

University College of Fraser Valley
PHILOSOPHY OF ART
Philosophy 483C (Section AB1): Selected Topics

Instructor: Dr. J. Bruin

Summer 2007 (7 May – 23 June)

Contact: john.bruin@ucfv.ca

Class times: T/R 1300-1550

Room: ABA 269

Office hours: T/R 1130-1230 and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION: The purpose of this course is to go into some of the major philosophical questions about the nature of art. Thus, it is to acquaint ourselves with some of the best things that philosophers have said about art, from the ancient Greeks to the present day (from Plato to Aristotle; from Hume to Hegel; from Kant to Danto). We shall survey a range of quite different questions about the nature of art:

- What is essential to something's being a work of art? Is it "mimetic"? Or expressionist? Or is it "significant form"?
- What has art to do with beauty, beauty to do with art? And what about the sublime?
- Is one aesthetic judgment as good as another? Is their a criterion of excellence?
- Does the meaning of a work of art turn on the intention of the artist? Is there such a thing as "getting it right"?
- Could we have art without the institutions around it?
- Does an art object's being a forgery diminish its value?

These are the texts, and they should help us answer any number of related questions that we can ask along the way. This course will be structured *roughly* as follows (this is subject to amendment). There is more here than will be actually covered; but what's to be covered will be drawn from this list.

COURSE SYLLABUS:

[I] The "Indefinability" of Art: Morris Weitz

...

[II] Art as Imitation:

1. Plato, from the *Republic X*
2. Aristotle, from the *Poetics*

[III] On the Possibility of the Objectivity of Taste:

3. David Hume's "Of Standard of Taste"
4. Kant: On the idea of an aesthetic judgment

...

[IV] Art versus craft—Collingwood (with a bit of reference to Kant)

[V] Formalism and Abstract Art (with a bit of reference to Kant)

5. Clive Bell on "significant form"

Maybe also some excerpts from Kandinsky's *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*.

Maybe some excerpts from Hanslick's *The Beautiful in Music*.

[VI] Art and Morality (with a bit of reference to Kant)

6. Plato, from the *Republic X*
7. Lance Morrow, "The Poetic License to Kill" (handout)
8. Oscar Wilde, Preface from *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (handout)
9. Tolstoy (and more later when we get to expressionism).

[VII] Expression-Theory of Art:

10. Excerpts from Leo Tolstoy's *What is Art?* (the communication of feeling)
11. Excerpts from R. G. Collingwood, from *Principles of Art*

[VIII] The Role—or Non-Role—of the Artist, of the Author:

12. Monroe C. Beardsley
13. Roland Barthes

[IX] On the “Aura” of a Work; Authenticity and Forgery.

- 14. Benjamin (and maybe Piper and Davis)

...

[X] The Institutional Theory of Art:

- 15. George Dickie
- 16. Arthur Danto

[XI] The End or Future of Art

- 17. G.W.F. Hegel
- 18. Danto (“The End of Art”)

The aim of this course is to get us to bring our experiences of art (and the artworks dear to us) to these discussions. And it is to take these discussions back to our experiences. The objective is to philosophize about art—the better to appreciate both philosophy and art.

Required text: *The Nature of Art: An Anthology*, 2nd edition, by Thomas E. Wartenberg.



GRADING SCHEME:

- 1) Assignment 1 (20%)
- 2) Assignment 2 (20%)
- 3) Assignment 3 (20%)
- 4) Test (20%)
- 5) Spot quizzes: ten of them, 2% each (20%)

The date of each test will be announced at least two weeks before you have to write it.

GRADING PROFILE:

A+	95-100	B+	80-84	C+	65-69	D	50-54
A	90-94	B	75-79	C	60-64	F	0-49
A-	85-89	B-	70-74	C-	55-59		



OPERATIONAL DETAILS:

(1) Policy on Plagiarism and Cheating: Students are hereby warned about academic dishonesty and college policies regarding this matter. Please ensure that you are familiar with the College’s policy on these matters. (For further information see Course Calendar.)

Details Specific to This Course:

(2) Missed Test Policy: A student who misses a test will receive a mark of “0” for that test, with the exception of absence justified by a medical certificate or some circumstance that the instructor, at his discretion, deems sufficiently

'extenuating'. As for a late submission of a take-home assignment (if there is any), the instructor reserves the right to subtract five percentage points from the assignment per day, and return the paper without comments.

(2.1) There is a make-up assignment in this course. It is strictly optional. It will count for the lowest of the three assignments. I will assign the make-up sometime near the end of the course. Details forthcoming.

(2.2) There are no "make-ups" for missed quizzes.

(3) About assignments:

- Make sure you keep a spare copy of any take-home work that you submit to your instructor. (Also, make sure you keep any returned materials, tests as well as assignments.)
- Submission of any take-home work must be typed and stapled.

(4) Class attendance and participation: students will be expected to attend class regularly, and must complete assigned readings and informal homework exercises in preparation for specific classes. Regular class attendance is *mandatory*; lectures will integrate and augment material not found in the required readings. **A student who misses more than 30 percent of class-time will risk automatically receiving an 'unsatisfactory' for the final grade. A student who misses more than three classes will risk an automatic zero for the participation grade.**

(5) Classroom protocol:

- Turn off cell-phones in class. If the phone rings, either turn it off straightaway or immediately go out of the room.
- Test protocols: No talking as you leave the class-room if other students are still working on their test.
- Everybody sits as close to the front of the class as possible.

(6) On Emailing: The student's having regular access to his or her email account is required. Required also is the student's ability to print out any materials the instructor sends out (e.g., an outline of a lecture). My email is NOT for sending handouts and lecture materials for students who miss classes; and it is NOT for conveying marks. You can use it to ask me philosophical questions, or use it as a substitute for voice mail, or to set up an appointment. *In fact, I prefer email to voice mail.* In any case, please don't abuse it. No courtesy, no reply.

(7) A study buddy: You should find yourself a study buddy, who can help you in the event that you've missed a class and need to get hold of lecture notes, handouts, and whatnot. Although the instructor will try his best, he cannot guarantee supplying handouts from a previous class.