center. The Disability Resource Center collaborates with faculty to provide inclusive learning environments. More information may be found at the DRC's website: drc.fiu.edu.

¹ Documented illnesses/emergencies do not include car trouble, work schedules, or family trips/vacations.

Grading at a glance:

Attendance	15	No due date
Group projects	6	Part of attendance score
-First group project	(2)	Sept 21
-Second group project	(2)	Oct 17
-Third group project	(2)	Nov 16
Discussion Leader	5	Sign up sheet
Journal	3x8=24	Weekly before class
Midterm	10	Oct 10
Project Proposal	6	Nov 2
Paper Outline	5	Nov 21
Final Paper	20	Dec 3
Final exam	10	TBD

TENTATIVE LESSON PLAN

WEEK 1: August 22nd

TOPIC: Introductions, On Beauty

- Plato's Symposium selections (in class)
- Plato reading (on your own after class)

Suggested reading:

- Nehemas, selections from *Only a Promise of Happiness*

WEEK 2: August 29th

TOPIC: Concepts of beauty and art: Kant and Bell

<FIRST GROUPS ASSIGNED><GROUP ASSIGNMENT ON ARTWORKS AND BEAUTY>

- Selections from Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment*
(http://www.denisdutton.com/kant_third_critique.htm)
- Short selection from Clive Bell (PDF)²
- Presentations: Kant, Bell, Greenberg

Suggested reading:

- Formalism PDF
- My "Kant help" document
- Greenberg, "Avant-Guard and Kitsch"

WEEK 3: September 5th

TOPIC: Concepts of beauty and art: Hume and Weitz

- Hume, Of the Standards of Taste (Page 12-22 of PDF, everything else is background you might want to read)
- Weitz PDF
- Presentations: Hume, Weitz

Suggested reading:

- Pages 1-12 of Hume PDF

WEEK 4: September 12th

TOPIC: Concepts of beauty and art: Danto and Dutton

- Danto PDF (<http://faculty.georgetown.edu/irvinem/visualarts/Danto-Artworld.pdf>)
- Dutton PDF
- Presentations: Danto, Dutton

Suggested reading:

- Davies pdf contra Dutton

² If you want to do your presentation on Bell, please read the longer article here:
<http://philosophy.lander.edu/intro/articles/bell-a.pdf>

WEEK 5: September 19th

TOPIC: The sublime

- Burke, Selections from *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (https://blogs.warwick.ac.uk/files/roppersclub/burke_sublime_and_the_beautiful.pdf)
- Kant, Selections (PDF)
- Presentations: Burke, Kant, Crawford

Suggested reading:

Donald Crawford, "Art & Nature: Some Dialectical Relationships" (PDF)

WEEK 6: September 26th

<SECOND GROUPS ASSIGNED><GROUP ASSIGNMENT NATURE & SUBLIME>

TOPIC: Tolstoy

Tolstoy *What is Art?* (<http://web.csulb.edu/~jvancamp/361r14.html>)

MUSEUM VISIT

<FIRST GROUP PROJECT DUE FRIDAY>

WEEK 7: October 3rd

TOPIC: Aesthetics of Natural Environments

- Allen Carlson, "Aesthetic appreciation of the natural environment" (AA)
- Noel Carroll, "On being moved by nature" (AA)
- Presentations: Carlson, Carroll, Budd

Suggested reading:

Malcolm Budd (AA)

WEEK 8: October 10th

TOPIC: MIDTERM / CATCH-UP

You will not need to come to class for the midterm. The previous week (WEEK 7) I will give you a list of questions that might show up on the midterm. The morning of September 20th I will send you which questions to answers for the midterm. You will hand in your answers by Friday at 11:59pm via CANVAS.

WEEK 9: October 17th

Topic: Music

- Scruton, "The Decline of Musical Culture" (AA)
- Gracyk, "Music's worldly uses, or how I learned to stop worrying and to love Led Zeppelin" (AA)

RECOMMENDED READING TBD (based on student interest)

<SECOND GROUP PROJECT DUE: PRESENT IN CLASS>

WEEK 10: October 24th

TOPIC: Problems in art – public art

<THIRD GROUPS ASSIGNED>

- Hein, "What is public art? Time, place, and meaning" (AA)
- Kelly, "Public art controversy: the Serra and Lin cases" (AA)

WEEK 11: October 31st

Topic: Emotions in Film / HORROR

- Walton (AA)
- Carroll, "Why Horror?" (AA)

RECOMMENDED READING

- Gaut, "On Horror" (AA)
- Cynthia Freeland "Realistic Monsters" (PDF)

Nov 2 project proposal due. You will present these on Nov 7th in class.

WEEK 12: November 7th

TOPIC: Human Beauty

- Anne Eaton, "Bodily Taste and Fat Oppression" (PDF)
- Sheila Lintott and Sherri Irvin, "*Sex Objects and Sexy Subjects: A Feminist Reclamation of Sexiness*" (PDF)

RECOMMENDED READING

- Ted Cohen, "Personal Style" (PDF)

Presentation of topics for papers (prep 1-2 elevator pitch)

WEEK 13: November 15th

TOPIC: Fakes and Forgeries

- Lessing, "What is wrong with a forgery?" (AA)
- Dutton, "Artistic Crimes" (AA)

Third Group Project: Public Art Presentations in Class.

RECOMMENDED READING

- Horowitz (AA)

WEEK 14: November 22nd (Wednesday before Thanksgiving)

TOPIC: Fakes and Forgeries

Watch: *F for Fake* in class

<Workshop outlines of papers>

<DUE: Outline of papers>

Week 15: November 26th

TOPIC: Jokes

- Cohen, Jokes (PDF)
- Anderson, Racist jokes (PDF)

PAPER DUE DEC 3rd

FINAL EXAM TBD