

PHIL 77600, Wednesdays, 11:45-1:45, Rm 7395

Aesthetic Psychology

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Reading Schedule

(subject to revision)

| Recognition | |
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| Feb 2 | <i>Intrinsic Accounts</i> : Bell, "Art as Significant Form"; Layton, "Anthropology of Art" (excerpt). Recommended: Beardsley, "The Aesthetic Point of View" |
| Feb 9 | <i>Relations and Clusters</i> : Carroll, "Identifying Art"; Duchamp, "The Richard Mutt Case"; Dean "The Nature of Concepts and the Definition of Art." Recommended: Levinson, "Artworks and Artifacts," and Gaut. "Art as a Cluster Concept" |
| Evaluation | |
| Feb 16 | <i>Objective Beauty</i> : Hutcheson, "Of Original or Absolute Beauty"; Ramachandran & Hirstein, "The Science of Art"; McManus et al. "The Aesthetics of Composition: A Study of Mondrian"; recommended: Dio et al. "The Golden Beauty: Brain Response to Classical and Renaissance Sculptures" |
| Feb 23 | <i>Good Taste</i> : Hume, "On the Standard of Taste"; Masuda et al. "Culture and Aesthetic Preference"; Cutting "Gustave Caillebotte, French Impressionism, and Mere Exposure"; Komar and Melamid's "Most Wanted" check out the (http://awp.diaart.org/km/); recommended: Silver, "Foreign Art and Asante Aesthetics" |
| Mar 2 | <i>Empiricism and Particularism</i> : Beardsley, "On the Generality of Critical Reasons"; Iseminger, "Experiential Theories of Artistic Value"; Kosuth, "Art After Philosophy"; LeWitt, "Sentences on Conceptual Art" |
| Emotion | |
| Mar 9 | <i>Emotions and Appraisal</i> : Kant, <i>Critique of Judgment</i> (excerpt); Burke, <i>A Philosophical Inquiry Into The Origin Of Our Ideas Of The Sublime And Beautiful</i> (excerpt); Prinz, "Emotion and Aesthetic Value"; Nadal, "Towards a framework for the study of the neural correlates of aesthetic preference" |
| Mar 16 | <i>Elicitation of Emotions</i> : Walton, "Fearing Fictions"; Robinson, "Music, Mood, and Misattribution" |
| Mar 23 | <i>Why We Like Unpleasant Emotions in Art</i> : Carroll, "Why Horror?"; Smuts, "The Paradox of Painful Art"; Recommended: Gaut, "The Paradox of Horror" |
| Perception | |
| Mar 30 | <i>Pictorial Representation</i> : Goodman, "Reality Remade" (LoA, chap 1); Hochberg, "The Perception of Pictorial Representations"; Deregowski, "Pictorial Perception and Culture" |
| Apr 6 | <i>Top-Down Effects</i> : Goodman, "Art and Authenticity" (LoA, chap 3); Seeley, "Imagining Crawling Home: A Case Study in Cognitive Science and Aesthetics"; Prinz, "Seeing with Feeling" |
| Morals | |
| Apr 13 | <i>Imaginative Resistance</i> : Gendler; "The Puzzle of Imaginative Resistance"; Currie, "Desire and the Imagination" |
| Apr 27 | <i>Moralism</i> : Kieran, "Art and Morality"; Huessman and Taylor "The Role of Media Violence in Violent Behavior" |
| Origins | |
| May 4 | <i>Evolution of Art</i> : Dutton "Aesthetics and Evolutionary Psychology"; Davies, "Why Art is Not a Spandrel" |
| May 18 | TBA |

Note: Missing May 11, but make up on Feb 23 (Monday schedule) barring conflicts

Course Description

This course surveys key topics in (mostly) 20th century analytic aesthetics. Questions include: What is art? How do we evaluate art? Is there an objective standard of taste or is taste relative? What makes a picture realistic? Are aesthetic qualities merely sensory? What is the role of emotion in aesthetic response? Is our interest in art a product of evolution? Many readings focus on fine art, but students can write term papers on music, film, literature, poetry, dance, or other art forms.

Course Materials

All readings will be available on Blackboard.

Requirements

Grades will be based on:

- A term paper on a topic relating to themes in the course. Themes can include areas we won't cover in depth, such as literature, music, or film.

Non-graded requirements:

- Five times, for five of the assigned papers, come up with an "art counter-example". These should be the name of an artwork (can be visual art, music, or another kind of art) that seems difficult to explain on one of the theories we are examining in class. For example, if an author says good art must be beautiful, identify a piece of good art that isn't beautiful; or if an author says good art expresses emotion, identify an artwork that does not. These counter-examples should contain the name of the work (a .jpg as well, if you like) and a sentence or so explaining why the work constitutes a challenge to one of the papers we are discussing. These can be submitted by email or in class, but must be submitted on or before the day when the paper is discussed. They will promote discussion and get us in the practice of testing aesthetic theories by appeal to artworks. If you send me your counter-example by email the day before class, I can try to bring in a slide to share it with everyone. These assignments will not be graded, but it will affect your grade if you miss any or submit late.

