

Lingnan University
Department of Philosophy

Course Title	: Continental Aesthetic Theories
Course Code	: PHI3270
Recommended Study Year	: 3 rd Year
No. of Credits/Term	: 3
Mode of Tuition	: Lecture and Tutorial
Class Contact Hours	: 1.5 hours Lecture/week; 1.5 hours Tutorial/week
Category in Major Programme	: Programme Elective –Continental Philosophy Profile
Prerequisite(s)	: N/A
Co-requisite(s)	: N/A
Exclusion(s)	: N/A
Exemption Requirement(s)	: N/A

Brief Course Description

This course studies some major reflections on art and aesthetics in continental philosophy. They are grouped under four essential themes of mimesis, truth, modernity and the sublime. These themes are intricately interrelated to one another, as are the theories grouped under them. Underlying these themes is an effort to think art in the aftermath of Hegel's aesthetics and in the closure of metaphysics.

Aims

To provide students with a theoretical and philosophical basis for reflecting on contemporary art and for engaging themselves in the debates of some issues in contemporary aesthetics.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this course, students will:

1. be informed of the debates and discussions in contemporary continental philosophy on art and aesthetics.
2. have a basic understanding of the situation of modern art from a philosophical perspective.
3. understand the essential differences between contemporary art and the traditional form of art.
4. be aware of the philosophical attempts to think art beyond metaphysics.
5. be able to present their thoughts in a systematic and clear manner.

Indicative Content

- I. Mimesis
 - a. Plato: Art and simulacrum
 - b. Aristotle: Mimesis and *poiesis*
 - c. Diderot: the paradox of the actor and the modern concept of mimesis
 - d. Nietzsche: Tragedy and the dionysiac
- II. Figures of Truth
 - a. Hegel's end of art thesis
 - b. Heidegger: Art and truth
 - c. Bataille: Art and transgression
- III. Art and Modernity
 - a. Benjamin: Art, allegory and aura
 - b. Adorno: Art, commodity and ideology
- IV. The Sublime and the Unpresentable
 - a. Kant's aesthetics of the sublime
 - b. The sublime and the avant-garde

Teaching Method

Lectures and tutorials.

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

1. Tutorial presentation and class participation: (LO1, LO2, LO5)

Students will do a presentation on a text of continental aesthetics related to the topics discussed in the lectures. They are expected to think through the text, to apply the knowledge they have acquired in the lectures to explicate it, and to comment on its importance and relevance for understanding contemporary art.

2. Term paper: (LO1, LO2, LO3, LO4, LO5)

Students will write a final paper that demonstrates their mastery of the concepts and theories of continental aesthetics. They are expected to reflect on an aspect of contemporary art from a philosophical perspective. The paper will reflect their ability to argue in a logical and consistent manner.

3. Final examination: (LO1, LO2, LO3, LO5)

The final examination will assess students' general understanding of the course materials. They will be required to present their ideas cogently in short essay type questions.

Assessment

30% Tutorial presentation and participation in class discussions

30% Term paper

40% Final examination

Required Readings

Selections from:

Kearney, Richard & David Rasmussen, eds. *Continental Aesthetics: Romanticism to Postmodernism: An Antology*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2001.

Supplementary Readings

Adorno, Theodor W., *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. R. Hullot-Kentor; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

Bataille, Georges, *Lascaux: or, the Birth of Art: the Prehistoric Paintings*, trans. A. Wainhouse, Lausanne: Skira, 1955.

Benjamin, Walter, *Selected Writings, Vol. 4, 1938-1940*, H. Eiland & M. W. Jennings eds., Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003.

Heidegger, Martin, *Off the Beaten Track*, trans. by J. Young & K. Haynes, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Kant, Immanuel, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, trans Paul Guyer; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Lacoue-Labarthe, Philippe, *Typography: Mimesis, Philosophy, Politics*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.

Lyotard, Jean-François, *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time*. Translated by G. Bennington & R. Bowlby; Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991.

Lyotard, Jean-François, *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime: Kant's Critique of Judgment*, trans. E. Rottenberg, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994.

Nancy, Jean-Luc, *The Muses*, trans. P. Kamuf, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996.

Sallis, John, *Crossings: Nietzsche and the Space of Tragedy*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.

Sallis, John, *Double Truth*, New York: State University of New York Press, 1995.

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/>