

COURSE INFORMATION

St. Lawrence University: Spring 2016
Department of Philosophy
Course: Phil 321: Aesthetics
Time: Tues. 7-10pm
Location: Piskor 19

CONTACT INFORMATION

Professor: Amir Jaima
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

From the Ancient Greek term, *aisthesis*, Aesthetics characterizes the branch of philosophy concerned with the nature and value of knowledge acquired and disseminated through sense perception. The field of inquiry divides into two categories that will structure this course: a) questions concerned Beauty, and b) questions concerned with the Arts.

COURSE OBJECTIVES¹:

Students will learn:

- A basic philosophical lexicon: terms such as premise, conclusion, epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, presupposition, relativism, etc. (1.2)
- The ability to answer major philosophical questions – in this case, “what is beauty?” – from at least two different philosophical perspectives, historical periods, or traditions. (1.5.5)

Students will be able to:

- Understand philosophical ideas (e.g., ability to read and accurately interpret philosophical texts; but this also includes the ability to perceive the basic philosophical ideas underlying the rest of human thought and actions). (2.1)
- Ability to unpack implications (e.g., logical, metaphysical, ethical) from ideas. (2.6)
- Construct an argument in support of a belief. (2.7)
- Generate good philosophical questions. (2.8)
- Communicate effectively to a variety of audiences about philosophical questions and ideas. (2.11)

TEXTS²:

Required:

- Cahn, Steve, and Aaron Meskin, eds. *Aesthetics: A Critical Anthology*. 2nd edition. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1989. ISBN-13: 978-1405154352 (abbr. “C/M”)
- Scarry, Elaine. *On Beauty and Being Just*. Princeton University Press, 2001. ISBN-13: 978-0691089591

EVALUATION & COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Participation: 10%

This will be a discussion based class. You are expected to contribute and respond to questions and ideas.

Reading Responses: 15%; and Comments: 5%

Using the Sakai Forum feature, each student will draft two thoughtful questions on an aspect of the reading for class, and post a ~400 word reflection responding to one of them. Students are expected to post 8 reflections over the course of the semester. They are due online Tuesday at 5pm and cannot be made up (please also bring a hard copy to class). Over the course of the week, students are expected to respond to their peers’ reflections online.

Class Presentation: 10%

Each of you will be responsible for leading the class in a discussion on an aspect of the assigned reading for a given day.

Take-home Exam #1: 10%

¹ Numbers refer to the SLU philosophy department learning goals.

² See the course bibliography for the full list of citation information for course readings.

Short essay questions on course readings.

Essay #1: 15%

~1500 words on an assigned topic.

Aesthetic "essay": 15%

An engagement with a question from the course using a non-traditional medium, to be presented on the last day of class

Essay #2: 20%

1500-2000 words on a topic of your choosing, relevant to the course (subject to professor approval).

A FEW PHILOSOPHY RESOURCES:

Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: www.iep.utm.edu/

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <http://plato.stanford.edu/>

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Except in the case of a disability, temporary or otherwise, there are no "excused absences" in this class. You are permitted one absence, for whatever reason. Beyond one absence, your grade will be negatively affected, **0.25 per absence**.

TECHNOLOGY POLICY:

Silence your cell phones during class time (we can still hear it on vibrate). No computers. No internet.

LATE WORK POLICY:

Assignments must be turned in on time in order to be candidates for full credit. Late Papers will be penalized **.5 per 24 hr period**. Reading responses will not be accepted late. That said, if you *anticipate* needing more time in order to do your best work, for a compelling reason, I will consider granting an extension.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: <http://www.stlawu.edu/advising/academic-integrity>

DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES: <http://www.stlawu.edu/disability-and-accessibility-services>

ACADEMIC SUPPORT: <http://www.stlawu.edu/academic-support>

COURSE SCHEDULE: (subject to amendment)

wk	date	TOPIC	READING DUE	ASSIGNMENT DUE
1	1/26	Introduction:		
Beauty and the Aesthetic				
2	2/2	The Forms and the Ancient Quarrel	Plato, <i>Hippias Major</i> (entirety) ---, <i>Symposium</i> , "Speech of Diotima" (C/M) ---, <i>Republic X</i> , (C/M)	RR1
3	2/9	Judgment and Taste	Immanuel Kant, <i>Critique of Judgment</i> (CoJ), §1-29	RR2
4	2/16	Judgment and Taste, cont'd	Immanuel Kant, CoJ, §30-40, §55-56 David Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste" (C/M) Mojca Kuplen, "The Aesthetics of Ugliness – A Kantian Perspective"	RR3
5	2/23	The Good and the Just	Elaine Scarry, <i>On Beauty and Being Just</i> (entirety) Immanuel Kant, CoJ, §59	RR4
6	3/1	Otherwise	Crispin Sartwell, <i>Six Names of Beauty</i> (selections)	Take-Home Exam
7	3/8	Blackness	Paul Taylor, "Black Aesthetics" Toni Morrison, <i>The Bluest Eye</i> , (selections) Trey Ellis, "The New Black Aesthetic" WEB DuBois, "Criteria of Negro Art" Chris Rock, "Good Hair"	RR5
The Arts and the Artistic				
8	3/15	What is Art?	CLR James, "What is an Art?" Leo Tolstoy, "What is Art?" (C/M) Clive Bell, "Art" (C/M) RG Collingwood, "The Principles of Art" (C/M) Arthur Danto, "The Artworld" (C/M) George Dickie, "What is Art?..." (C/M)	RR6
	3/22	Spring Break – No Class		
9	3/29	Literature and Poetry: Truth, Intention, and Imagination	EM Forster, <i>Aspects</i> (selections) Edith Wharton, <i>The Writing of Fiction</i> , (selections) Toni Morrison, "Unspeakable Things Unspoken"	Essay 1
10	4/5	Literature and Poetry, cont'd: Imitation, Tragedy	Aristotle, <i>Poetics</i> , (C/M) Frederick Nietzsche, "The Birth of Tragedy" (C/M)	RR7
11	4/12	Music and Movement: Expression, Embodiment, and Ephemerality	David Drake, "Sadness and Beauty" Jerold Levinson, What a Musical Work Is (C/M) St. Augustine, <i>De Musica</i> (C/M)	RR8
12	4/19	The Visual Arts: Painting, Drawing, Film, Photography: Representation, Realism, Illusion	Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Cezanne's Doubt", ---, "Eye and Mind" Delueze, <i>Francis Bacon</i> , (selections) Susan Sontag, <i>On Photography</i> (selections)	RR9
13	4/26	Architecture and Sculpture: Presence, Place, and	Brian Irwin, "Dwelling in the Built Environment"	RR10

		Permanence	Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art" (C/M)	
14	5/3	Conclusion:		Aesthetic "Essay"
		Sat. May 14 th 11:30am		Essay 2

COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY: