

PHIL 2807 A / ARTH 2807 A – Philosophy of Art

Fall 2021

Instructor: Christopher McGrath

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:30-12:30

Office: Virtual Office @ Chat Room on CuLearn

Lecture Times: Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:00-11:30

Classroom: Virtual Class @ Course Webpage

Lecture Format: Pre-Recorded / Asynchronous – available to watch at any time after the scheduled date

Course Description:

Philosophical approaches to the study of art. Topics such as: the nature of art and artistic value; representation and symbolism in art; art and artifice; art and the emotions; art, culture and ideology; post-structuralism and art; theories of creativity; relationship between artworks and audiences.

The aim of this course is to provide an initial introduction to the philosophy of art, through reading and discussion of some of the classic texts from this field, selected both from historical classics and from more recent sources. The course material will be divided into two major units.

In the first unit, “Art and the Judgment of Taste”, we will engage some of the most classic texts on a problem that is often seen to be at the heart of philosophy of art: What is art? We may say, more specifically: What is the nature of a judgment of taste? When we say that something is art, and when we accord it or deny it some artistic value – most famously, beauty – what are the grounds of this kind of judgment? Is beauty something that exists objectively in the world? Is it something indeed objective, but only projected onto the world through our mental activity? Or must aesthetic judgments be merely subjective? To explore this fundamental approach to thinking about the nature of art, we will begin with some readings expounding one of the more influential theories about what makes something art: that art is a kind of expressive activity. From there we will turn to a consideration of how judgments of beauty, or other aesthetic values, might be thought of as anything other than subjective: beginning with a consideration of “constructivist” approaches that find the standard of taste within our minds and ending with “realist” approaches that find beauty to be a principle really found in the world.

In the second unit, “Art and Worldview”, we will turn from these foundational questions about the nature of art to a consideration of how art relates to our broader understanding of ourselves and our place in the world. To facilitate this inquiry, we will begin by trying to clarify what a worldview is and by looking at two perspectives that seem to bookend the sweep of history much philosophy of art is caught up in: first, art and worldview at the origins of philosophy in ancient Greece, then art and worldview in relation to a contemporary state of culture called postmodern. From this introduction to the theme of art and worldview, we will turn to a more sustained inquiry into art’s relation to modernism, by exploring three different but influential accounts of what exactly is at stake for modern art. To conclude

the unit, we will see how this consideration of modernism leads us to ask how art informs the experience, responsibility, and self-cultivation of the individual.

Hopefully, between this foundational exploration of art and the judgment of taste in Unit One and the broader inquiry into the stakes of art for our experience of the world in Unit Two, the course will be able to provide students with a sampling of some of the topics explored at the intersection of art and philosophy.

Lecture Schedule:

Lecture topics may be adjusted pending our ability to adequately get through the material in class.

Date:	Topic:	Reading Selections Taken From:
	Introduction	
Sep 09	Introduction to the Course - Administrative	n/a
Sep 14	Introduction to the Course - Thematic	n/a
	Unit One: Art and the Judgment of Taste	
Sep 16	Art as Expression I	Tolstoy's <i>What is Art?</i>
Sep 21	Art as Expression II	Collingwood's <i>The Principles of Art</i>
Sep 23	Art as Expression III	Dilthey's <i>Poetics</i>
Sep 28	Constructivism about Taste I	Hume's <i>Of the Standard of Taste</i>
Sep 30	Constructivism about Taste II	Kant's <i>Critique of the Power of Judgment</i>
Oct 05	Constructivism about Taste III	Schillers' <i>On the Aesthetic Education of Man</i>
Oct 07	Realism about Beauty I	Plato's <i>Symposium</i>
Oct 12	Realism about Beauty II	Aristotle's <i>Poetics</i>
Oct 14	Realism about Beauty III	Mendelssohn's <i>On Sentiments</i>
Oct 19	Concluding Remarks for Unit One	n/a
Oct 21	No Class – Test #1 Assigned	n/a
Oct 26	No Class - Fall Break (Due: Workbook #1)	
Oct 28	No Class – Fall Break (Due: Test #1)	
	Unit Two: Art and Worldview	
Nov 02	Art, Philosophy, and Worldview I	Dilthey's <i>The Types of World-View</i>
Nov 04	Art, Philosophy, and Worldview II	Hesiod's <i>Theogony and Works and Days</i> and Aeschylus' <i>The Eumenides</i>
Nov 09	Art, Philosophy, and Worldview III	Lyotard's <i>The Postmodern Condition</i>
Nov 11	Art and Modernism I	Ortega y Gasset's <i>The Dehumanization of Art</i>
Nov 16	Art and Modernism II	Neurath's <i>Personal Life and Class Struggle</i>

Nov 18	Art and Modernism III (Due: Research Paper)	Horkheimer's <i>Art and Mass Culture</i>
Nov 23	Art and the Individual I	Marcuse's <i>The Aesthetic Dimension</i>
Nov 25	Art and the Individual II	Sartre's <i>What is Literature?</i>
Nov 30	Art and the Individual III	Nietzsche's <i>The Gay Science</i> and <i>Twilight of the Idols</i>
Dec 02	Concluding Remarks for Unit Two	n/a
	Conclusion	
Dec 07	Concluding Remarks for the Course	n/a
Dec 09	No Class – Test #2 Assigned (Due: Workbook #2)	n/a
...	Final Exam Period	
Dec 23	No Class – Final Exam Period (Due: Test #2)	n/a

Assessment:

Students who are not able to submit an assessment by the due date should contact the instructor at the earliest reasonable opportunity if they still wish to submit it. In cases that reasonably excuse the lateness, a late assignment may be accepted at the instructor's judgment and pending a discussion of the issue with the student. In other cases, a late assignment may be penalized up to 10% of the total mark per day late, at the judgment of the instructor.

Due Date: Assignment: Proportion of Final Mark:

OCT 26	Workbook #1	15%
OCT 28	Test #1	22.5%
NOV 18	Research Paper	25%
DEC 09	Workbook #2	15%
DEC 23	Test #2	22.5%

Two Tests: 22.5% each (**DUE OCTOBER 28th and DECEMBER 23rd**)

Once during the term and once during the final exam period a set of test questions will be assigned. These will be conducted as take-home tests, with the questions first assigned and then answers to be submitted electronically at a later date. The tests are non-cumulative with Test #1 covering Unit One and Test #2 covering Unit Two. The test format will be long-answer question, with the questions requiring students to integrate material from multiple classes of the unit into a cohesive explanation.

Two Workbooks: 15% each (DUE OCTOBER 26th and DECEMBER 9th)

Twice during the term students will be required to submit a workbook. These workbooks are non-cumulative, with Workbook #1 covering Unit One and Workbook #2 covering Unit Two. The workbooks will consist of short (~½ page) answers to a series of study questions. One such study question will be assigned for each class in the unit where a reading was assigned, and it will be assigned at the time of the class. This means that students can complete their workbooks by working continually on them throughout the term, rather than leaving them to do just before the due date, and it is very strongly recommended that students do this, as a way of keeping up with the material and to keep from being too busy when due dates arrive. The study questions will be basic, requiring the student simply to briefly explain the main concept of each class in their own words. Students copying or mechanically paraphrasing explanations given in course notes will not receive full marks. Students are encouraged to meet with one another to discuss the material and help each other with the workbooks, however it is not a group assignment and each student must submit a workbook that is clearly their own work.

Research Paper: 25% (DUE NOVEMBER 18th)

Students will be expected to submit a brief research paper (4-6 pages double-spaced, 1000-1500 words) on a topic in philosophy of art, that shows evidence of having independently researched, read, and synthesized relevant academic material informing their case, and communicating it in an effective manner. Details and guidance in writing the research paper will be provided during the term.

Readings:

Readings will be provided online via the course webpage.

Email Policy:

I am available to answer course emails on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays until 4:30pm. If you email me outside these hours, please allow the appropriate time for me to attend to the emails. When emailing me, please include the course code ("PHIL 2807") in the subject line so I can readily identify the email as coming from one of my students.

Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (Fall/Winter 2021-22)

Assignments:

Please follow your professor's instructions on how assignments will be handled electronically. There will be NO hard copies placed in the essay box this coming year.

Evaluation:

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

Deferrals for Term Work:

If students are unable to complete term work because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control, they should contact their course instructor no later than *three working days* of the due date. Normally, any deferred term work will be completed by the last day of the term. Term work cannot be deferred by the Registrar.

Deferrals for Final Exams:

Students are expected to be available for the duration of a course including the examination period. Occasionally, students encounter circumstances beyond their control where they may not be able to write a final examination or submit a take-home examination. Examples of this would be a serious illness or the death of a family member. If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a take-home examination by the due date, you may apply for a deferral no later than *three working days* after the original due date (as per the University Regulations in [Section 4.3 of the Undergraduate Calendar](#)). Visit the [Registrar's Office](#) for further information.

Plagiarism:

It is the responsibility of each student to understand the meaning of 'plagiarism' as defined in the Undergraduate or Graduate Calendars, and to avoid both committing plagiarism and aiding or abetting plagiarism by other students. ([Section 10.1 of the Undergraduate Calendar Academic Regulations](#))

Academic Accommodation:

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term:

- *Pregnancy or religious obligation:* write to your professor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the [EDC](#) website.
- *Academic accommodations for students with disabilities:* The [Paul Menton Centre](#) for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class test or exam requiring accommodation. After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your professor to ensure accommodation arrangements are made.
- *Survivors of Sexual Violence:* As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per [Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy](#).
- *Accommodation for [Student Activities](#):* Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist.

Important Dates:

Sept. 8	Classes start.
Sept. 22	Last day for registration and course changes for fall term and fall/winter (two-term) courses.
Sept. 30	Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from fall term or two-term courses. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.
Oct. 11	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Oct. 25-29	Fall Break – no classes.
Nov. 26	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, before the official examination period.
Dec. 10	Last day of fall term classes. <i>Classes follow a Monday schedule.</i> Last day for academic withdrawal from fall term courses. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for term work for a fall term course.
Dec. 11-23	Final examinations for fall term courses and mid-term examinations in two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
Dec. 23	All take-home examinations are due.
Jan. 10	Classes begin.
Jan. 24	Last day for registration and course changes in the winter term.
Jan. 31	Last day for a full fee adjustment when withdrawing from winter term courses or from the winter portion of two-term courses. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.
Feb. 21	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Feb. 22-25	Winter Break – no classes.
Mar. 29	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, in winter term or fall/winter courses before the official examination period.
Apr. 12	Last day of two-term and winter term classes. <i>Classes follow a Friday schedule.</i> Last day for academic withdrawal from fall/winter and winter courses. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for two-term and for winter term courses.
Apr. 13	No classes or examinations take place.
Apr. 14-28	Final examinations for winter term and two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
Apr. 15	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Apr. 28	All take-home examinations are due.

Addresses:

Department of Philosophy:
www.carleton.ca/philosophy
520-2110

Registrar's Office:
www.carleton.ca/registrar
520-3500

Academic Advising Centre:
www.carleton.ca/academicadvising
520-7850

Writing Services:
<http://www.carleton.ca/csas/writing-services/>
520-3822

MacOdrum Library
<http://www.library.carleton.ca/>
520-2735