

## **PHIL4323: AESTHETICS**

Tuesday/Thursday, 11:00-12:20  
ENG/PHIL 163

### **Instructor**

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Office hours: MWF 9:00-10:00

### **Course Description**

We spend a lot of our time with the arts—we read novels and poetry, we watch movies and television, we go to art galleries and the theater. Some works of art are simply distractions from our own lives. But others (and not always the ones we expect) raise important philosophical questions:

- If I weave a basket, is it art? If so, is it art in the same way that the *Mona Lisa* is art? What is the difference between art and craft?
- Why is a perfect copy of a novel like *Lord of the Flies* a genuine instance of the novel, but a perfect copy of a statue like Michelangelo's *David* is only a reproduction?
- Why do we get sad, excited, and frightened by what happens to characters in shows like *Breaking Bad*? After all, don't we know the characters are *fictional*?

These questions and many others besides will serve to frame discussion in the class as we investigate theories of art and beauty from the Ancient Greeks to the present.

### **Text**

Darren Hudson Hick, *Introducing Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art* (Continuum, 2012)  
ISBN: 978-1-4411-7103-0

### **Course Requirements**

Your final grade will depend on the percentage you earn of the total points possible in the class: A+: 97-100; A: 94-96; A-: 90-93; B+: 87-89; B: 84-86; B-: 80-83; C+: 77-79; C: 74-76; C-: 70-73; D+: 67-69; D: 64-66; D-: 60-63.

### **Papers**

You will have to write two 8-to-10-page papers during the course of the term:

- The first paper is due Tuesday, October 8, and is worth 20% of your grade. It must be written on a topic from Chapters 1-3 in the course text.
- The second paper is due Tuesday, December 3, and is worth 25% of your grade. It must be written on a topic from Chapters 4-7 in the course text.

For each paper, you must refer to at least two primary sources—either philosophy articles or scholarly books. My text does not qualify as a primary source, though I would suggest referring to articles and books cited in your text and recommended at the end of each chapter. The University Library has an impressive collection of books on the philosophy of art, and provides electronic access to a number of philosophy journals, including the *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* and the *British Journal of Aesthetics*.

Assignments submitted late without explicit extensions or authorized excuses will receive a penalty of one letter grade (10%) per day late.

*Papers will not be accepted via e-mail or fax.*

### ***Exams***

There are two exams for this course: a midterm exam worth 20% of your grade, and a final exam worth 25% of your grade. The midterm exam will be held in class on Tuesday, October 8. The final exam will be held Wednesday, December 11, 1:30-4:00 pm.

### ***Participation***

The final 10% of your grade is your participation grade. Participation includes doing the assigned readings *before* the class in which the reading shall be discussed, taking active part in class discussion, and putting serious effort into your papers. Participation also includes attendance. For every class you miss without authorized excuse, your participation grade will be deducted 1 point (that is, 1% of your final grade, up to the 10% encompassed by the participation grade). See also “Classroom Courtesy” below.

### **Special Accommodations**

- Students with disabilities that require special class or exam accommodations must present a form from AccessTECH Disability Support Program specifying the details during the first week of classes. Their offices are located in 335 West Hall. See [www.accesstech.dsa.ttu.edu](http://www.accesstech.dsa.ttu.edu).
- You will not be penalized for any absences due to religious observances. However, it is your responsibility to inform me in advance of any intended absences for religious observance *as soon as possible* so that we can make other arrangements. As well, it remains your responsibility to have read the material assigned for that day and to obtain any notes from one of your classmates for classes missed.

### **Classroom Courtesy**

Please be courteous to your fellow students and avoid unnecessary disruptions. Arrive on time, leave on time, and *turn off your cell phone during class*. Note that if your cell phone rings during class, *I will answer it*. Laptops are permitted in class, but please do not abuse this privilege. Text-messaging is *not* permitted during my class. If I see you text-messaging during class-time, your participation grade will be deducted 1 point. This is your only warning.

### **Academic Integrity and Irresponsibility**

I take incidents of academic misconduct *very seriously*. These include but are not restricted to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and fabrication. Penalties are dependent on the nature of the misconduct, and may involve disciplinary proceedings with the Student Judicial Programs. Knowing what constitutes academic misconduct is *your responsibility*. If you have a concern about what constitutes academic dishonesty *prior to turning in an assignment*, please see me, and I will be happy to help you. For more information, see <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/studentjudicialprograms/academicinteg.php>.

### **The Writing Center**

Particularly for new philosophy students, I strongly recommend that you work on your paper with a writing tutor. The Writing Center offers *free assistance* in room 175 of the Philosophy and English Building. See <http://english.ttu.edu/uwc01>.

### Course Schedule

Topic	Date	Readings	Assignments
Introduction	(Tu) Aug 27	<i>No Readings</i>	
Defining Art	(Th) Aug 29	Chapter 1, §§I-III, pp. 17-22	
	(Tu) Sept 3	Chapter 1, §§IV-V, pp. 22-27	
	(Th) Sept 5	Chapter 1, §§VI-VII, pp. 27-34	
	(Tu) Sept 10	Chapter 1, §§VIII-IX, pp. 34-40	
The Ontology of Art	(Th) Sept 12	Chapter 2, §§I-III, pp. 45-54	
	(Tu) Sept 17	Chapter 2, §§IV-V, pp. 54-63	
	(Th) Sept 19	Chapter 2, §§VI-VII, pp. 63-68	
Interpretation and Intention	(Tu) Sept 24	Chapter 3, §§I-III, pp. 72-78	
	(Th) Sept 26	Chapter 3, §IV, pp. 78-83	
	(Tu) Oct 1	Chapter 3, §§V-VI, pp. 83-90	
	(Th) Oct 3	Chapter 3, §§VII-VIII, pp. 90-96	
Midterm Examination	(Tu) Oct 8	<i>No Readings</i>	Paper #1 Due
Aesthetic Properties and Evaluation	(Th) Oct 10	Chapter 4, §§I-III, pp. 100-107	
	(Tu) Oct 15	Chapter 4, §§IV-V, pp. 107-116	
	(Th) Oct 17	Chapter 4, §§VI-VII, pp. 116-124	
Emotions and the Arts	(Tu) Oct 22	Chapter 5, §§I-II, pp. 128-135	
	(Th) Oct 24	Chapter 5, §III, pp. 135-143	
	(Tu) Oct 29	Chapter 5, §IV, pp. 143-149	
	(Th) Oct 31	<i>No Class</i>	
Art and Morality	(Tu) Nov 5	Chapter 6, §§I-II, pp. 153-161	
	(Th) Nov 7	Chapter 6, §III, pp. 162-164	
	(Tu) Nov 12	Chapter 6, §IV, pp. 165-170	
	(Th) Nov 14	Chapter 6, §V, pp. 170-176	
Aesthetics Without Art	(Tu) Nov 19	Chapter 7, §§1-II, pp.180-186	
	(Th) Nov 21	Chapter 7, §§III-IV, pp. 186-196	
	(Tu) Nov 26	Chapter 7, §V, pp. 196-202	
	(Th) Nov 28	<i>No Class</i>	
Final Review	(Tu) Dec 3	<i>No Readings</i>	Paper #2 Due

**Final Exam** scheduled for Wednesday, December 11, 1:30-4:00 pm.