

San José State University
Philosophy Department
Philosophy 66, Introduction to Aesthetics, 04 & 05, Fall, 2018

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Fern Alberts
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Office Hours:	Wednesdays 10am – 11am and by appointment
Class Days/Time:	Section 04 – TuTh 7:30am – 8:45am Section 05 – TuTh 9:00am - 10:15am
Classroom:	DMH 208
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

Goldblatt, David and Lee B. Brown. **Aesthetics: A Reader in Philosophy of the Arts.** 3rd ed. (Upper Saddle River: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2011). [You can use the earlier edition, but page numbers will be different, and some essays will be missing. You will still be responsible for missing content]

Bring the text or at least a photocopy of the readings for that day to class every meeting.

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. These are usually graded on as 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.

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

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.”

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.

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.

Late papers 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-class-related 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.

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo>

46907/48717, Introduction to Aesthetics, Fall 2018, Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	8/21	Review the syllabus. Introduction; What is philosophy? What is aesthetics?
1	8/23	Plato <i>Against Imitation</i> pg. 4-7; <i>Allegory of the Cave</i> pg 89-91 turn in index cards
2	8/28	Plato <i>Ion</i> 258-265; Alexander Nehamas <i>Plato and the Mass Media</i> pg. 315-321
2	8/30	Aristotle <i>On Tragedy</i> pg. 265-267
3	9/4	Realism. Ernst Gombrich <i>The Limits of Likeness</i> pg 7-11; Nelson Goodman <i>Reality Remade</i> pg 12-13
3	9/6	David Hume <i>Of the Standard of Taste</i> pg 399-404
4	9/11	Robert Solomon <i>Kitsch</i> pg. 342-345; Edmund Burke <i>The Sublime</i> pg.404-405
4	9/13	Danto <i>Works of Art and Mere Real Things</i> pg. 33-36
5	9/18	Ted Cohen <i>Jokes</i> pg. 359-364
5	9/20	Clive Bell <i>Form in Modern Painting</i> pg 17-20
6	9/25	Peer review
6	9/27	First paper due
7	10/2	Midterm Review
7	10/4	Mid-Term Exam [date subject to change with reasonable notice]
8	10/9	John Dewey <i>Art as Experience</i> pg. 414-417
8	10/11	Walter Benjamin <i>The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction</i> pg. 66-69
9	10/16	Architecture. Le Corbusier <i>Towards an Architecture</i> pg.128-130; Adolf Loos, <i>Ornament and Crime</i> 123-127
9	10/18	Architecture continued
10	10/23	Music. Chernoff <i>African Music</i> pg. 199-201 Joel Rudinow <i>Can White People Sing the Blues?</i>
10	10/25	Brown <i>Adorno's Case Against Popular Music</i> pg. 321-327
11	10/30	Anne Eaton <i>Painting and Ethics</i> pg. 52-57
11	11/1	Chinese Aesthetics. Bodman <i>How to Eat a Chinese</i> pg 244
12	11/6	Dance Aesthetics. Langer <i>Virtual Powers</i> pg. 278-281 Turn in translations of poems.
12	11/8	Nietzsche <i>The Birth of Tragedy</i> pg. 267-273
13	11/13	Feminist Aesthetics. Linda Nochlin <i>Why Are There No Great Women Artists?"</i> pg. 42-47
13	11/15	Foucault <i>What is an Author?</i> Pg. 225

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
14	11/20	Second Field Paper Due
	11/21 – 11/23	Thanksgiving Holiday
14	11/27	film
15	11/29	film
15	12/4	Hegel <i>The Philosophy of Fine Art</i> pg. 410-417
16	12/6	Midterm Review
Final Exam	12/18 12/13	Section 04 - Tuesday, December 18 0715-0930am Section 05 - Thursday, December 13 0715-0930am