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**University of North Texas**

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

**Fall 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: ENV 115 Sec. 004 – TTH 11.00-12.20 PM

TA (sec. 004 only): Hayden Ridings TA email (sec.004 only):

TA office hours: by appointment only HaydenRidings@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 and art.

**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 and participation:** You are expected to be on time and attend class. If you are not present when attendance is taken, you will be counted absent for the day. Excessive absences will lower your grade. At times, I will ask you to complete an ‘exit ticket’ before you leave. Your completion of these pop assignments will contribute towards/detract from your attendance and participation grade. Exit tickets will be graded as complete, half-complete, or incomplete. 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. I take attendance on paper. **Your attendance grade will be uploaded to canvas at the end of the semester, so, in the meantime, you are responsible for tracking your absences.**

**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 (Anna.Myers@unt.edu). 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.

**Technology:** No electronic devices (phones, laptops, tablets, etc.) are permitted in the classroom except as approved by the ODA. There will be some days that I ask you to bring a laptop with you to share and discuss artworks with other students. You will be informed of which days you need to bring a laptop ahead of time. Because electronic devices are not permitted in the classroom, **you are expected to print out the readings each week before coming to class**. All required reading materials will be made available on canvas in advance. Excessive phone use will result in the student being marked absent for the day. If there is an emergency, please step out of the classroom to use your phone.

**Guide on how to utilize UNT printers:** <https://library.unt.edu/services/printing-scanning-copies/>

**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.

**Required materials:** Paper notebook, pen, and a highlighter. You will also need access to a printer.

**All assigned readings will be made available on our Canvas page. There is no textbook for this course.**

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

**Attendance and participation 15%**

 See attendance policy.

 **Weekly Annotation-Reading Response (x 15) 30%**

Each week students will turn in a physical copy of their annotations to the instructor. Annotations are usually due at the end of class on Tuesdays (please see the reading schedule for due dates and exceptions). On weeks where we are watching a film, you will need to turn in annotations for both the reading and the film. You are expected to follow a prompt, which will change weekly. Some weeks you will annotate for keywords, other weeks you might be asked to give a personal response or a summary of the reading (please see the reading schedule and canvas page for more guidelines). Students are responsible for printing out the readings.

 **Midterm Essay**  **25%**

The Midterm essay is a 600-word response to a prompt(s). 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.

Students may make up some lost points on the Midterm paper by resubmitting their assignment with corrections. If a student wishes to make up lost points, they must resubmit their revised paper in the following two weeks of receiving their initial grade. Students caught using AI or plagiarizing will not be given this opportunity.

**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 to four students per group).

**Letter grades are distributed as follows:**

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

**I DO NOT ACCEPT LATE ANNOTATIONS OR MEANING-MAKING ASSESSMENTS (with the exception of late work that falls within UNT authorized absences guidelines). If you cannot make it to class when annotations are due, you may drop them off at my mailbox in the Department of Philosophy and Religion (ENV 225) or scan a clear, legible copy (using Adobe Scan for phone or a scanner machine) and email them to me. If you send me a photo of your annotations, it needs to be clear and legible (so please just use Adobe Scan, it’s easy!). I will deduct 2.5 points from your midterm essay for each day it is late.**

**AI Generated Content Policy:** Use of artificial intelligence (AI) to generate content without permission is not allowed (and also has a huge environmental toll!). 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 Turnitin, which has an integrated AI-checker. Given the possibility of false positives, I strongly suggest drafting your work with track changes on in word or through a google doc with version history that clearly shows your writing process. Please see the academic integrity policy below.

**Academic Integrity:** Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive a "0" for that particular assignment or exam. You will not be given an opportunity to retake the assignment. 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> For two points of extra credit to your final grade, email me a picture of a jumping spider.

**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 Fall 2025**: <https://registrar.unt.edu/registration/fall-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**

Tuesday, August 19th: Read syllabus

Thursday, August 21st: In-class reading: The Brancusi Case

ANOTATIONS (KEYWORDS) DUE AT THE END OF CLASS

**Week 2**

Tuesday, August 26th: Collingwood

ANOTATIONS (ARGUMENT TRACKING) DUE AT THE END OF CLASS

Thursday, August 28th: In-class discussion

**Week 3**

Tuesday, September 2nd: Saito

ANOTATIONS (PERSONAL RESPONSE) DUE AT THE END OF CLASS

Thursday, September 4th: In-class discussion

**Week 4**

Tuesday, September 9th: Danto

ANOTATIONS (THESIS) DUE AT THE END OF CLASS

Thursday, September 11th: In-class discussion: Gallery discussion (bring laptop)

**Week 5**

Tuesday, September 16th: Selected manifestos

ANOTATIONS (CONTEXT) DUE AT THE END OF CLASS

Thursday, September 18th: In-class discussion: Debate

**Week 6**

Tuesday, September 23rd: Sontag

ANOTATIONS (KEYWORDS AND THESIS) DUE AT THE END OF CLASS

Thursday, September 25th: Film screening

ANOTATIONS (CONNECTIONS) DUE AT THE END OF CLASS (Film response)

**Week 7**

Tuesday, September 30th: Plato

ANOTATIONS (THESIS AND PERSONAL RESPONSE) DUE AT THE END OF CLASS

Thursday, October 2nd: In-class discussion/writing workshop

**Week 8**

Tuesday, October 7th: Aristotle

ANOTATIONS (SUMMARY) DUE AT THE END OF CLASS

Thursday, October 9th: In-class discussion/writing workshop

**Week 9**

Tuesday, October 14th: Berger

ANOTATIONS (CONTEXT AND ARGUMENT TRACKING) DUE AT THE END OF CLASS

Thursday, October 16th: In-class discussion/writing workshop

**Week 10**

Tuesday, October 21st: Sontag

ANOTATIONS (SUMMARY) DUE AT THE END OF CLASS

**MIDTERM ESSAY DUE OCTOBER 22nd**

Thursday, October 23rd: In-class discussion: Gallery discussion (bring laptop)

**Week 11**

Tuesday, October 28th; DuBois and Locke

ANOTATIONS (KEYWORDS AND PERSONAL RESPONSE) DUE AT THE END OF CLASS

Thursday, October 30th: In-class discussion: Debate/choose final project groups

**Week 12**

Tuesday, November 4th: Riggle

ANOTATIONS (SUMMARY) DUE AT THE END OF CLASS

Thursday, November 6th: In-class discussion/final project workshop

**Week 13**

Tuesday, November 11th: hooks

ANOTATIONS (SUMMARY) DUE AT THE END OF CLASS

Thursday, November 13th: Basquiat (1996)

**Week 14**

Tuesday, November 18th: In-class discussion

ANOTATIONS (CONNECTIONS AND PERSONAL RESPONSE) DUE AT THE END OF CLASS (Film response)

Thursday, November 20th: Final project workshop

**THANKSGIVING BREAK NOVEMBER 24th-28th**

**Week 15**

 Tuesday, December 2nd: Meaning-Making Presentations

 Thursday, December 4th: Meaning-Making Presentations

**Week 16**

No class!