

Syllabus

This course will explore traditional and contemporary philosophical approaches to beauty and to art, tracing how the latter breaks free of the former and thereby also breaks free of the framework prepared for it by the intellectual tradition of the West. Along the way we shall consider issues connected to the meaning, definition, interpretation, and history of art in its various media: What is a work of art? Is there such a thing as artistic genius? What makes an artwork good? What is the relation, if any, between art, morality, and politics?

Texts:

[PAB] Hofstadter & Kuhns, eds., *Philosophies of Art and Beauty* (Chicago)
[TC] Arthur Danto, *Transfiguration of the Commonplace* (Harvard)
[TM] Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (Continuum)
Frank Sibley, “Aesthetic Concepts” [pdf]
Kendall Walton, “Categories of Art” [pdf]
George Dickie, “The New Institutional Theory of Art” [pdf]
Robert Stecker, “The End of an Institutional Definition of Art” [pdf]
George Dickie, “Reply to Stecker” [pdf]

Requirements:

all requirements – including attendance and participation – must be completed in order to pass the course. Readings must be done in advance of the day they are assigned, and texts must be brought to class in order to facilitate reference and discussion.

- class attendance and participation; daily readings
- two short (5-7 pp.) essays
- one longer (10-15 pp.) term paper

Daily Readings:

I. The Cosmological Perspective and the Theory of Mimesis

- Jan 12: Introduction: aesthetics – philosophy of art or philosophy of beauty?
Jan 14: The claim of the beautiful
 Plato, from *Symposium* and *Phaedrus* [PAB 57-77]
Jan 19: The ancient quarrel between philosophy and poetry
 Plato, from *The Republic* [PAB 30-45]
Jan 21: Art and nature
 The trajectory of Greek sculpture (*slides*)
 Aristotle, from *Metaphysics*, *Ethics*, *Physics* [PAB 30-45]
Jan 26: Mimesis, meaning, and metaphor: truth in art?
 Aristotle, from *Poetics* [PAB 97-119]

Jan 28: The collapse of the cosmological perspective
Michelangelo (*slides*)

II. The Turn to the Subject and the Theory of Taste

Feb 2: Aesthetic judgment
Kant, from *The Critique of Judgment* [PAB 280-293]
Feb 4: Aesthetic judgment
Kant, from *The Critique of Judgment* [PAB 293-307, 312-13]
Feb 9: Art, genius, and aesthetic ideas (**PAPER DUE**)
Kant, from *The Critique of Judgment* [PAB 313-323]

III. Art, Metaphysics, and History

Feb 11: The priority of art over nature and the demand for philosophical reflection
Hegel, from *Philosophy of Fine Art, Introduction* [PAB 382-395]
Feb 16: Beauty as truth: the essence of appearance
Hegel, from *Philosophy of Fine Art, Introduction* [PAB 395-424]
Feb 18: The historical essence of art
Hegel, from *Philosophy of Fine Art, Introduction* [PAB 425-445]
The self-transcendence of art (*slides*)

IV(a). The Autonomy of Art: Phenomenological Approaches

Feb 23: Ontological phenomenology: thing and work
Heidegger, *Origin of the Work of Art* [PAB 650-669]
Feb 25: Ontological phenomenology: work and truth
Heidegger, *Origin of the Work of Art* [PAB 669-683]
Mar 2: **Midterm recess**
Mar 4: **Midterm recess**
Mar 9: Ontological phenomenology: truth and art
Heidegger, *Origin of the Work of Art* [PAB 683-708]
Mar 11: Hermeneutic phenomenology: critique of aesthetic differentiation
Gadamer, from *Truth and Method* [TM 70-102]
Mar 16: Hermeneutic phenomenology: play, presentation, and the increase in being
Gadamer, from *Truth and Method* [TM 102-130]
Mar 18: Hermeneutic phenomenology: historicity of the work of art
Gadamer, from *Truth and Method* [TM 130-152]
Mar 23: Heidegger and Gadamer continued (**PAPER DUE**)

IV(b). The Autonomy of Art: Analytic Perspectives

Mar 25: Evaluative approaches to art: taste, discrimination, aesthetic concepts
Frank Sibley, "Aesthetic Concepts"
Kendall Walton, "Categories of Art"
Mar 30: Classificatory approaches to art: the institutional theory
George Dickie, "The New Institutional Theory of Art"
Robert Stecker, "The End of an Institutional Definition of Art"

George Dickie, "Reply to Stecker"

Apr 1: **Spring Break**

Apr 6: Works and things

Danto, *Transfiguration of the Commonplace* [TC 1-53]

Apr 8: Aesthetics and the metaphysics of representation

Danto, *Transfiguration of the Commonplace* [TC 54-114]

Apr 13: Interpretation, identification, representation

Danto, *Transfiguration of the Commonplace* [TC 115-164]

Apr 15: Metaphor, expression, and life transfigured

Danto, *Transfiguration of the Commonplace* [TC 164-208]

Apr 20: Danto continued

Apr 22: **no class meeting**

May 5: Final paper due: graduating students

May 14: Final paper due: non-graduating students

Statement on students with disabilities:

Any student with a documented disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with me during the first two weeks of class. All discussions will remain confidential. Students with disabilities will also need to contact Disability Support Services in the Ley Student Center.