

PH8110: AESTHETICS

Fall 2012

Instructor: **Dr. Glenn Parsons**

Location & Time: Thursdays 4:00-7:00 in JOR440

Office Hours: Tuesdays noon-1:00 and Thursday noon-1:00, or by chance or appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is about the concept of 'the aesthetic' as it figures in contemporary Anglo-American philosophy. Traditionally, philosophy of art in the West gave pride of place to other concepts, notably the beautiful. In twentieth-century philosophy, however, beauty was largely discarded in favour of the notion of the aesthetic. During this period, various philosophers attempted to say what the aesthetic is, show why it is valuable, and make it the cornerstone of a philosophy of Art. Others rejected the concept as incoherent and misleading. Our survey of these debates will introduce us to some of the main issues, thinkers, and approaches of contemporary philosophical aesthetics.

COURSE BLACKBOARD PAGE

This course has a Blackboard page, which you should be able to access through <http://my.ryerson.ca>. Various announcements will be posted there periodically, along with certain class material and, at my discretion, grades. Also note that the authoritative version of the class schedule will be the one on the Blackboard page, and if you are missing class you should check it periodically for updates.

CLASS FORMAT

This course is a seminar focused on group discussion; it is not a lecture course. So for the course to be successful, it is vital that you come to class, and that you come prepared to participate. Each class will be divided into two parts. In the first two hours, we will have group discussion of the paper(s) for that week. After a 15 minute break, I will give a short mini-lecture providing background for the following week's material.

TEXTS

Some of the essays that we will be reading this term are available through our library and will be made available for downloading on the course Blackboard page (in pdf format). These texts are free but you are responsible for the cost of printing them. Texts not available in this format will be distributed, as photocopies, by the instructor. Students are expected to bring the relevant readings to class each week.

CONTACTING ME/EMAIL

I set aside a specific day of the week to answer student emails, so depending on when you email me you may not get an instant response. Email is fine for quick logistical questions, but if you have a substantial question, you should use the scheduled office hours to come talk to me in person.

Note that, according to Ryerson's academic policy you are required to use, and to monitor, your Ryerson email account for this course. If I need to contact you regarding any official matters (academic misconduct, changes to the course schedule, *e.g.*) I will email your Ryerson account, so please check it periodically. I reserve the right not to respond to non-Ryerson email addresses (*e.g.* yahoo, hotmail, etc.) and my mail filters delete such messages. For information on how to activate your Ryerson email account, go to: <http://www.ryerson.ca/ccs/myaccounts/activate/index.html>.

EVALUATION

Grades will be calculated as follows:

	<i>Due Date</i>	<i>Value</i>
Class presentations For two papers, you will give a brief (maximum 10 min) summary to the class (see below for details).	Summary slides must be submitted to me by 5:00 pm on the Tuesday prior to the class. You can choose the weeks, but <u>you must sign up for your specific dates and readings during the first week of class.</u>	30%
General contributions to class discussion	-----	20%
Paper #1 (6-8 pages, or 3000 words)	11:00 pm on Thursday October 25 th , 2012	25%
Paper #2 (6-8 pages, or 3000 words)	11:00 pm on Tuesday December 10 th , 2012	25%

CLASS PRESENTATIONS

During the term, each student will give a short presentation on two papers. The presentation should be a brief (10 minute maximum) summary of the paper. Your summary should be presented to the class on a maximum of three powerpoint slides. It should succinctly identify the main claim of the paper and state (what you take to be) the main support that the paper offers for that conclusion. Presentations should be mainly exegetical: the goal is to identify and clearly state the paper's position so that we can then discuss it.

These presentations are short but they are an important part of the course. Your summary of the paper will be the basis for our subsequent discussion of it. In the subsequent discussion we may ask you questions about your summary, or other aspects of the paper. Your summary slides must be emailed to me by 5:00 pm on the Tuesday prior to class, and I may suggest some changes or improvements to style, content, or both, before our Thursday meeting.

PAPERS

You must submit two essays of around 2500-3000 words (roughly 6-8 pages at 2x or 1.5x spacing in MS Word). You are responsible for choosing a topic, but topics must be approved by the instructor. The essay must take up some issue relevant to the course theme that arises from the course readings and/or class discussion. Note that paper may be on a reading that you presented to the class. The two papers must be on different topics. Papers must conform to the standard stylistic and bibliographic conventions of philosophy papers; more information on these will be provided by the instructor later in the semester.

LATE PENALTIES

Essays are due by the time and date indicated; work received after this deadline is late.

The penalty for late submission is one letter grade per day (e.g. an A+ paper submitted one day late receives an A, a C- paper two days late receives a D, and so on), including weekend days, up to a maximum of seven days. Papers that are more than seven days late will receive a grade of zero. **There are no exceptions to these deadlines** unless there are documented medical or compassionate grounds for an extension (see 'Course Policies' below).

- There is no make-up or bonus work for this course.
- Work will not be returned to anyone except the author (that is, friends cannot pick up your essay).
- Final essay grades will be posted on Blackboard; final essays will be returned to students once final marks have been submitted.
- Ryerson's academic policy states that "students will receive their final course grades only from the Registrar. Final course grades may not be posted or disclosed anywhere by an instructor" (<http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol145.pdf>). This means that I cannot, under any circumstances, email, or report to you in any other way, your final grade in this course.

COURSE POLICIES

Alternate Arrangements for Missed Exams and Assignments

- In general, **circumstances interfering with your ability to perform required course work must be brought to my attention as they arise, and if at all possible, in advance of missed work.** Requests made at the end of term for extensions, rewrites, etc. due to ongoing personal circumstances will not be considered (for more information, see Ryerson's Student Guide to Avoiding Academic Appeals). Alternate arrangements for missed exams and assignments will normally be granted **ONLY** for reasons of illness or injury, religious observance, disability and compassionate grounds (see below).
- Alternate Arrangements/Extensions will NOT be granted for the following reasons:
 - Computer failure, loss of work (keep a backup copy of all your work)
 - Social engagements, including family-related events
 - Work schedules
 - Coincident deadlines in other courses
 - Travel other than home-to-school commuting (holidays, cancelled flights, e.g.)
- Requests for alternate arrangements will be considered in the following cases:
 1. *Illness/Injury.* Students must provide, within three working days of the missed deadline (or as soon as medically feasible), a completed Ryerson Medical Certificate or a letter from a physician (on letterhead) with the student declaration portion of the Ryerson Medical Certificate attached (this form can be obtained at <http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/forms/medical.pdf>). The nature of the alternate arrangement for making up the missing grade is left to the discretion of the instructor. For further details, refer to Ryerson Academic Policy 134, Undergraduate Academic Consideration and Appeals, available at <http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol134%28a%29-Ends-Aug-31-2010.pdf>.
 2. *Religious Observance.* Ryerson policy allows accommodation for religious observances. Requests for such accommodation must be made no later than two weeks prior to the conflict in question and preferably should be made during the first two weeks of class. For the appropriate forms and instructions, see <http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/forms/reobservforminstr.pdf>. Ryerson's full policy on Accommodation of Student Religious Observance Obligations is available at <http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol150.pdf>
 3. *Disability.* Students with a diagnosed physical or learning disability should register with the Ryerson Access Centre at the start of the term. For more information, visit their website at <http://www.ryerson.ca/accesscentre/>
 4. *Compassionate Grounds.* Students unable to complete assignments due to loss of a family member or loved one, or due to personal difficulties that are interfering with their studies, should

speak to the instructors as soon as is possible. The instructor reserves the right to require documentation, depending upon the circumstances.

Academic Misconduct

- Students are reminded that they are required to adhere to all relevant University policies, such as the Student Code of Academic Conduct (available online at: <http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol60.pdf>). This code treats plagiarism (the misrepresentation of someone else's work as your own) as a form of academic misconduct. For detailed information concerning academic misconduct and the relevant penalties, see the Student Code. Note that **the instructor will be distributing information specifying the required citation practices for assignments in this course, and that you are responsible for being aware of and employing this information.** Note also that **it is your responsibility to be aware of what constitutes plagiarism**, and that ignorance of this is not an acceptable excuse. For further information on plagiarism and how to avoid it, go to Ryerson's Academic Integrity website (www.ryerson.ca/ai). This site contains tutorials and quizzes to help you learn about various types of misconduct, as well as a brief guide to avoiding plagiarism (<http://www.ryerson.ca/ai/students/studentplagiarism.html>)
- Students should be aware that the instructor reserves the right, upon suspicion of academic misconduct, to submit work to a plagiarism detection database (turnitin.com) and/or conduct an oral examination on the assignment.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

This schedule is subject to change. Readings are available as pdf files on the course Blackboard page, under

'E-reserve', unless marked (*). The latter will be distributed as photocopies by the instructor.

Week	Date	Topic	Papers for Discussion	Presentation
1	6 Sep	Introductory Lecture: The Origins of the Aesthetic	Bell, "The Aesthetic Hypothesis"	
2	13 Sep	The Aesthetic Attitude	*Stolnitz, <i>Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art Criticism</i> : §§ 2.1-2.3 and 2.5 (on the aesthetic attitude)	
			*Stolnitz, ch. 14 (on evaluation and criticism) Dickie "The Myth of the Aesthetic Attitude"	
			Lecture on next week	

3	20 Sep	Beardsley on Aesthetic Experience	*Beardsley, <i>Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism</i> , excerpt from Ch. X (on the meaning of critical judgements)	
			* Beardsley, excerpts from Ch. XI (on aesthetic experience), and Ch. XII, (on the value of	
			Lecture on next week	
4	27 Sep	The Beardsley/Dickie Debate	Dickie, "Beardsley's Phantom Aesthetic Experience"	
			Beardsley, "Aesthetic Experience Regained"	
			Dickie, "Beardsley's Theory of Aesthetic Experience"	
			*Beardsley, "Aesthetic Experience"	
			Lecture on next week	
5	4 Oct	Sibley and Aesthetic Concepts	Sibley, "Aesthetic Concepts"	
			Sibley, "Aesthetic and Non-aesthetic"	
			Sibley, "Objectivity and Aesthetics"	
Reading Week (Oct 8-12)				
6	18 Oct	Critical Responses to Sibley	*Cohen, "A Critique of Sibley's Position"	
			Walton, "Categories of Art"	
			Lecture on Next Week	
7	25 Oct	<p><i>No class this week– Parsons away at the ASA</i> <i>Paper #1 is due at 11:00 pm, Thursday 25th October</i></p>		

8	1 Nov	Special Guest: Derek Matravers (Open University) on Aesthetic Properties	To be announced	
9	8 Nov	Aesthetic Properties and Aesthetic Value	*Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste"	
			Levinson, "Hume's Standard of Taste: The Real Problem"	
			Lecture on Next Week	
10	15 Nov	The Aesthetics of Nature	Carlson, "Nature, Aesthetic Judgement, and Objectivity"	
			Budd, "The Aesthetics of Nature"	
			Lecture on Next Week	
11	22 Nov	Smell, Taste and Touch	*Sibley, "Tastes, Smells, and Aesthetics"	
			Irvin, "Scratching an Itch"	
			Shusterman, "From Analysis to Eros"	
			Lecture on Next Week	
12	29 Nov	The Return of the Aesthetic Attitude?	Iseminger, "The Aesthetic State of Mind"	
			Carroll, "The Axiological Approach"	

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF REQUIRED READINGS

Beardsley, Monroe. *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1958).

"Aesthetic Experience" (1982), in *The Aesthetic Point of View: Selected Essays*, M. Wreen and D. Callen eds, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982).

"Aesthetic Experience Regained" (1968), *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 28 (1969) 3-11. Bell, Clive. *Art* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1913).

Budd, Malcolm. "The Aesthetics of Nature", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, n.s., 100 (2000) 137-157.

Carlson, Allen. "Nature, Aesthetic Judgment, and Objectivity", *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 40 (1981) 15-27.

Carroll, Noël. "Aesthetic Experience: A Question of Content", in M. Kieran, ed. *Contemporary Debates in Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art* (Blackwell, 2006), pp. 69-97.

Cohen, Ted. "A Critique of Sibley's Position: Aesthetics/Non-aesthetics and the Concept of Taste", in *Aesthetics: A Critical Anthology*, 2nd ed. G. Dickie, R. Sclafani and R. Roblin eds. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1973), pp. 375-393.

Dickie, George. "The Myth of the Aesthetic Attitude" (1964) ", *American Philosophical Quarterly* 1 (1964) 56-65.

"Beardsley's Phantom Aesthetic Experience", *Journal of Philosophy* 62 (1965) 129-136.

"Beardsley's Theory of Aesthetic Experience", *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 8 (1974) 13-23. Hume, David. "Of the Standard of Taste" (1757), reprinted in David Hume, *Moral Philosophy*, G. Sayre-McCord, ed. (Indianapolis, Hackett: 2006), pp. 345-360.

Iseminger, Gary. "The Aesthetic State of Mind", in M. Kieran, ed. *Contemporary Debates in Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art* (Blackwell, 2006), pp. 98-110.

Irvin, Sherri. "Scratching an Itch" (2008), *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 66 (2008) 25-35.

Levinson, Jerrold. "Hume's Standard of Taste: The Real Problem", *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 60 (2002) 227- 238.

Shusterman, Richard. "From Analysis to Eros", *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 64 (2006) 217-229. Sibley, Frank. "Aesthetic Concepts" *Philosophical Review* 68 (1959) 421-450.

"Aesthetic and Non-aesthetic", *Philosophical Review* 74 (1965) 135-159.

"Objectivity and Aesthetics", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Supplementary Vol. 42 (1968) 31-54.

"Tastes, Smells, and Aesthetics", published posthumously in Frank Sibley, *Approach to Aesthetics: Collected Papers on Philosophical Aesthetics*, J. Benson, B. Redfern, and J.R. Cox eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 207-255.

Stolnitz, Jerome. *Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art Criticism: A Critical Introduction* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1960).

Walton, Kendall. "Categories of Art", *Philosophical Review* 79 (1970) 334-367.