

## Philosophy 240 (Philosophy of Art)

Winter, 2004

**Prof. D.M. Farrell**  
322 University Hall  
292-1534  
farrell.4@osu.edu

**Office hours: Mon. 10:30-12:00, Thurs. 2:30-3:30**

**Mr. Ryan Jordan**  
214 University Hall  
292-3663  
jordan.323@osu.edu  
**Office hours: TBA**

### Text

Aesthetics: A Reader in the Philosophy of the Arts (Prentice-Hall: 1997), ed. David Goldblatt & Lee B. Brown (A copy of the text is on reserve at the main library)

### Course aims

We'll think about the following questions, among others, with students expected to develop and defend their own answers to these questions: (i) Why do people create "art," and why are people interested in the artistic creations of other people? (ii) Is there a difference between art and ("mere") entertainment? If so, what is it? If not, why do so many people think there is? (Snobbery? Something else?) (iii) Is the difference between "good" and "bad" art just a matter of personal taste, or could it sometimes be more than that? (Think of crafts, where we don't have a lot of trouble distinguishing between good carpentry, say, and bad. Why is art different, if it is?) (iv) What *is* art anyway? Can art be defined, or is this too a matter of taste? (v) What can we say about art and morality? E.g., is there such a thing as morally bad or *immoral* art? If so, what's an example? If not, why not? (vi) What about social control of art—e.g., prohibition of pornography and obscenity? What, if anything, justifies this? (There will be other questions and issues, as the syllabus below indicates. This is just a sampling of some of the most important ones.)

We will read what others have said in answer to these questions, and you'll be tested on your understanding of what they've said. But the real goal of the course is to inspire you to think seriously about these and some related questions and to get you either to formulate your own answers or to figure out why you think these are silly questions, if that's what you think.

### Requirements

There will be three short exams during the quarter and a comprehensive final at the end of the quarter. The format of the exams will be explained in class. Each of the short exams will count for twenty-percent of your final grade; the final exam will count for forty-percent of your final grade. Attendance and participation will count in a manner to be explained at the first class. It's possible we'll allow optional special projects (one per student) for special credit; we'll discuss this in class. Make-ups for missed exams will be

given only for serious medical or other emergencies and will require an acceptable (written) certification of the nature of the emergency.

## Syllabus

Unless otherwise noted, references below are to the Goldblatt/Brown text. Readings not found in this text will be distributed in class.

Mon., Jan. 5 <sup>th</sup>	Introduction, preview of course agenda
Weds., Jan. 7 <sup>th</sup>	Photography: a possible art-form?  Scruton, "Why Photography Is Not Art" (pp. 89-94); Cohen, "What's Special About Photography?" (pp. 103-110)
Mon., Jan. 12 <sup>th</sup>	Movies: when is a movie a "work of art"?  Carroll, "The Power of Movies" (pp. 122-127); Sesonske, "Space, Time and Motion in Film" (pp. 136-142)
Weds., Jan. 14 <sup>th</sup>	Music: the "pop" art vs. "high" art controversy, or the "highbrows" vs. the "lowbrows"  Brown, "Adorno's Case Against Popular Music" (pp. 426-432); Shusterman, "Form and Funk" (pp. 433-440)
Mon., Jan. 19 <sup>th</sup>	Martin Luther King Day: holiday; no class
Weds., Jan. 21 <sup>st</sup>	Some theories of art and the question of whether they matter  Bell, "Form in Modern Painting" (pp. 10-13); Collingwood, "The Poetic Expression of Emotion" (pp. 314-319)  <b>First exam</b> (at the start of class)
Mon., Jan. 26 <sup>th</sup>	Assessing the theories in relation to one art-form: why do painters paint?  Feldman, "A Formal Analysis" (pp. 13-17); Greenberg, "Modernist Painting" (pp. 17-23)
Weds., Jan. 28 <sup>th</sup>	Assessment of theories continued  Reread Feldman and Greenberg (above)

- Mon., Feb. 2<sup>nd</sup> Music: apart from lyrics, can music *represent* something, or is it always purely formal and non-representational?  
  
Scruton, “Representation in Music” (pp. 235-241); Kivy, “Sound and Semblance” (pp. 241-246)
- Weds., Feb. 4<sup>th</sup> Music (continued): how can music express emotions, if it can, and how does it arouse them? Is this important to what serious music is all about?  
  
Robinson, “The Expression and Arousal of Emotion in Music” (pp. 223-232)
- Mon., Feb. 9<sup>th</sup> Pop Art and its siblings: “But is it *art*?!”  
  
Readings to be announced  
  
**Second exam** (at the start of class)
- Weds., Feb. 11<sup>th</sup> More on Pop Art and its siblings  
  
Danto, “The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art” (pp. 46-50); Danto, “Aesthetics and the Work of Art” (pp. 50-56)
- Mon., Feb. 16<sup>th</sup> Poetry: what’s its point and why is it so unpopular?  
  
Urmson, “Literature as a Performing Art” (pp. 323-330)
- Weds., Feb. 18<sup>th</sup> Fiction: what’s its point and why doesn’t anyone read it anymore?  
  
Beardsley, “The Intention of the Author” (pp. 330-336)
- Mon., Feb. 23<sup>rd</sup> Censorship: Robert Mapplethorpe vs. the Cincinnati Museum of Art  
  
Feinberg, “Pornography” (pp. 472-475); Devlin, essay to be distributed in class
- Weds., Feb. 25<sup>th</sup> Censorship (continued)  
  
Hart, essay to be distributed in class; MacKinnon, “Liberty and its Limits” (pp. 475-478)
- Mon., March 1<sup>st</sup> Theories again: can we do better than The Big Three?

Readings to be announced in class

**Third exam** (at the beginning of class)

- Weds., March 3<sup>rd</sup>      Theory 4: the anti-theory theory of art  
Weitz, “The Role of Theory in Aesthetics” (pp. 518-524)
- Mon., March 8<sup>th</sup>      Theory 5: the museum theory of art  
Dickie, “Art as a Social Institution” (pp. 524-529)
- Weds., March 10<sup>th</sup>      To be announced

**Final exam is on Wednesday, March 17th at 7:30 a.m.**