

PHIL5533
Philosophical Analysis of Literature and Art

Course Outline

Time: Thursdays: 18:30-21:15

Location: Wu Ho Man Yuen 301

Course overview

This course is a critical introduction to philosophically oriented analysis of art and literature. We will address some of the central classical positions from the history of philosophy as well as some of the most distinctive approaches in contemporary philosophy, especially as it is practiced in continental philosophy. We will also address how art and aesthetics were conceptualized in literature and psychoanalysis. The themes discussed will include the meaning of beauty, aesthetic attitude, aesthetic experience, the variety of arts, the essence of art, the creation, interpretation, evaluation, and function of works of art.

Learning outcomes

1. Understand the historical and cultural conditions of the emergence of philosophical reflections on art and literature.
2. Grasp the contribution of such analyses to the understanding of the human condition.
3. Develop a critical view on such theories themselves.
4. Grasp the potential of such theories in promoting intercultural understanding.
5. Develop the ability to research independently on the issues taught.

Topics

1. Introduction: Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art
2. Art and Representation
3. Aesthetic Taste and Beauty
4. Aesthetic Judgment and Aesthetic Experience
5. Philosophical History of Art
6. Art and Imagination
7. Art and Interpretation
8. The World of Art
9. Art and Modern Society
10. Art, Feeling, Expression, Form
11. Art and Truth
12. Conclusion: Further Perspectives

Learning activities

In this course, you are expected to

- read and think about the assigned readings;
- develop the skills mentioned in the course outcomes through philosophical discussion and writing (essays, take home exams, and critical summaries of tutorial readings);
- attend lectures/tutorials to participate in discussion.

Activities and workload:

In-class (mandatory):

1. Lectures will be conducted in a seminar fashion: 2 hours each week.
2. Tutorials: Tutorial meetings will be arranged approximately every two weeks.

Out-of-class (average workload per week):

1. Reading: approximately 2-3 hours on the basic and suggested readings each week.
2. Writing assignments: an average of 1 hour each week on preparing and writing essay assignments throughout the term. You should try to design a schedule that allows you to apportion more time on writing and discussing your essay with your teacher two to three weeks before each essay is due.

Assessment scheme

The assessment methods are designed to encourage participation and learning through argumentative writing and active participation.

Task nature	Description	Weight
Participation in Discussions	Discussion	20%
Group Presentation	Formal Presentation	20%
Term paper	Around 2500-3000 words	60%

Remarks:

1. Participation in Lectures/Seminars: Grading is based on active participation in discussions. *Absence will damage your grades.*
2. Tutorial Presentation: You will need to make a ten-minute long formal presentation.
3. The term paper: you may choose to write on any philosophical problem addressed in this course. You will be asked to submit a preliminary statement on a chosen topic on the last day of class. You will be expected to do some independent research, to formulate a central thesis as well as to develop arguments in support of it.

Required Textbook:

Steven M. Cahn and Aaron Meskin (eds.). *Aesthetics: A Comprehensive Anthology*. Harper & Row, Publishers, 1969.

I will be happy to recommend further readings to you. Please feel free to stop by my office for a discussion concerning the questions that you might want to pursue in greater detail. My suggestions concerning further readings will largely depend on your interests.

Course schedule

<i>Meetings</i>	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Required reading</i>	<i>Group Presentations</i>
Sep 9	Introduction	No readings	Briefing Session
Sep 16	Art and Reproduction (Plato)	Plato: <i>Republic</i> (Book X)	
Sep 23	Art and Mimesis (Aristotle and Collingwood)	Aristotle: <i>Poetics</i> (Extracts)	1st Group Presentation Tolstoy: "What is Art?"
Sep 30	Aesthetic Taste (Hume)	Hume: "Of the Standard of Taste"	2nd Group Presentation Collingwood, "The Principles of Art" 3rd Group Presentation Danto: "The Artworld"
Oct 7		Kant: "The Analytic of the Beautiful" (Extracts)	4th Group Presentation Dickie: "What is Art? An Institutional Analysis"
Oct 14	Aesthetic Judgment (Kant and Dickie)	Public holiday (Chung Yeung Festival)	
Oct 21	The Historical Destiny of Art I (Hegel and Goodman)	Hegel: "The Philosophy of Fine Art" (Introduction)	5th Group Presentation Goodman, "When Is Art?"
Oct 28	Art and Form (Hanslick, Bell and Langer)	Hegel: "The Philosophy of Fine Art" (Introduction)	6th Group Presentation Langer, "The Symbol of Feeling"
Nov 4	Art and Psychoanalysis (Freud, Rose and Beardsley)	Hanslick: "The Beautiful in Music" and Bell: "The Aesthetic Hypothesis"	7th Group Presentation Beardsley, "Aesthetic Experience Regained"
Nov 11	Aesthetic Experience II (Dewey and Shusterman)	Freud: "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming" and Rose: "The Body and Creative Imagination"	8th Group Presentation Shusterman, "The End of Aesthetic Experience"
Nov 18		Dewey: <i>Art as Experience</i> (extracts)	9th Group Presentation Carroll, "Aesthetic Experience Revisited"
Nov 25	Art and Truth (Hartmann)	Hartmann: <i>Aesthetics</i> (304-334)	10th Group Presentation Hartmann: <i>Aesthetics</i> (347-368)
Dec 2	Art, Imagination and Society (Dufrenne, Adorno and Benjamin)	Dufrenne: <i>Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience</i> (345-370)	11th Group Presentation Adorno, "Aesthetic Theory" 12th Group Presentation Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"

Professor's Contact details

Teacher	
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Academic honesty and plagiarism

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>

With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. For group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign the declaration.

For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.