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**University of North Texas**

**PHIL 1900**: **Philosophy of Art**

**Spring 2025**

Instructor: Anna Myers Email: Anna.Myers@unt.edu

Office hours: by appointment only Section/Time:

Office location: 320f or zoom Sec. 003 – TTH 9.30-10.50 AM

Class location: GAB 114 Sec. 004 – TTH 11.00-12.20 PM

TA (sec. 003 only): Sibillá Cavada TA email: Sibilla.Cavada@unt.edu

“*The function of art is to do more than tell it like it is – it’s to imagine what is possible.*” –bell hooks

**Rationale and course outline:** This class examines what makes something art, what makes someone an artist, and how we understand and appreciate art. Focusing on movies, music, painting, and performance, the class analyzes what makes a work great, good, meh, or awful, and examines power, profit, and the role of art in our lives.

We will consider the relation of art and beauty, art and pleasure, art and disgust, art and emotion, art and expression; music and criticism, painting and drawing, literature and writing, architecture and design, dancing, doodling, and video games.

**Course Outcomes:** By the end of the course students should be able to demonstrate the ability to:

* accurately and fairly represent the thoughts and ideas of another
* think critically about a text or set of ideas
* clearly and compellingly communicate their own conclusions in conversation with others
* articulate what social and personal responsibility looks like in particular circumstances

**Teaching Philosophy:** My responsibility as your instructor is to create a space where you are empowered to think critically. Every one of you has something valuable that you will bring to this class. I employ assignments that engage you in conversation with the authors, your fellow classmates, and larger society to promote your ability to actively participate in debates surrounding philosophical questions.

**Format and Procedures:** We will meet two times per week throughout the term. This class will be fully in person with some lecture to introduce, contextualize, and clarify readings. Students should expect to actively engage with the material and class time will focus on small and large group discussion, application exercises, low stakes in-class assessments, and creative activities.

**Course Requirements:**

**Attendance:** You are expected to be on time and attend every class. Research has shown that students who attend class are much more likely to succeed. This course utilizes a seating chart, students should have already chosen a seat they would be content setting in for the duration of the semester by the second week of class. If you are not present when attendance is taken, you will be counted absent for the day. Excessive absences will lower your grade. Owing to the contingencies of life, **you are permitted 4 unexcused absences**, after which each subsequent absence will lower your final attendance grade by one letter grade. If a student misses a class, that student is responsible for class content, assignments missed, and upcoming due dates. It is your responsibility to keep up with the class. If you do not stay for the entirety of class, you will be counted absent. You will also be counted absent if you are wearing earphones during class without ODA permission or spending excessive time on your phone; please be aware that you may be asked to leave the classroom if you engage in these activities.

**Communication:** Communication regarding course information will be handled through Canvas. If you have questions or concerns at any point during the term and wish to contact me via email, please contact me using the address listed above. The instructor will do her best to respond within 48 hours. Emails pertaining to information that is already available to you on Canvas or on the syllabus may not be responded to at all. In your email correspondence with me you must include the time our class meets in the subject field. (Example: PHIL 2500.002 T/Th 10:30AM.) Please sign the email so that I know who I am communicating with; keep in mind that I have numerous courses with many students.

**Office hours:** I will be available for office hours to discuss the course material by appointment. Students must either write me an email or set an appointment with me after our regularly held class sessions. Please keep in mind that office hours are not intended to make up for an entire class session. You will be responsible for any material that you miss due to an absence.

***Emergency communications****:* 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 Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials. If Canvas is not accessible during the emergency, contact me via email for more information.

Recommended Materials: Hick, Darren Hudson. *Introducing Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art* (3rd Edition). Bloomsbury Academic, 2023. ISBN: 978-1-3502-5675-0



All other assigned readings will be made available on our Canvas page

**Final grades will consist of the following:**

**Attendance 20%**

 See attendance policy.

 **Reading Quizzes (x 6) 25%**

Reading Quizzes are posted to Canvas. Quizzes consist of multiple-choice and true/false questions. Students should expect quizzes to cover content from previous class/units.

 **Short Writes (x 4)**  **25%**

Short Writes are 300-word responses to a prompt. Students will receive high grades for completion (i.e., word-count) and for good grammar, good reasoning, and close attention to the prompt. Failure to meet these requirements will result in a low grade.

**Meaning-Making Assessment** **30%**

The Meaning-Making Assessment may be thought of as a “final project.” Put simply, the MMA is an in-class presentation with a follow-up cross-examination of the student’s knowledge about content from the course. The MMA is a small group project (three students per group).

**Letter grades are distributed as follows:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A | 90-100 % |
| B | 80-89 % |
| C | 70-79 % |
| D | 60-69% |
| F | 0-59% |

**At the end of the semester, I will drop one (1) Reading Quiz grade. Other extra credit opportunities may be provided at the instructor’s discretion, but these are not guaranteed.**

**I DO NOT ACCEPT LATE WORK (with the exception of late work that falls within UNT authorized absences guidelines).**

**Academic Integrity:** 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.

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.

**Acceptable Student Behavior:** Students must be respectful of the instructor and their fellow students. When addressing the instructor in person or through email, you must always conduct yourself in a respectful and polite manner. Student behavior that interferes with an instructor’s ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Any behavior or language used, which is deemed racist, sexist/misogynistic, ableist, homophobic/anti-LGBTQIA, or bigoted in any capacity will not be tolerated. For more on appropriate conduct, see <http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/sites/default/files/code_of_student_conduct.pdf>

**Accommodations for students with disabilities (ODA statement):** The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You 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 deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty 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 at <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access>. You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.

**Inclusivity, chosen names, and pronouns:** UNT students represent a variety of backgrounds and perspectives. The professor is committed to providing an atmosphere for learning that respects diversity. Therefore, a portion of the student’s participation grade will reflect their ability to:

* share their unique experiences, values and beliefs
* be open to the views of others
* honor the uniqueness of their colleagues
* value each other’s opinions and communicate in a respectful manner
* keep confidential discussions that the community has of a personal nature

*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.

**Retention of Student Records:** Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Blackboard online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. You have a right to view your individual record; however, information about your records will not be divulged to other individuals without the proper written consent. You are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the university’s policy in accordance with those mandates at the following link: <http://essc.unt.edu/registrar/ferpa.html>

**Succeed at UNT:** UNT endeavors to offer you a high-quality education and to provide a supportive environment to help you learn and grown. And, as a faculty member, I am committed to helping you be successful as a student. Here’s how to succeed at UNT: Show up. Find Support. Get advised. Be prepared. Get involved. Stay focused. To learn more about campus resources and information on how you can achieve success, go [http://success.unt.edu/.](http://success.unt.edu/)

**UNT Writing Center:** <https://writingcenter.unt.edu/undergraduate-tutoring?cta=section-highlight>

**Student Evaluation of Teaching (SETE):** Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The Student Evaluation of Teaching (SETE) is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. This short survey will be made available at the end of the semester to provide you with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught.

**Add/Drop Schedule for Spring 2025**: <https://registrar.unt.edu/registration/spring-academic-calendar.html>

**Course Schedule**

(*May change to accommodate public health or other unanticipated events & student needs*)

\*The instructor reserves the right to make modifications and/or adjustments to the syllabus at her discretion

**Week 1, Introduction to Course: What is Philosophy?**

Tuesday, January 14th: Read syllabus

Thursday, January 16th: Discussion: What is philosophy?

**Week 2, Introduction to the Philosophy of Art**

Tuesday, January 21st: In-class reading: Brancusi case

Thursday, January 23rd: Read Hick, *Introducing Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art,* pp. 1-16 [pdf on canvas]

**Week 3, Introduction: What is Art?**

Tuesday, January 28th: Read Hick, *Introducing Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art,* pp. 19-48 [pdf on canvas]

Thursday, January 30th: Read Aristotle, *Poetics* [pdf on canvas]

**Reading Quiz 1—Due Sunday (2/2) by 11:59pm**

**Week 4, What is Art?**

Tuesday, February 4th: Leo Tolstoy, “What is Art?” [pdf on canvas]

Thursday, February 6th: Levinson, “Intention and Interpretation in Literature” [pdf on canvas]

**Week 5, Introduction: How do we Interpret the Meaning of Art?**

Tuesday, February 11th: Hick, *Introducing Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art,* pp. 56-66 [pdf on canvas]

Thursday, February 13th: Read Hick, *Introducing Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art,* pp. 90-100 and selected passages from David Hume [pdf on canvas]

**Reading Quiz 2—Due Sunday (2/16) by 11:59pm**

**Week 6, Introduction: How do we Judge Art?**

Tuesday, February 18th: Susan Sontag, “Notes on Camp” [pdf on canvas]

Thursday, February 20th: In-class film: TBD

**Week 7, How do we Judge Art?**

Tuesday, February 25th: Pierre Bourdieu “A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste” [pdf on canvas]

Thursday, February 27th: Hick, *Introducing Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art* pp. 124-151 [pdf on canvas]

**Reading Quiz 3—Due Sunday (3/2) by 11:59pm**

**Short Write 1—Due Sunday (3/2) by 11:59pm**

**Week 8, Introduction: The Ontology of Art**

Tuesday, March 4th: Heidegger, “The Origin of the Work of Art” [pdf on canvas]

Thursday, March 6th: Gadamer, “The Ontology of the Work of Art and its Hermeneutical Significance” [pdf on canvas]

**Week 9, The Ontology of Art**

Tuesday, March 18th: bell hooks “In Our Glory: Photography and Black Life” [pdf on canvas]

Thursday, March 20th: Andre Breton, “The Manifesto of Surrealism” [pdf on canvas]

**Week 10, The Ontology of Art**

Tuesday, March 25th: Joseph Kosuth “Art after Philosophy” [pdf on canvas]

Thursday, March 27th: In-class film: *Jackson Pollock Documentary*

**Reading Quiz 4—Due Sunday (3/30) by 11:59pm**

**Short Write 2—Due Sunday (3/30) by 11:59pm**

**Week 12, Introduction: Art and Moral Responsibility**

Tuesday, April 1st: Plato, *The Republic*, Bk X [pdf on canvas]

Thursday, April 3rd: Hick, *Introducing Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art,* pp. 187-213 [pdf on canvas]

**Week 13, Introduction: Art and Politics**

Tuesday, April 8thth: Susan Sontag, “Fascinating Fascism” [pdf on canvas]

Thursday, April 10th: W.E.B Du Bois, “All Art is Propaganda” and Alain Locke, “The Distinction Between Art and Propaganda” [pdf on canvas]

**Reading Quiz 5—Due Sunday (4/13) by 11:59pm**

**Short Write 3—Due Sunday (4/13) by 11:59pm**

**Week 14, Introduction: Performative and Dramatic Arts: Movies, Music, and Theater**

Tuesday, April 15th: Noël Carroll, “The Power of Movies” [pdf on canvas]

Thursday, April 17th: Nietzsche, *Birth of Tragedy* [pdf on canvas]

**Week 15, Performative and Dramatic Arts: Movies, Music, and Theater**

Tuesday, April 22nd: Theodor Adorno [TBD] [pdf on canvas]

Thursday, April 24th: In-class film: *Chasing Trane: The John Coltrane Documentary* (2016)

**Reading Quiz 6—Due Sunday (4/27) by 11:59pm**

**Short Write 4—Due Sunday (4/27) by 11:59pm**

**Week 16, Meaning-Making Presentations**

 Tuesday, April 29th: Group presentations

 Thursday, May 1st: Group presentations

**Week 17, Finals week**

Group presentations continued (TBD, more information will be given later on in the semester)