

PHI 3800 U02: Aesthetics – Fall 2017 Philosophy

Instructor: Dr. Elizabeth Scarbrough

Class: Wednesdays 2-4:45

Location: Academic Health Center 3

Office Hours: T/Th 11:20-12:20, W 1-2, DM340B

Email: escarbro@fiu.edu

Web Site: <http://myweb.fiu.edu/escarbro>

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?

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

Recommended Text: Scruton, Roger. *Beauty: A Very Short Introduction*

Evaluation Criteria: Late work will be penalized at 10% 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 questions day 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.

Writing Assignments 50 points total comprising the following:

Weekly Journal Questions and Reflections 20 points:

Attendance includes being prepared with questions. You will be required to write in your on-line journal (on blackboard). You will be required to write 10 journal reflections (in our 15 week semester). Each journal entry should contain the following three things: (1) a brief (5-10 sentence) rehearsal of the main argument in the text, (2) two questions about the text, and a brief statement (3-5 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.

Final Paper Project Proposal 3 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, why you think this topic is important, and your thesis statement.

Final Paper Outline / Draft Revision 7 points: You will be required to bring a draft or detailed outline of your paper to class for a peer review day. You will be graded both on your outline and your participation in providing comments on a classmate's paper.

Final Paper 20 points: There will be one assigned final paper. This paper should be 5-10 pages in length, typed and double-spaced and turned in on 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 15 points each (30 points total): There will be two in-class examinations. Each will be worth 15% 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 final is December 6th from 12-2.

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 one point 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, or draft revisions 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.

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*

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

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.

Grading at a glance:

Attendance	15	No due date
Discussion	5	Sign up sheet
Journal	2x10=20	Weekly before class
Midterm	15	Oct 11
Project Proposal	3	Nov 1
Paper outline	3.5	Nov 15
Peer review	3.5	Nov 15
Final Paper	20	Dec 2
Final exam	15	Dec 6

TENTATIVE LESSON PLAN

WEEK 1: August 23rd

TOPIC: Introductions, On Beauty

Scruton *Beauty* Chapter 2 (pdf)
Plato's Symposium selections (in class)

WEEK 2: August 30th

TOPIC: Concepts of beauty

Selections from Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment*
(http://www.denisdutton.com/kant_third_critique.htm)
Hume, Of the Standards of Taste
(<http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/hume1757essay2.pdf>)

WEEK 3: September 6th

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

Donald Crawford, “Art & Nature: Some Dialectical Relationships” (pdf)

WEEK 4: September 13th

TOPIC: Aesthetics of Natural Environments

Allen Carlson, “Aesthetic appreciation of the natural environment” (AA)

Noel Carroll, “On being moved by nature” (AA)

WEEK 5: September 20th

TOPIC: What makes something a work of art? Week 1

Shiner, “Western and Non-Western Concepts of Art” (AA)

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

WEEK 6: September 27th

TOPIC: What makes something a work of art? Week 2

Clive Bell, <http://philosophy.lander.edu/intro/articles/bell-a.pdf>

Arthur Danto, “The Artworld”

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

WEEK 7: October 4th

TOPIC: Food As Art?

Tefler, “Food as Art” (AA)

Korsmeyer, “The Meaning of taste and the taste of meaning” (AA)

WEEK 8: October 11th

TOPIC: Midterm and Catch-up day

WEEK 9: October 18th

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)

WEEK 10: October 25th

TOPIC: Horror Films

Carroll, “Why Horror?” (AA)

Gaut “The paradox of horror” (AA)

WEEK 11: November 1st

TOPIC: Problems in art – public art

Hein, “What is public art? Time, place, and meaning

Kelly: “Public art controversy: the Serra and Lin cases”

WEEK 12: November 8th

TOPIC: Human Beauty

Anne Eaton, “Bodily Taste and Fat Oppression” (forthcoming)(PDF)

Sheila Lintott and Sherri Irvin, “*Sex Objects and Sexy Subjects: A Feminist Reclamation of Sexiness*” (forthcoming) (PDF)

WEEK 13: November 15th

TOPIC: Human Beauty / Draft Day

Ted Cohen, “Personal Style” (PDF)

WEEK 14: November 22nd (Wednesday before Thanksgiving)

TOPIC: Fakes and Forgeries

Watch: *F for Fake* in class

Week 15: November 29th

TOPIC: Fakes and Forgeries

Lessing, “What is wrong with a forgery?” (AA)

Dutton, “Artistic Crimes” (AA)

PAPER DUE DEC 2nd