

Lingnan University
Department of Philosophy

Course Title	: History of Aesthetics
Course Code	: PHI3271
Recommended Study Year	: 3 rd Year
No. of Credits/Term	: 3
Mode of Tuition	: Lecture and tutorial
Class Contact Hours	: 2 hours lecture per week 1 hour tutorial per week
Category in Major Programme	: Programme Elective – Aesthetics Profile
Prerequisite(s)	: N/A
Co-requisite(s)	: N/A
Exclusion(s)	: N/A
Exemption Requirement(s)	: N/A

Brief Course Description

This course will trace the development of central themes in aesthetics from Plato and Aristotle to the twentieth century. It will deal with general aesthetic themes as well as themes in the philosophy of art. Among the former are the nature of beauty, aesthetic experience, aesthetic judgement, aesthetic taste, etc. Among the latter one finds the cognitive status of art, the ontological status of art, the interpretation and appreciation of art, art and emotion, the value of art, art and morality. The course will also introduce the students to the most important contributors to the debates about these themes both from within and from outside philosophy.

Aims

To give the students an overview of the issues and arguments that make up the tradition in aesthetics and, with this background, enable them to put recent debates about aesthetic issues in a historical perspective.

Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, students will be able to:

(LO1) Demonstrate a solid knowledge of the theories of art that has been developed by philosophers and artists from ancient Greece to the present.

(LO2) Critically evaluate claims made by theorists in this tradition.

(LO3) Make use of these theories to put recent debates about aesthetic issues in a historical perspective.

Indicative Content

1. Plato. The theory of beauty. The mimesis theory of art. Art and emotion. Art and morality.
2. Aristotle. An answer to Plato: Aristotle's *Poetics*
3. Horace on the nature of literature (*Ars Poetica*) and pseudo-Longinus *On the Sublime*.
4. Neo-Platonism from Plotinus to Ficino
5. Renaissance aesthetics: music, poetry, theory of painting;
6. The Enlightenment: Cartesian Rationalism and British Empiricism. The reappearance of the sublime.
7. Kant and German Idealism
8. Romanticism: the aesthetics of feeling; theories of the imagination.
9. Art as Expression: Croce and Collingwood
10. Theories of art and beauty in the 20th Century.

Teaching Method

Lectures and tutorials

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

Student's successful engagement with the lectures and readings, and corresponding progress towards the learning outcomes outlined above, will be measured by means of mid-term and final examinations comprising both short-answer and more substantive, reflective essay questions (to assess LO 1, 2, 3). These examinations will determine whether students have engaged successfully with the required readings for the course and with content presented in the lectures and tutorials. The examination questions will assess the ability to draw the course materials together, the ability to articulate and organize ideas in written form, as well as the ability to synthesize ideas and form an individual opinion on the relevant questions. In addition, students are expected to participate in discussions in class (to assess LO 1, 2, 3).

Assessment

10% Participation

40% Mid-term Examination

50% Final Examination

Required Readings

A selection from Hofstadter, Albert, and Richard Kuhns, eds. *Philosophies of Art and Beauty. Selected Readings in Aesthetics from Plato to Heidegger*. 1964. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976; plus 150 pages of selected primary texts from other sources.

Supplementary Readings

Ashfield, Andrew, and Peter de Bolla. eds. *The Sublime: A Reader in British Eighteenth-Century Aesthetic Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Beardsley, Monroe C. *Aesthetics from Classical Greece to the Present. A Short History*. 1966. Tuscaloosa, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1975.

Bosanquet, Bernard. *A History of Aesthetic*. 1892. 2nd ed. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1904.

Dickie, George. *The Century of Taste. The Philosophical Odyssey of Taste in the Eighteenth Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Eco, Umberto. *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*. Trans. Hugh Bredin. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986.

Kemal, Salim. *Kant's Aesthetic Theory: An Introduction*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992.

Kemal, Salim, and Ivan Gaskell, eds. *Landscape, Natural Beauty and the Arts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Lamarque, Peter, and Stein Haugom Olsen. eds. *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art: The Analytic Tradition: An Anthology*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2004.

Lippman, Edward. *A History of Western Musical Aesthetics*. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1994.

Tatarkiewicz, Wladyslaw, *History of Aesthetics*. 1970-1974. ed. J. Harrell, C. Barrett and D. Petsch. 3 vols. (Bristol: Thoemmes Press 1999):

Vol. 1: *Ancient Aesthetics*

Vol. 2: *Medieval Aesthetics*

Vol. 3: *Modern Aesthetics*

Important Notes

- (1) Students are expected to spend a total of 9 hours (i.e. 3 hours of class contact and 6 hours of personal study) per week to achieve the course learning outcomes.

- (2) Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations. In particular, plagiarism, being a kind of dishonest practice, is “the presentation of another person’s work without proper acknowledgement of the source, including exact phrases, or summarised ideas, or even footnotes/citations, whether protected by copyright or not, as the student’s own work”. Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.
- (3) Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.
- (4) To enhance students’ understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course “Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness” is available on <https://pla.ln.edu.hk/>