PHILOSOPHY 240 Philosophy of Art
Section A01 Winter 2015

Instructor: Thomas Heyd, Ph.D.
Office: Clearihue B 309
Class meetings: Tue, Wed, Fri: 1:30 – 2:20
Office Hours: Tue, Wed 2:30-3:20, or by appt.
Tel.: (250) 853 3767
e-mail: heydt@uvic.ca

Course description
In this course we will explore fundamental questions in the philosophy of art, such as

- Is art anything that we choose to call ‘art’? Is it something determined by ‘art experts’? Or is there something that ‘essentially’ makes something art?
- Is art based on an expression of feeling? Is it a way of representing the world? Or is it symbolic of something intrinsic of the human spirit?
- What is beauty? Is beauty only a certain an arrangement of materials?
- Is the meaning of art entirely ‘open to interpretation’? Are there ‘better’ and ‘worse’ ways of interpreting art? What is the role of ‘artist intention’ in judging artworks?
- Does technology change what art is? Is art capable of changing society? Do historical art periods signify stages of human development?
- Is aesthetics relevant in ordinary life? How do we appreciate the aesthetic value of nature?

Course objectives
The objective of this course is to facilitate the understanding of key debates in philosophy of art through readings and critical discussion of diverging perspectives. To complement class-based work, a studio visit with an artist and an artsite visit on campus are planned, and gallery visits will be encouraged.

Texts and Coursespaces
Required reading: 1) Most materials will be available online at the Coursespaces site for Phil 240. Those who would rather buy a hardcopy, containing most of the materials to be covered, may acquire Kathleen M. Higgins, Aesthetics in Perspective (Harcourt/Nelson, 1996/2003). It can also be viewed at the McPherson Library, RESERVE Room, Call Number: NX620 H54. 2) A coursepack with extracts from Battin, Fisher, Moore, and Silvers, Puzzles about Art (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1989/2003), ISBN 0-312-00307-2, will be available at the bookstore. Further reading materials may be placed on reserve at the McPherson Library or handed out in class, as the course progresses. Please be attentive to announcements in class and on Coursespaces.

Course organisation and student engagement
It is expected that assigned weekly readings be done ahead of class lectures. Attendance during class periods, constructive participation, and tolerance with regard to the views of others, will be expected. Students are responsible for materials covered, and for informing themselves about announcements missed, while absent. Constructive engagement in discussion and doing weekly short assignments are essential in earning credit toward the participation grade.
Tips for best performances
1. Do readings ahead of class periods and read material attentively (by asking questions about the material), and do weekly assignments.
2. Come to class, and participate in class discussion with constructive points.
3. Speak to the instructor if failing to understand the material.

Grading
Mid-term test, worth 30%
A final, comprehensive, take-home exam, worth 50%
Participation, including course journal, worth 20%

1. The mid-term test will cover both readings and lectures. Both understanding and recall of material covered, and reflective analysis, will be expected. Test questions will consist of a combination of shorter and longer answer, and possibly some true-false and multiple choice, questions.

2. The final exam will be a comprehensive take-home exam with long as well as short answer questions. Questions will be handed out on the last day of classes, and the completed exam must be delivered to the Dept. of Philosophy no later than 5 days after exam questions hand-out, before 3:30 p.m. Exams also have to be submitted simultaneously through Coursespaces. Late exams will NOT be accepted (late exams will receive 0%). Understanding of material covered and reflective analysis will be expected. Answers to questions will be assessed on the basis of the following three criteria: (1) accurate presentation of the views discussed, (2) presentation of valid arguments, (3) effective and correct use of the English language.

3. Participation is assessed on the basis of regular attendance, through constructive participation in class discussion (including end of semester discussion/debates), and especially through weekly assignments based on the course readings and personal analysis of the issues under discussion. Class attendance will be taken. Attendance will be particularly encouraged in the case of guest speakers and for studio visits. Justified absences should be discussed with the instructor ahead of time.

Weekly assignments
Questions are based on each week’s readings. Answers should be in your own words (not copied from the textbook or other texts), be about a paragraph long, and handed in on the first day of classes every week (usually Tuesdays). On the left side of the head of the page please state, in this order, 1) your last and first name, 2) the week it is for, 3) the particular readings being discussed, and 4) the date on which it is due. No late assignments will be accepted. Feedback will be given on the first sets of assignments, and occasionally thereafter. The total minus two assignments will be graded on a pass/fail basis.

End of semester discussions/debates
In the last 2-3 weeks of the semester groups of students will have the opportunity to introduce discussion on selected topics. Active participation in these discussions will make up an essential part of participation grade.

Other matters
Numerical and letter grades
Grades will be given as percentile marks. The percentile mark for the course will be converted to a letter grade in the following manner: A+ = 90 - 100, A = 85 - 89, A- = 80 - 84, B+ = 77 - 79, B = 73 - 76, B- = 70 - 72, C+ = 65 - 69, C = 60 - 64, D = 50 - 59, F = 0 - 49. The A range means exceptional, outstanding and excellent performance. A grade in the B range means a very good, good and solid performance. A grade in the C+ or C range means satisfactory, or minimally satisfactory, performance. A grade of D or D- indicates merely passable or marginal performance. An F indicates unsatisfactory performance.

Late assignments, plagiarism and other policies
Late assignments will not be accepted and exams will not be rescheduled. There will not be make-up exams. If an exam is missed for significant reasons of a medical sort (provide medical certificate), or for other serious, documented personal
reasons, the final exam will be weighted so as to incorporate the weighting of the missed exam. Documented evidence for having legitimately missed an exam and an explanatory statement in writing have to be received no more than ten days after the deadline or exam missed. Academic honesty will be expected in this course. Plagiarism (e.g. copying from others or working together on the take-home exam) may lead to dismissal from the course and the university. Any matters not covered in this handout will be handled in accordance with University and Department policies. Please familiarize yourself with them.

Transition and inclusivity/diversity
Students who are new to the University, and would like assistance may contact the Transition Office, www.uvic.ca/transition. This course is committed to inclusivity and diversity, in line with the policy of the University Senate outlined in 1999, which states that “UVic is committed to promoting, providing and protecting a supportive and safe learning and working environment for all its members.”

Schedule of lectures and tests
This schedule is subject to change. Weekly reading assignments will be confirmed during class periods, so please be attentive to announcements in class and on Coursespaces. Class time will be divided between lectures and discussion. Informed participation in class discussion will be expected, so you should read the assigned texts in advance. Readings are from our textbook or to be downloaded from Coursespaces and from the Coursepack, unless indicated otherwise. Confirmed dates of studio and gallery visits will be announced in class.

Week 1
9-13 Sept
Introduction
What is aesthetics? What is Philosophy of art
Is art only found in galleries and concert halls?
Is art only found in modern Western society?
Do other societies and people from other times also have art?
Readings: Chapter 1, Art and Artworks, from Puzzles about Art. ATTENTION: this chapter is online

Week 2
14-20 Sept
Definition of art and artworks
Do artworks have a fundamental nature?
Is it possible to define art?
Is art just a matter of historical accident?
Is art whatever the artworld decides on?
Readings: Danto, Dickie, Weitz, Binkley
Possible GUESTSPEAKER: Aurora Skala, M.A., First Nations rock art from coastal B.C., Fri. 18 Sept

Week 3
21-27 Sept
Aesthetics, art, and aesthetic experience
Is a special attitude required for aesthetic experience?
Is aesthetic appreciation limited to art?
If not, then, what distinguishes art from other things in our world?
Readings: Bullough, Dickie, Ziff
FIELD TRIP/STUDIO VISIT: Prof. Emer. Mowry Baden, Saanich, Saturday 26 Sept., 11am-12pm
*25 Sept, last day for adding courses*

Week 4
28 Sept – 4 Oct
Art: expression, emotion, and significant form
Is a certain emotion the indicator-sign of artworks?
Is art a symbol of feeling?
Is art the expression of emotion?
Readings: Bell, Langer, Collingwood
*31 Oct: Last day for withdrawing from courses without penalty of failure*

Week 5
5-11 Oct
Beauty in art
What is beauty? What has love got to do with beauty?
Is beauty a matter of ‘construction’?
Readings: Plato on beauty and love, Aristotle on tragedy. Selected readings from Chapter 2, Beauty, Ugliness, and Aesthetic Experience, from Puzzles about Art
**Week 6**
12-18 Oct  
Aesthetic judgments  
What is the basis of taste? How can some artworks be ‘better’ than others?  
How can subjective aesthetic judgments claim universality?  
Readings: Hume, Kant

*12 October, Thanksgiving Day* **Columbus’ Encounter with the Americas Day**

**Week 7**
19-25 Oct  
Interpretation  
How does interpretation work? Is it necessarily subjective?  
**Mid-term in-class test on 23 October**

Readings: Gadamer. Selected readings from Ch. 3, Meaning and Interpretation, from *Puzzles about Art*

**Week 8**
26 Oct -1 Nov  
The role of intentions in art  
Are intention and historical context relevant for interpretation of artworks?  
Can computer programs make art?  
Readings: Wimsatt/Beardsley, Juhl

ARTWORK VISIT with Prof. Daniel Laskarin: Bob Wise's *The office: a portable amenity kiosk for female outdoor sex workers*, Friday 30 October at Visual Arts Building, UVic (to be confirmed)

**Week 9**
2-8 Nov  
Can art change society? Is change in society reflected in art styles?  
Does mechanical reproduction rob art of its aura and turn it into a tool for social change?  
Can art become a tool for activism? How so?  
Does art signal stages in world history?  
Readings: Benjamin, Heyd on performance art, Hegel

**Week 10**
9-15 Nov  
Artworks: inspiration, genius, and institutions  
What is the role of inspiration in art?  
Does one need genius to be creative?  
Why are so few women included in the history of art?  
Readings: Plato, Aristotle, Kant on creativity and inspiration, Nochlin

*9-11 November, READING BREAK*  
**11 November, Remembrance Day**

**Week 11**
16-22 Nov  
Aesthetics and the everyday, aesthetics and nature  
How can everyday living have aesthetic value?  
What does aesthetic appreciation of the natural environment consist in?  
How do other cultures value their environment aesthetically?  
Can art create something new?  
Readings: Dewey, Carlson; Heyd on aesthetic appreciation of nature. Selected readings from Ch. 5, Art and Other Values, from *Puzzles about Art*

ARTIST–LED DISCUSSION with Architect Randal Recinos, in-class, 20 November (to be confirmed)

**Week 12**
23-29 Nov  
Students-led discussion on selected topics  
Does immorality of art undermine its art credentials?  
Does taking artistic motifs and techniques constitute cultural appropriation?  
Artworks for performance: ‘where’ are they?  
Originals and copies: are they of different value?  
Is the functionality of art relevant to its value?  
Readings: TBA

**Week 13**
30 Nov – 4 Dec  
Summary-conclusion, Course Experience Survey, and Final exam  
4 December, Last Day of Classes. Final take-home exam questions handed out **  
4 December, National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women**

***9 December, before 3:30 p.m., final exam submission (hardcopy AND on Coursespaces)***