

AESTHETICS

TR 12:30-1:50, Eng/Phil 164

Instructor

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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 often not the ones we expect) raise important philosophical questions:

- In 1917, Marcel Duchamp purchased a urinal, upended it, signed it with a pseudonym, and titled it *Fountain*. Was *Fountain* art? Is it now? Is *Fountain* just a urinal with some paint on it?
- You watch a horror story, and you get scared. You watch a sad movie, and you cry. Are these rational responses? Does it matter than you know the story is a fiction?
- In 2007, J.K. Rowling announced that the character of Albus Dumbledore is gay. Does this make it so? What hangs on the matter?

This course focuses on these questions and others central to contemporary aesthetics and the philosophy of art.

Core Text

- Peter Lamarque and Stein Haugom Olsen (eds.), *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art: The Analytic Tradition, An Anthology* (2004: Blackwell; ISBN: 978-1-4051-0582-8)

(Additional readings will be available in PDF format on my website, www.tytoken.com. These are indicated under the course schedule below as “[WEB]”).

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 three 5-to-7-page “response” papers during the course of this term, and one longer research paper.

Response Papers

Each response paper must be written one of the major topics of the course (“Identifying & Defining Art”; “Ontology of Art”; “Aesthetic Properties”; “Intention & Interpretation”; “The Paradox of Fiction”). No more than one paper

may be written any major topic, and you cannot turn in a paper on “Value”. You may write a paper responding to some particular philosophical reading, comparing two or more views, or on some other relevant topic. Papers are due within two weeks of the major topic being covered in class:

- “Identifying & Defining Art”: Papers due on or before Tue, Sept. 29.
- “Ontology of Art”: Papers due on or before Tue, Oct. 13.
- “Aesthetic Properties”: Papers due on or before Thu, Oct. 22.
- “Intention & Interpretation”: Papers due on or before Thu, Nov. 12.
- “The Paradox of Fiction”: Papers due on or before Tue, Dec. 1.

(I *strongly* recommend that you not put off writing your papers until the last three topics. Each paper is worth 10% of your final grade.)

Research Paper

Your research paper is worth 25% of your grade, and will be on a topic of your choosing, focusing on one or more of the major topics covered in the term. This paper is due on the last day of class, and will not be returned to you. I strongly suggest you schedule a meeting with me to discuss the topic of your paper well in advance of the due date.

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.

Exam

There is a take-home final exam for this course, worth 25% of your final grade. The exam will be given out on the last day of class, and will be due on the final day of the fall exam schedule.

Participation

The final 20% of your grade is your participation grade: 10% for the first half of term, and 10% for the second half. 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.
- 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>.

Course Schedule

DATE	TOPIC	READING(S)
Thurs, Aug. 27	Introduction	<i>No readings</i>
Tues, Sept. 1	Identifying & Defining Art	• J.O. Urmson, “What Makes a Situation Aesthetic?”
Thurs, Sept. 3		• Monroe Beardsley, “An Aesthetic Definition of Art”
Tues, Sept. 8		• Morris Weitz, “The Role of Theory in Aesthetics” • Stephen Davies, “Weitz’s Anti-Essentialism”
Thurs, Sept. 10		• Arthur C. Danto, “The Artworld” • George Dickie, “The New Institutional Theory of Art”
Tues, Sept. 15		• Jerrold Levinson, “Defining Art Historically”
Thurs, Sept. 17		Ontology of Art
Tues, Sept. 22	• Jerrold Levinson, “What a Musical Work Is”	
Thurs, Sept. 24	• Peter Kivy, “Platonism in Music: A Kind of Defense”	
Tues, Sept. 29	• Gregory Currie, “Art Works as Action Types”	

Thurs, Oct. 1	Aesthetic Properties	• Frank Sibley, “Aesthetic Concepts”
Tues, Oct. 6		• Kendall Walton, “Categories of Art”
Thurs, Oct. 8		• Philip Pettit, “The Possibility of Aesthetic Realism”

Tues, Oct. 13 No Class

Thurs, Oct. 15	Intention & Interpretation	• Monroe Beardsley, “Intentions and Interpretations: A Fallacy Revived”
Tues, Oct. 20		• Jerrold Levinson, “Intention and Interpretation in Literature”
Thurs, Oct. 22		• Gregory Currie, “Work and Text” [WEB]
Tues, Oct. 27		• Berys Gaut, “Interpreting the Arts: A Patchwork Theory” [WEB]
Thurs, Oct. 29		• Robert Stecker, “The Constructivist’s Dilemma”
Tues, Nov. 3	The Paradox of Fiction	• Colin Radford, “How Can We Be Moved by the Fate of Anna Karenina?”
Thurs, Nov. 5		• Eva Schaper, “Fiction and the Suspension of Disbelief” [WEB]
Tues, Nov. 10		• Kendall Walton, “Fearing Fictions”
Thurs, Nov. 12		• Peter Lamarque, “How Can We Fear and Pity Fictions?”
Tues, Nov. 17		• David Novitz, “Fiction, Imagination and Emotion” [WEB]
Thurs, Nov. 19	Value	• P.F. Strawson, “Aesthetic Appraisal and Works of Art”
Tues, Nov. 24		• Frank Sibley, “Particularity, Art and Evaluation”

Tues, Dec. 8 No Class

Tues, Dec. 1	Value	• Malcolm Budd, “Artistic Value”
Thurs, Dec. 3		• Anthony Saville, “The Test of Time”
Tues, Dec. 8	Exam Review	<i>No readings</i>