**University of North Texas Fall Semester 2025**

**PHIL 1900 – Philosophy of Art**

Section 001: ENV 120 | Monday, Wednesday, Friday, | 10:00am-10:50am

Section 002: ENV 120 | Monday, Wednesday, Friday, | 11:00am-11:50am

Instructor - Sibillá Daniel Cavada ([sibilla.cavada@unt.edu](mailto:sibilla.cavada@unt.edu)) Pronouns: she/her Office Hours - By appointment only

“Forgetful Angel” (1939) by Paul Klee

***Course Description***

This course explores central philosophical dimensions to art from a wide variety of authors. In addition to classroom discussion and online assignments relative to the course readings, this course draws from examples of sculpture, poetry, painting, and photography to illustrate concepts discussed through the semester.

The order of our course readings is guided by the following questions:

What is art? What makes something art? What are aesthetics? Where does art take place? What role does the unconscious play in art? What is the relation between art and politics? What role does the imagination play in making art? What is the relation between art and technology? What is the relation between art and culture?

***Course Format***

This course meets three times per week. It is wholly in-person (apart from student responsibilities concerning submitting assignments to canvas) and centered on lectures supplemented with class discussion. Lectures, where the instructor will introduce, present, and explain course readings, are an opportunity for students to ask clarifying questions if needed and for students to discuss the readings amongst themselves in small groups when prompted to. Prior to our class sessions, students are expected to do the reading and submit the relative reading response beforehand.

***Course Outcomes***

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Accurately and fairly represent the thoughts and ideas of another - Think critically about a text or set of ideas - Clearly and compellingly communicate with their own conclusions in conversation with others - Articulate what social and personal responsibility looks like in particular circumstances

***Required Materials***

All course readings are available on canvas in PDF format.

***Student Responsibilities*:**

**Respect for one another and instructor:** This course, like other philosophy courses, intends to bring forward discussion of politicized topics which many of us have opinions on. Regardless of personal dispositions towards given topics or ideas explored, students, even when (and especially if) disagreements arise, must always remain respectful toward one another and the instructor. Students are expected to conduct themselves with total refrain from any bigoted sentiment being latent in their speech or actions. Any remarks or actions (inclusive of student’s submitted material) determined to be racist, homophobic/anti-LGBTQIA+, ableist, misogynistic, or emblematic of any other variety of xenophobic sentimentality, will not be tolerated and will be subject to further action. For more on appropriate student conduct follow the following link: <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/dean-of-students/conduct/index.html>

**Chosen Names***:* A chosen name is a name that a person goes by that may or may not match their legal name. If you have a chosen name that is different from your legal name and would like that to be used in class, please let the instructor know.

**Pronouns:**Pronouns (she/her, they/them, he/him, etc.) are a public way for people to address you, much like your name, and can be shared with a name when making an introduction, both virtually and in-person. Just as we ask and don’t assume someone’s name, we should also ask and not assume someone’s pronouns. You can [add your pronouns to your Canvas account](https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-18406-42121184808) so that they follow your name when posting to discussion boards, submitting assignments, etc.

**Office Hours:** My office hours are available to all students should they wish to discuss class material, find clarification on what is expected of them concerning assignments and classroom behavior, or bring issues to my attention that are impacting their academic performance. To request a meeting, students are encouraged to reach out via email or after class sessions to determine a time and date that mutually works between student and instructor.

**Communication:** If students are ever unclear on an assignment or what is expected of them in class, they are encouraged to contact the instructor via email, briefly once class ends, or through a scheduled office hours appointment. As an instructor with many responsibilities, I will not respond to student emails if they are sent in urgency concerning due dates – if students require deadline extensions due to the contingencies of life, which I am more than amenable to, they are required to reach out in advance with a minimum of 24 hours preceding the relative due date unless the circumstances are exceptionally dire.

**Attendance and Participation:** Due to the unexpectedness of life, students are permitted 3 unexcused absences which will not impact their Attendance/Participation grade. Each absence beyond the 3 allocated unexcused absences will shave 2% off the total percentage of their Attendance/Participation grade. If something occurs that impacts a student’s ability to appear in class beyond their control, they are encouraged to contact the instructor to work out an arrangement for their grade. Student’s Attendance/Participation grade will be determined from attending *and* participating in class; sufficient participation does not come in the form of asking questions during lecture as I will not force students to do so if they are anxious or do not have anything to say. Instead, at the instructor’s discretion, student participation will be determined by their attention or lack thereof during class lectures.

**Late Work:** Apart from unexpected circumstances arising, late work will not be accepted.

***Grade Distribution*:**

**x10 Reading Responses – 30%**

Students are responsible for writing 10 reading responses of their choice from the available course readings to choose from. Reading responses are 300 words in length responding to 2-3 of the following questions:

* What was your reading experience? Was the reading difficult, accessible, meaningful, relatable, etc.?
* What do you find to be the reading’s main concept? Explain your understanding of it.
* What do you find to be the reading’s main argument? Explain your understanding of it.
* Choose a sentence or a paragraph that seems central/meaningful to you. Explain why you chose it and what your understanding of it is.

Reading responses are due prior to class lectures on Sundays at 11:59PM.

**Attendance/Participation – 15%**

See attendance and participation subheading under ***“Student Responsibilities.”***

**Midterm – 25%**

The midterm for this course is a double-spaced essay at 600 words in length which responds fully to available prompts for students to choose from which can be found on canvas.

**Meaning-Making Assessment – 30%**

The Meaning-Making Assessment is the final for this course; a group presentation covering your chosen material from the course followed by an additional cross-examination by your instructor.

*Note: Students can find greater detailed descriptions of the assignments which make up their grade in their relative designations on canvas. If students are ever unclear on what is being asked of them, they are highly encouraged to contact the instructor.*

**Reading/Assignment Schedule**

***\*The reading/assignment schedule may be subject to change according to student’s needs and unanticipated events occurring. If this happens, an updated version of the schedule will be uploaded to canvas***

**Week 1**: “What is art? What makes something art?”

**NO READING RESPONSE THIS WEEK**

Monday, August 18th

Syllabus review, class introduction, student introductions

Wednesday, August 20th

“An Odd Bird” (2002) by Stéphanie Giry, and excerpts from the Brancusi case (1927)

Friday, August 22nd

“An Odd Bird” and Brancusi case cont.

**Week 2:** “What is art? What makes something art?” Cont.

Monday, August 25th

R.G. Collingwood *The Principles of Art* Chapter II “Art and Craft.” (1938)

Wednesday, August 27th

“Art and Craft” cont.

Friday, August 29th **(Last day to drop a class section without a W)**

Art showcase and Discussion: “Fountain”(1917) by Marcel Duchamp

**Week 3:** *“What are aesthetics? Where does art take place?”*

Monday, September 1st

**\*NO CLASSES -LABOR DAY- UNIVERSITY CLOSED\***

Wednesday, September 3rd

Yuriko Saito “Everyday Aesthetics” (2001) from *The John Hopkins University Press*

Friday, September 5th

“Everyday Aesthetics” cont.

**Week 4:** *“What are aesthetics? Where does art take place?” Cont.*

Monday, September 8th

Arthur Danto “The Artworld.” (1964) from *The Journal of Philosophy*

Wednesday, September 10th

“The Artworld” cont.

Friday, September 12th

Art showcase and discussion: “Who’s afraid of Red, Yellow & Blue?” (1966-1970) by Barnett Newman

**Week 5:** *“What role does the unconscious play in art?”*

Monday, September 15th

André Breton selections from “The Surrealist Manifesto.” (1924)

Wednesday, September 17th

“The Surrealist Manifesto” cont.

Friday, September 19th

Art showcase and discussion: “Inaugural Gooseflesh”(1928) by Salvador Dalí

**Week 6:** *“What role does the unconscious play in art?” Cont.*

Monday, September 22nd

Melanie Nicholson “Alejandra Pizarnik, Georges Bataille, and the Literature of Evil” (1999) from *Latin American Literary Review*

Wednesday, September 24th

“Alejandra Pizarnik, Georges Bataille, and the Literature of Evil” cont.

Friday, September 26th

Art showcase and discussion: “Le Bout du Monde” (1948) by Leonor Fini

**Week 7**: *“What is the relation between art and politics?”*

Monday, September 29th

Plato Book VII from “The Republic.” (380-375 BCE)

Wednesday, October 1st

Book VII cont.

Friday, October 3rd

Lecture on writing expectations

**Week 8:** *“What is the relation between art and politics?” Cont.*

Monday, October 6th

Plato Book X from “The Republic.” (380-375 BCE)

Wednesday, October 8th

Book X cont.

Friday, October 10th

In-Class Midterm workshop

**Week 9:** *“What is the relation between art and politics?” Cont.*

Monday, October 13th

Aristotle selections from “Poetics” (335 BCE)

Wednesday, October 15th

Art showcase and Discussion: Poetry selections; “Canción del Naranjo Seco” (1927) by Federico García Lorca and “Los Perros Romanticos” (1994) by Roberto Bolaño

Friday, October 17th

In-Class Midterm workshop

**\*MIDTERM DUE SUNDAY OCT 19TH AT 11:59PM\***

**Week 10:** *“What role does the imagination play in making art?”*

Monday, October 20th

Federico García Lorca “Imaginación, Inspiración, Evasión.” (1928)

Wednesday, October 22nd

“Imaginación, Inspiración, Evasión” lecture cont.

Friday, October 24th

Art showcase and Discussion: “The Two Fridas” (1939) by Frida Kahlo

**Week 11:** *“What is the relation between art and technology?”*

Monday, October 27th

Susan Sontag “In Plato’s Cave” from *On Photography* (1977)

Wednesday, October 29th

“In Plato’s Cave” cont.

Friday, October 31st

Art showcase and Discussion: Series of photographs from Diane Arbus; “Two female impersonators backstage” (1962), “A Widow in Her Bedroom, 55th Street, New York City” (1963), and “Elderly couple on a park bench” (1969)

**Week 12:** *“What is the relation between art and technology?” Cont.*

Monday, November 3rd

John Berger Chapter I from “Ways of Seeing.” (1972)

Wednesday, November 5th

“Ways of Seeing” cont.

Friday, November 7th **(Last day to drop course(s) with a grade of W)**

Art showcase and Discussion: Alamy Licensed Image “PARIS, FRANCE - August 18, 2017: Visitors take photo of Mona Lisa at the Louvre Museum” (2017) by Nikolai Sorokin

**Week 13:** *“What is the relation between art and culture?”*

Monday, November 10th

W.E.B. Du Bois “Criteria of Negro Art” (1926) from *The Crisis*, Alain Locke “Art or Propaganda?” (1928) from literary journal *Harlem*

Wednesday, November 12th

“Criteria of Negro Art” and “Art or Propaganda?” cont.

Friday, November 14th

“Searching for Augusta Savage” (2024) Documentary by PBS

**Week 14:** *“What is the relation between art and culture?” Cont.*

Monday, November 17th

Nicholas Alden Riggle “Street Art: The Transfiguration of the Commonplaces” (2010) from *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*

Wednesday, November 19th

Art showcase and Discussion: Photography of Denton graffiti nook on W Hickory St, next to Aura Coffee.

Friday, November 21st

In-Class final group presentations workshop

**\*FALL BREAK NOVEMBER 24TH – NOVEMBER 30TH, NO CLASSES THIS WEEK\***

**Week 15:** *“What is the relation between art and culture?” Cont.*

Monday, December 1st

bell hooks “Altars of Sacrifice: Re-membering Basquiat” (1994) from *Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representations*

Wednesday, December 3rd

In-Class final group presentations workshop

Friday, December 5th

**\*READING DAY – NO CLASSES\***

**Week 16: FINAL PRESENTATIONS**

**\*FINAL PRESENTATION POWERPOINT DUE SUNDAY DEC 7TH AT 11:59PM\***

Monday, December 8th

Final group presentations

Wednesday, December 10th

Final group presentations cont.

Friday, December 12th

Final group presentations cont.

**Academic Integrity:**

According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University. Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive a "0" for that particular assignment or exam. Additionally, the incident will be reported to the Dean of Students, who may impose further penalty.

According to the UNT catalog, the term "cheating" includes, but is not limited to:

1. use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations;
2. dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments;
3. the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty or staff member of the university;
4. dual submission of a paper or project, or resubmission of a paper or project to a different class without express permission from the instructor(s); or
5. any other act designed to give a student an unfair advantage.
6. The "unauthorized" use of any person or technology that assists in a student's assignment, project, or paper is considered cheating under the UNT Student Academic Integrity Policy (UNT Policy 6.003). Unless a professor or instructor gives explicit "authorization," AI cannot be used to complete assignments, projects, or papers. Doing so will result in a "cheating" violation.
   1. AI should not be used to assist in writing papers, searching for sources, or creating citations. Citations provided by AI are fabricated by mimicking existing bodies of work. In most cases, AI will pull direct quotes from existing sources to answer queries and make-up information about the source.

**\*\*\*\*\*Course Generative AI Policy\*\*\*\*\*\***

**Use of AI generated content without permission is not allowed. If you choose to use Grammarly or similar for spelling and minor grammar edits, you must submit a clean draft – mistakes and all – as well as a clearly labelled final version that discloses what program you used and how. All written work will be submitted through Turinitin, which has an integrated AI-checker. Given the possibility of false positives, I strongly suggest drafting your work with track changes on or through a google doc with version history that clearly shows your writing process.**

The term "plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to:

1. the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment; and
2. the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

**ADA Accommodation Statement:**

The University of North Texas makes reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities. Students needing reasonable academic accommodations must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the student will request their letter of accommodation. ODA will provide faculty with a reasonable accommodation letter via email to begin a private discussion regarding a student’s specific needs in a course. Students may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to meet with faculty regarding their accommodations during office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the Office of Disability Access website: <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access>. Alternatively, contact the ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323

**Survivor Advocacy:**

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Federal laws (Title IX and the Violence Against Women Act) and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, and therefore prohibit sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking, and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. UNT’s Survivor Advocates can assist a student who has been impacted by violence by filing protective orders, completing crime victim’s compensation applications, contacting professors for absences related to an assault, working with housing to facilitate a room change where appropriate, and connecting students to other resources available both on and off campus. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565-2648. Additionally, alleged sexual misconduct can be non-confidentially reported to the Title IX Coordinator at oeo@unt.edu or at (940) 565 2759.

**Emergency Notification & Procedures:**

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to the UNT Learning Management System (LMS) for contingency plans for covering course materials.