

**Professor Elisabeth Camp**

*Office:* 106 Somerset, Room 514

*Office Hours:* Mondays and Thursdays 10:30-11:15, and by appointment

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**Required Text:** All readings and handouts will be posted online at Sakai.

**Course Description**

What is art? Why do we care about it? As far as we know, every human culture makes art, though in very different ways; and most people engage passionately with art in some way, whether Beyoncé or Beethoven. Is there some distinctive quality that all works of art have, which makes them art? Do they have a special kind of meaning? What makes art good or bad: should it be beautiful? original? morally uplifting?

To ask these questions well, we need to test our answers on actual artworks. I'll therefore be asking you to spend as much time with art as possible this semester, and to apply the questions and theories we discuss to actual art in your papers and online discussion.

**Course Goals**

Students in this course will learn to:

- understand the benefits of, and challenges to, the traditional philosophical method of conceptual analysis through necessary and sufficient conditions.
- appreciate the diversity of art: 'high' and 'low', within and across cultures, and across media.
- apply specific questions about art and theories of art and in engaging with actual artworks.

In pursuing these aims, students will also acquire the following skills:

- the ability to engage in close reading of sophisticated theoretical and empirical arguments.
- the ability to articulate clear, structured, well-supported arguments for your own conclusions.
- the ability to engage in respectful, reasoned, and passionate debate with your peers about complex topics that lack clear answers.

**Course Requirements**

- Daily readings, to be completed *before* class, and brought to class.
- Attendance and participation in class (10% of course grade).
- Weekly blog posts (20% of course grade).
- Three short papers, 2-3 pages (15% each of course grade).
- A final paper, 4-5 pages (25% of course grade).

**Papers** should be 'blinded' (by substituting your student ID for your name) and submitted as .pdfs through Sakai. Except in extreme conditions, extensions must be granted well before the due date, and only at my discretion; otherwise, late papers will be downgraded 1/3 letter grade per day.

You are expected to be familiar with and to abide by RU's policy on academic and intellectual integrity: <http://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity>

If you need special accommodations because of a learning disability or for any other reason, please let me know, or have the Office of Disabilities get in touch with me.

*Blog posts*

You are required to post a **brief** comment (1 paragraph) for **each forum**, once a week. These are aimed to get you thinking and talking about the material before class, so we can have a richer discussion in class. I will post an opening question on Friday morning.

Posts will be graded on a 3-point scale:

- 1 point** for posting by **Sunday** night or **Wednesday** night (depending on which reading the question asks about), in a way that shows you've done the reading;
- 1 point** for being one of the first 2 posters, OR for responding to someone else's post;
- 1 point** for contributing an original thought about the question and/or material.

**Number** your post based on the order in which it comes in.

**BEFORE class:** review the posts, and **vote** for a post at **webclicker.org**.

(**Sign in** to webclicker.org with the Class ID: **PhilArt-173**.)

Here are some useful online resources for philosophy and art:

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <http://plato.stanford.edu>

American Society for Aesthetics: <http://www.aesthetics-online.org>

ArtLex (a dictionary of art): <http://www.artlex.com/>

ARTstor (a database of visual images): <http://www.artstor.org>

## Schedule of Topics and Readings

Th 9/3                      Introduction

### ***What is art? What does it do?***

#### *Mimesis and Catharsis*

**TUES 9/8**                      Plato: *Republic* II, III, X (excerpts)  
Th 9/10                      Aristotle: *Poetics* §§4-7 (excerpts)

#### *Expression and Inspiration*

M 9/14                      Plato: *Ion* (excerpt)  
   Shelley: "A Defense of Poetry" (excerpts)  
Th 9/17                      Tolstoy: *What is Art?* (excerpts)  
M 9/21                      Collingwood: *Principles of Art*, chs. 2 & 7  
**First paper topics handed out**

#### *Pleasures and Forms*

Th 9/24                      Bentham: *Rationale of Reward* (excerpt)  
   Kant: *Critique of Judgment* §§1-9, 14-16, 19-22, 43-45  
M 9/28                      Kant cont'd  
Th 10/1                      Bell: "The Aesthetic Hypothesis"  
   Greenberg: "Modernist Painting"  
**First papers due**

#### *Nature and Culture*

M 10/5                      Dutton: *The Art Instinct*, chs. 1-3  
Th 10/8                      Danto: "The Artworld"

### ***How does art mean?***

#### *Medium and Message*

M 10/12                      Dewey: *Art as Experience* (excerpt)  
   Bosanquet: "Three Lectures on Aesthetic" (excerpt)  
Th 10/15                      Stolnitz: "On the Cognitive Triviality of Art"  
   Brooks: "The Heresy of Paraphrase"  
   Keats: "Ode on a Grecian Urn"  
M 10/19                      Levinson: "Messages in Art"  
   Ice T: "High Rollers"  
**Second paper topics handed out**

#### *Idea as Medium*

Th 10/22                      LeWitt: "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art"  
   Lippard: "Escape Attempts"  
   Vogel: "Swimming with Famous Dead Sharks"

**What determines aesthetic value?***Whose judgment matters?*

M 10/26	Hume: "On the Standard of Taste"
Th 10/29	Kant: <i>Critique of Judgment</i> §§32-42
	<b>Second papers due</b>
M 11/2	Babbitt: "Who Cares if You Listen?"
	Weingarten: "Pearls Before Breakfast"
Th 11/5	Appiah: "The Postcolonial and the Postmodern"

*Does morality matter?*

M 11/9	Gaut: "The Ethical Criticism of Art"
	Nussbaum: "Fancy"
	<b>Watch <i>Talk to Her</i> (outside class)</b>
Th 11/12	Posner: "Against Ethical Criticism"
	<b>Third paper topics handed out</b>
M 11/16	Eaton: "Robust Immoralism"
	"Almodovar's Immoralism"

*Does originality matter?*

Th 11/19	Kant: <i>Critique of Judgment</i> §§46-50
	Eliot: "Tradition and the Individual Talent"
	Borges: "Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote"
M 11/23	Lessing: "What is Wrong with a Forgery?"
	Russell: "As Long as Men Make Art..."
	<b>Watch <i>Who the \$&amp;% Is Jackson Pollock?</i> (outside class)</b>
	<b>Third papers due</b>
Th 11/26	<b>NO CLASS</b>

*Why care about criticism?*

M 11/30	Nehamas: "Essay on Beauty and Judgment"
Th 12/3	Harrison: "Some Uses of 'Good' in Criticism"
M 12/7	Walton: "How Marvelous! Toward a Theory of Aesthetic Value"
Th 12/10	<i>Review and Conclusion</i>
	<b>Final Paper Topics Handed Out</b>
Fri 12/18	<b>Final Paper Due</b>