

PHIL402 -Aesthetics – Sandrine Bergès



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## Course Details

The first hour every week will be a lecture class, in which I will expose some main aspects of the debates we are studying.

The next two hours will consist of presentations and discussions based on your readings for that week. The reading for each week is clearly specified in the syllabus and available either in the course book, on moodle, or in the library. I will collect your homework, a critical summary of one of the texts, every week.

All the texts listed in the syllabus are compulsory readings, but you need only prepare a critical summary (report) for one text per week.

Each week, two students will do a short presentation to start off the discussion.

If you need to contact me, please come to my office hours, posted on my office door. If you cannot come then, you should talk to me in class, or contact me by email.

## Aims and Objectives

This course is intended to give students a firm groundings in central questions in aesthetics both from a historical and an analytic perspective. Together with upper level courses, this course also aims to develop students' abilities to read and write philosophy at a higher level. The reading is accordingly more difficult than it is in lower level courses and it is expected that students read two or three articles every week.

## Readings:

You should purchase Noel Carroll's *Philosophy of Art*.

Articles for each week will be posted on Moodle.

A useful source for secondary literature is Olsen and Lamark's collection on *Aesthetics*, available at Meteksan.

A copy of Plato's *Republic*, Aristotle's *Poetics* and Kant's *Third Critique* will be useful. If you do not have a copy, you can either find it in the library or online.

# Assessment

The assessment for this course will consist of two essays (6-8 pages long), one take home exam, a presentation and in class participation.

## Essay 1: 20%

Deadline 20 March

You must submit a detailed outline and bring it to class the week before the deadline. We will do an in-class drafting exercise. The quality of your outline will count towards your essay grade.

Question:

You should create your own question, based on your reading for weeks 1 to 7. You must agree to a question with me before proceeding to write an outline.

## Essay 2: 20%

Deadline 11 May

You must submit an outline and arrange for a tutorial at least one week before the deadline.

Question:

You should create your own question, based on your reading for weeks 7 to 14. You must agree to a question with me before proceeding to write an outline.

## Presentation: 20%

You should choose a text in week 1 and prepare a presentation according to the guidelines given in the section on presentations and homework.

## Final exam. 20%

This will consist of a short essay on a topic that you did not cover in either essay 1 or essay 2 or in your presentation.

## In class participation: 20%

This will take into account the homework, the preparation you do for the class (i.e. whether you regularly do the set readings on time), and your ability to participate to in class discussion in a way that shows philosophical depth, clarity of expression, and ability to listen to and understand what others have to say. Needless to say, respect of your classmates, courtesy towards them and enthusiasm for philosophical argument are all qualities that will get you a long way in this part of the assessment.

## Essay format and submission:

Together with your essay, you should submit a detailed outline following the format in the document at the end of this pack, and a progress report (also included in this pack).

All submissions, including outlines, should be typed.

You should submit the final draft only on Moodle, and a hard copy of all the material (final draft, outline, progress report).

Do not give your essay a title, but instead, write the agreed question clearly at the beginning.

The university's plagiarism policy will apply.

### Advice on writing essays:

You should keep your paragraphs short. There is no need to divide your essay in five parts (intro, body 1,2,3 and conclusion), but if you feel more comfortable following that format, think of each part as a section and make sure to divide it into paragraphs of a readable size. A good rule is to have one paragraph per point.

Make sure you proof read you essays carefully for spelling and grammar mistakes. If you are not sure of the meaning of a word, use a different one.

Keep your sentences short and simple.

## Homework and presentations:

Each week choose one article or chapter from the relevant section of the weekly syllabus. Note: you cannot choose one of the texts in italics, as these are compulsory reading for everyone. Prepare a critical summary of the text in writing.

Your summary should take the following form:

- State the thesis the author is presenting.
- Summarize the main supporting argument.
- Consider one objection (either your own, or from a different text) to that argument.
- Attempt to reply to the objection.

Your answers should be typed and submitted in class each week and should be no longer than one or two pages.

A presentation is an extended form of this work: you should attempt to explain and illustrate the argument and objection.

Presentations should last no longer than 15 minutes.

## Weekly Syllabus

week	Date (mon)	topic	text
1	2/2	Intro	<i>Carroll "On Horror"</i>
2	09/2	Art as Mimesis	<i>Plato, Rep III and X</i> Whittick "Mimesis and Perception" Belfiore "Plato's Theory of Imitation"
3	16/2		<i>Aristotle, Poetics, Ch1-15</i> Nussbaum: "Tragedy and Self-Sufficiency" Halliwell: "Pleasure, Understanding and Emotions in Aristotle's Poetics"
4	23/2	Hume	<i>Hume "Of the standard of taste"</i> Mason: "Moral Prejudice" Ross: "Humean Critiques"
5	2/3	Kant	<i>Kant Critique of Aest. Sections 1-14,16, 23-24, 28</i> Carroll, ch. 4, part II Zuckert "The Purposiveness of form".
6	09/3	Writing week	Bring your outlines for essay 1 to class – we will do an in-class drafting exercise.
7	16/3	No classes	No readings Monday to Wednesday. Essays due Friday 20/3.
8	23/3	Neo-Wittgensteinian theory	Wittgenstein Phil.Inv. I 65-75 Weiz "The Role of Theory in Art" Dickie "The New Instit...."
9	30/3	Representation	Wollheim "On pictorial repres."
10	06/4	Writing week	I will be away on a conference.
11	13/4	Photography	Scruton "Photography and rep." D. Phillips "Photography and Causation"
12	20/4	Ethical criticism	<u>Nussbaum</u> <u>Posner</u> <u>Booth</u>
13	27/4	Art and pornography	Langton "Speech Acts and Unspeakable acts" Kieran "Pornographic Art" <i>Stock "Pornography and Imagining about oneself"</i>
14	04/5	Women and art	<u>Nochlin "Why have there been no great women artists?"</u> Freeland "Gender, Genius and Guerilla Girls" ch5 of <i>But is it Art?</i>
15	11/5		Essay 2 due Monday.