

## PHILOSOPHY OF ART AND AESTHETICS

At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, aesthetics is born as the study of the reasons that make some sensory experiences distinctly artistic, beautiful, musical, poetic or sublime. As we shall see, for Kant as well as for most theorists of the Enlightenment, art is a well demarcated field of philosophical investigation. We shall first reconstruct the plethora of conditions (philosophical, historical, cultural, and institutional) that enabled the emergence of both art as we know it today and aesthetics as a self-contained area of philosophical research.

During the second decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the many critiques of the Enlightenment project carry with them the first objections to the "aesthetic" orientation. This is clearly the case with both Hegel and Schopenhauer, whose work we shall briefly examine.

The problem of whether a set of distinctly "aesthetic qualities" can be discerned continues to haunt the debate on the philosophy of art into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. To this effect, we shall explore the position of influential philosophers on both sides of the Atlantic, including Marx and Emerson, but also analyze the role played by the Arts and Craft movement in England, which sought to rehabilitate the skill of the craftsman against both the glorification of the artist as creative genius and the "soulless" machine-made mode of production established by the emerging Industrial pattern.

In sharp contrast with the Kantian defense of art and aesthetics as a self-contained set of sensory experiences is the belief that the meaning of the work of art is not to be found autonomously from the facts of life, but rather in their midst. We shall follow this attempt to de-aestheticize art and its objects throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century: from Georg Simmel to Walter Benjamin, from Martin Heidegger to Michel Foucault.

But the search for "the aesthetic" as a unique form of experience did not begin and end with Kant. We shall explore the Renaissance of this plight in both philosophy and the arts from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century into the post WWII period. We shall start by looking at the Modern Movement's revolutionary use of space architecture, and then follow the development of its formalist agenda throughout the evolution of abstraction in the visual arts, from constructivism to minimalism.

In the last portion of the course, we shall follow the dismantling of the aesthetic edifice in the work of radical theorists in linguistics, philosophy, gender studies, and architecture, including Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, Elisabeth Grosz, and Peter Eisenman.

### Texts

- Shiner, *The Invention of Art* (University of Chicago Press, 2001)
- *Philosophies of Art and Beauty* (University of Chicago Press, 1976)
- Conrads, *Programs and Manifestoes on 20<sup>th</sup> Century Architecture* (the MIT Press, 1975)

### **Course Requirements**<sup>1</sup>

Listed below are the reading assignments for the course. Each one of them should be prepared thoroughly before class. Philosophy reading assignments need to be read at least twice. Should you miss a class for a justified reason, I expect you to get notes from a classmate and complete the reading assignment for that day. Philosophy is a demanding discipline and this is a demanding class (☹). There will be 3 short assignments, a take-home exam, and a final paper. All your written work has to be double-spaced, and submitted both by Blackboard in a “.doc” format<sup>2</sup> and in hard copy. On every one of your essays I expect to find a header with your name, the class in which you are enrolled, the type of assignment (separately from the specific title will choose for it), and page numbers. Failure to include any of this information will result in a grade reduction. Late papers will also result in a grade penalty. Extensions may be asked and obtained only at least two weeks in advance or for medical reasons.

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<sup>1</sup> Academic accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. Please, schedule an appointment with the Instructor early in the semester to discuss any accommodations that may be needed for the course. All accommodations must be approved through the Office of Disability and Support Services (ext. 7584) as indicated in the accommodation letter.

<sup>2</sup> This does NOT include Corel WordPerfect. If you have a Mac or WordPerfect, save the document as a “.doc” and then post it on Blackboard.

## Lectures and Readings

<b>August</b>	<b>30</b> Introduction
	<b><i>When, How, Where Was Art Born?</i></b>
<b>September</b>	<b>4</b> Shiner, <i>The Invention of Art</i> “Introduction,” 3-18 “The Greeks Had No Word for It,” 19-27
	<b>6</b> Shiner, <i>The Invention of Art</i> “Aquinas’ Saw,” 28-34 “Michelangelo and Shakespeare,” 35-56
	<b>11</b> Shiner, <i>The Invention of Art</i> “Art Divided,” 75-77 “Polite Arts for the Polite Classes,” 79-98 “The Artist, the Work, an the Market,” 99-129
	<b><i>The Aesthetic Ideal</i></b>
	<b>13</b> Kant, <i>Critique of Judgment</i> , First Book, Analytic of the Beautiful, in <i>Philosophies of Art &amp; Beauty</i> , 280-314
	<b>18</b> Kant, continued
	<b>20</b> Kant, <i>Critique of Judgment</i> , Second Book, Analytic of the Sublime, in <i>Philosophies of Art &amp; Beauty</i> , 307-343
<b><i>The History and Metaphysics of Beauty</i></b>	

**October**

<b>25</b>	Hegel, "The Philosophy of Fine Arts," I-IV, in <i>Philosophies of Art &amp; Beauty</i> , 382-424 <b>Short Assignment on Kant Due</b>
<b>27</b>	Hegel, "The Philosophy of Fine Arts," V, in <i>Philosophies of Art &amp; Beauty</i> , 425-445  <i>Art as the Most Universal Presentation of Reality</i>
<b>2</b>	Schopenhauer, "The World as Will and Idea," in <i>Philosophies of Art &amp; Beauty</i> , 448-495
<b>4</b>	Schopenhauer, "The World as Will and Idea," in <i>Philosophies of Art &amp; Beauty</i> , 448-495
<b>9</b>	Schopenhauer, continued  <i>Art and Modern Subjectivity</i>
<b>11</b>	Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," Blackboard
<b>OCTOBER BREAK</b>	
<b>23</b>	Simmel, "Metropolis and Mental Life," Blackboard  <i>Pure Forms of Life</i>
<b>25</b>	Shiner, <i>The Invention of Art</i> Modernism, Anti-Art, and the Bauhaus," 246-268 Conrads, <i>Programs and Manifestoes on 20<sup>th</sup> Century Architecture</i>

**November**

	Gropius/Taut/Behne, "New Ideas for Architecture," 46-48 Walter Gropius, "Programme of the Staatliches Bauhaus in Weimer," 49-53 <b>Take-Home Exam Distributed</b>
<b>30</b>	Clive Bell, "The Aesthetic Hypothesis," Blackboard Conrads, <i>Programs and Manifestoes on 20<sup>th</sup> Century Architecture</i> Adolf Loos, "Ornament and Crime," 19-24 Van Doesbug, "De Stijl: Manifesto I," 39-40, "De Stijl: Creative Demands," 64-65, "De Stijl: Manifesto V," 66, "Towards a Plastic Architecture," 78-80
	<b><i>The Autonomy of the Aesthetic</i></b>
<b>1</b>	Greenberg, "Modernist Painting," Blackboard Beardsley and Wimsatt, "The Intentional Fallacy," Blackboard <b>Take-Home Exam Due</b>
	<b><i>The Formalist Undoing of Minimalism</i></b>
<b>6</b>	Krauss, "Sculpture in an Expanded Field, Blackboard Judd, "Specific Objects," Blackboard
	<b><i>The Work of Art as World</i></b>
<b>8</b>	Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," in <i>Philosophies of Art &amp; Beauty</i> , 650-683
<b>13</b>	Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," in <i>Philosophies of Art &amp; Beauty</i> , 683-708
<b>15</b>	Shapiro, "The Still Life as a Personal Object: A Note on

	Heidegger and Van Gogh,” Blackboard <b>Short Assignment on Heidegger Due</b>
	<i>From Work to Text</i>
	<b>20</b> R. Barthes, “From Work to Text, Blackboard” M. Foucault, “What Is an Author?,” Blackboard E. Grosz, “Feminism after the Death of the Author,” Blackboard
	<i>The Heteronomy of the Aesthetic</i>
	<b>22</b> Danto, “The Artworld,” Blackboard Morgan, “The End of the Artworld,” Blackboard
	<i>The Possibility and Impossibility of Representation</i>
	<b>27</b> Foucault, “Preface” to <i>The Order of Things</i> , Blackboard Foucault, “Las Meniñas,” Blackboard
	<i>The Architecture of Desire</i>
	<b>29</b> Venturi, “Complexity and Contradictions in Architecture,” Blackboard Eisenman, “Post-Functionalism,” “The End of the Classical: the End of the Beginning, the End of the End,” Blackboard <b>Paper Proposal Due</b>
<b>December</b>	<b>4</b> Derrida, “Architecture Where Desire Can Live,” Blackboard
	<b>11</b> <b>Final Paper Due</b>