

San José State University
Philosophy Department
Philosophy 66, Introduction to Aesthetics, Fall, 2018

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Javier Cardoza-Kon
Office Location:	FO 211
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Office Hours:	Wed. 130pm-230pm
Class Days/Time:	Mon/Wed 3pm-4:15pm
Classroom:	Sweeney Hall 241

GE/SJSU Studies Category: Area C1: Humanities & Arts, Arts

Course Description

In this course we will explore some central aesthetic concerns: What *is* art, and can it ever be defined? What is 'good' art? What is 'bad' art? What is beauty? Is beauty *really* in the eye of the beholder? Or is beauty in the object? Or is it somewhere else? Are some judgments about art more reliable than others? Is there such a thing as good taste? Can we prove that one work of art is better than another? What role do emotions play, if any, in an aesthetic experience? What significance do aesthetics and art have for our lives? How are issues such as gender and race relevant to aesthetics?

We will look at these questions, and others, from various philosophical perspectives. However, some other perspectives, in particular, those of the art criticism and the history of art, will also be addressed. You will be expected to have at least two art field experiences, one of which will be attending a live performance of some sort (dance, music, etc.), and one of which will involve visiting a visual art exhibit (museum, art gallery, etc.). You will describe, analyze and interpret these events using the concepts you have learned from the various readings and from class lecture and discussion.

Typical class sessions will involve lecture, general discussion, small group discussion, and some in-class writing.

GE/SJSU Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

SLO1. recognize aesthetic qualities and processes that characterize works of the human intellect and imagination; [to be assessed in the two field papers and final exam]

SLO2. respond to works of art both analytically (in writing) and affectively (in writing or through other forms of personal and artistic expression) [to be assessed in the two field papers] SLO3. write clearly and effectively [to be assessed in all course writing].

The course will give students the opportunity to:

SLO4. experience significant works of art in the classroom, and in performances or exhibitions; [to be assessed in class participation and in the two field papers]

SLO5. understand the historical or cultural contexts in which specific works of art were created; and [to be assessed in the two exams]

SLO6. recognize the accomplishments of and issues related to women and diverse cultures reflected in such works of art. [to be assessed in the two exams]

Additional Student Learning Objectives

In addition to the GE course objectives above, on successful completion of this course students shall be able to:

- reason well about works of fine and popular art and join the conversation of those who do
- compare and contrast competing theories concerning the nature of art in general and several particular art forms
- compare and contrast various competing theories concerning the nature of beauty, aesthetics, and aesthetic experience
- read and analyze difficult texts in philosophy and related disciplines
- explain the history of philosophy of art and aesthetics

Required Texts/Readings

Textbook

Art and Its Significance: An Anthology of Aesthetic Theory 3rd ed. Stephen David Ross ISBN-13: 9780791418529. **Bring this text to every session of class.**

Course Requirements and Assignments

Attendance: as with any philosophy course, attendance is essential to a broad comprehension of the texts and of the discipline itself. Philosophy isn't something you simply memorize (e.g. dates, names, formulas, etc...), it is something you *do*.

Weekly reading assignments are to be read before the class in which they are discussed. The reading can be difficult. Therefore, it is best that you plough through them, discuss them in class, and then perhaps re-visit them (e.g. when writing a paper or studying for an exam).

Final Examination or Evaluation

Both the mid-term and the final will consist of short answer and essay questions.

Grading Information

Grades are assessed via two major papers, a mid-term, final exam and homework, quizzes and class participation. This is a philosophy class and much of the learning is done during discussion during class time.

Class Participation: Factors include:

Verbal Participation. This includes questions and comments in the general class and in small groups that show that you are engaged and thinking about the material.

Evidence of Having Read the Material. I like to call on people in class: be ready.

In-Class Projects. This includes any writing I ask you to do in class spontaneously. These are usually graded on a pass/fail, with a point given, if you pass. If your writing and comprehension is particularly good, you may get an extra point. I also assign points for quizzes.

Homework. This will happen spontaneously and will be generally graded on a pass/fail basis. I will give at least 2-3 of these.

Showing leadership and initiative in small group activities.

Interaction with the instructor outside the class. If you visit me during my office hours, this is a form of class participation

A Note on Papers:

***For your **field papers** you need to attach a ticket stub, program, etc as evidence that you attended the performance in person, this semester. You can choose which one (visual or performance) that you do first. I will document this – but you must do one of each!

It is important that papers are written at a college level, with close readings of the text, proper textual citation, and attention to grammar/spelling. Evaluation of papers will include assessment of your writing ability in terms of grammar, spelling, clarity, conciseness, coherence, and logic. Excellent papers will show good understanding of the written material discussed and engagement with the issues, for example in raising criticisms, trying to resolve a debate or developing your own position. Good writing is essential to a good philosophy paper. If you have problems with reading or writing in English, be sure to get help.

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Late papers (not quizzes or homework) will generally be accepted but your grade will be lowered depending on the circumstances and how late it is.

Determination of Grades

20% Performing Arts Field Paper

20% Visual Arts Field Paper

20% Homework, Quizzes and Class Participation

20% Mid-Term

20% Final Exam

It should be fairly easy to ascertain what your grade is in the class based on the grades you get on major assignments as the semester unfolds.

Academic dishonesty, or “plagiarism,” will not be looked upon lightly, and is grounds for failing this course.

“This course must be passed with a C- or better as a CSU graduation requirement.”

<http://info.sjsu.edu/static/policies/final-exam-schedule-fall.html>

Classroom Protocol

A note on classroom etiquette and electronic media

All cell phones, headphones, laptops and so on are to be turned off before class (unless they are aiding a student with a disability; if so, just let me know). Laptops are a sticky subject with me. I would prefer that you take hand written notes for a number of reasons 1) the writing process is conducive to learning and retention 2) computer screens are distracting to other students 3) often students are checking personal online matters rather than taking notes. Do not use computers or other electronic devices to do anything unrelated to the class.

Texting is forbidden at all times. I can see you doing it and it is annoying. Texting and other non-classrelated use of electronics are distracting both to me and to other students. If I notice that you are doing it your class participation grade will go down accordingly. At all times, show courtesy to your teacher and to other students.

If you need to leave class early please let me know and sit by the door so you can leave without disrupting class. Eating, sleeping, playing video games, using offensive language, talking out of turn, etc...are also distracting. So, please, do your best to be courteous to others in our social setting.

Of course, if you are a student with a learning or a physical disability that needs digital accommodations, a note taker, extra sensitivity, etc...please set up a time with me to discuss modifications.

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the DRC (Disability Resource Center) to establish a record of their disability.

Special accommodations for exams require ample notice to the testing office and must be submitted to the instructor well in advance of the exam date.

Course Schedule

Week	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1: W 8/22	First Day of class. Green-sheet/Syllabus. Introduction. What is Beauty, Art, Philosophy??
2: M 8/27	Plato, Republic II, III 9-32 [360 BCE] This consists of the sections that deal with the arts in Plato's book about the ideal society called <i>The Republic</i> .
2: W 8/29	Plato, Republic Book X 32-44 Also read Alexander Nehamas: "Plato's Pop Culture Problem, and Ours" <i>New York Times</i> , Aug. 29, 2010 (if the link below does not work, google "Nehamas New York Times Plato Pop Culture") https://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/08/29/platos-pop-culture-problem-and-ours/
3: M, 9/3	Labor Day no class
3: W 9/5	Plato continued "Ion" 45-55 "Symposium" from his <i>Symposium</i> 56-66

4: M 9/10	Aristotle “Poetics” from his <i>Poetics</i> [4 th century B.C.E. after Plato] 65-74.
4: W 9/12	David Hume , “Of the Standard of Taste” [1757] 77-92
5: M 9/17	Immanuel Kant , <i>Critique of Judgment</i> , 1790 95-113
5: W 9/19	Kant continued 113-142

Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
6: M 9/24	Kant continued (catch-up)
6: W 9/26	Hegel 143 – 160 Phil of Fine Art. Field paper #1 Due in class
7: M 10/1	Nietzsche , from <i>The Birth of Tragedy</i> and “An Attempt at Self Criticism” 161-177 For some help see http://www.sparknotes.com/philosophy/birthoftragedy/section1.html
7: W 10/3	Applying theory? All readings for Aeschylus will be made available on Canvas <i>Oresteia: Agamemnon</i>
8: M 10/8	<i>Oresteia: The Libation Bearers</i>

8: W 10/10	<i>Oresteia: Eumenides</i>
9: M 10/15	Review in class. Visual media of the Oresteia and its significance.
9: W 10/17	Midterm in class: Bring pens and greenbooks (available at theSJSU bookstore for \$0.85) *MANDATORY.
10: M 10/22	Leo Tolstoy “What is Art?” from <i>What is Art</i> [1897] 178-181. The entire book is free in Google books and in Gutenberg.org
10: W 10?24	Martin Heidegger “The Origin of the Work of Art,” [1936] 254-280

Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
11: M 10/29	“Heidegger’s Aesthetics” by Iain Thompson http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/heidegger-aesthetics/
11: W 10/31	Heidegger “Building, Dwelling, Thinking.’ (Canvas) Point of Transition Into Art and Politics
12: M 11/5	Heidegger Cont. Cardoza – selections from Heidegger’s <i>Politics of Enframing</i> (Canvas)
12: W 11/7	Field Paper 2 Due in class Film: <i>Fight Club</i> Extra credit: TBA – think Palahniuk

<p>13: M 11/12</p>	<p><i>Fight Club Cont.</i></p> <p>“Revolutionary Bodies in Chuck Palahniuk's <i>Fight Club</i>” (Canvas)</p>
<p>13:W 11/14</p>	<p>Arthur Danto, “The Artworld” [1964] 470-481</p>
<p>14: M 11/19</p>	<p>Marcuse “The Aesthetic Dimension” 448-559</p>
<p>14: W 11/21</p>	<p>NO CLASS Thanksgiving/Fall Break</p>
<p>15: M 11/26</p>	<p>Short Film: <i>La Jetée</i></p> <p>Reading: <i>Situationist International</i></p> <p>Guy Debord “For a Revolutionary Judgement of Art” https://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/revolutionary.html</p>
<p>15: W 11/28</p>	<p><i>Situationaist International</i></p> <p>Students of Strasbourg “On the Poverty of Student Life Considered in its Economic, Political, Psychological, Sexual, and Especially Intellectual Aspects, with a Modest Proposal for Doing Away With It” https://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/poverty.html</p>

16: M 12/3	Review/TBA and final presentations
16: W 12/5	Final presentations Final Culminating/wrap up TBA - This is mandatory!