

Professor Elisabeth Camp

*Office:* 426 Logan Hall

*Office Hours:* Wednesdays 2-3:30 and by appointment

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**Required Text:** Coursepack, at Campus Copy Center, 3907 Walnut Street.

**Recommended Text:** *Understanding Comics*, at Penn Book Center, 34<sup>th</sup> and Sansom.

All handouts, including paper topics, will be posted on Blackboard.

***Course Description:***

This course will investigate what art is and what role it plays in our lives. Is there some distinctive quality or function that all works of art have, which makes them art? Do works of art have a distinctive kind of meaning, which cannot be expressed in other terms? What criteria should we use in evaluating art: should art be beautiful, original, or morally uplifting?

In asking these questions, it's important that we test our answers on actual artworks, so you should spend as much free time with art as possible. Your first writing assignment will require you to visit the Art Museum, and your other papers will ask you to apply the theories we've been discussing to specific works of art.

***Course Requirements:***

- One short writing assignment, c. 500 words (5% of total course grade).
- Two short papers, c. 1500 words (25% each of course grade).
- A final paper, c. 2500 words (30% of course grade).
- Attendance and participation in lecture and section (15% of course grade).
- Daily readings: you should do the assigned reading *before* class.

Always bring the coursepack to class.

I will also post study questions on Blackboard by the beginning of each week. They are intended to help guide you through the readings, and they'll give you some sense for where we'll be heading. You will be expected to post a response to one of these questions on the Blackboard discussion board *before* section (by Thursday night) each week.

In addition, if you must miss either lecture or discussion, you should make up the absence by writing a short response (less than a page) to a question about the material discussed that day.

Except in extreme conditions, extensions on papers must be granted well before the due date, and only at our discretion; otherwise, late papers will be downgraded 1/3 letter grade per day.

You are expected to be familiar with and to abide by Penn's policy on academic and intellectual integrity: <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/osl/acadint.html>.

Here are some useful online resources for philosophy and art:

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <http://plato.stanford.edu>

American Society for Aesthetics: <http://www.aesthetics-online.org>

ArtLex (a dictionary of art): <http://www.artlex.com/>

ARTstor (a database of visual images): <http://www.artstor.org>

## Schedule of Topics and Readings

(subject to revision: check Blackboard for updates)

Wed 1/13 Introduction  
 Mon 1/18 NO CLASS (Note assignment to visit Art Museum, due 1/21)

### **What is art? What does it do?**

#### *Mimesis and catharsis*

Wed 1/20 Plato: *Republic* II, III, X (excerpts)  
 Thurs 1/21 **\*First assignment due 5 p.m.\***  
 Mon 1/25 Plato cont'd  
 Wed 1/27 Aristotle: *Poetics* §§4-7 (excerpts)

#### *Expression and inspiration*

Mon 2/1 Plato: *Ion* (excerpt)  
 Wed 2/3 Shelley: "A Defense of Poetry" (excerpt)  
 Wordsworth: "Ode: Intimations of Immortality"

#### *Varieties of pleasure*

Mon 2/8 Bentham and Mill, excerpts  
 Kant: *Critique of Judgment* §§1-9, 14-16, 19-22, 43-45  
 Wed 2/10 Kant cont'd

#### *Anti-essentialist definitions of art*

Mon 2/15 Weitz: "The Role of Theory in Aesthetics"  
 Wed 2/17 Danto: "The Artworld"  
**First paper topics handed out**

### **'Where' is art? What kind of meaning does it have?**

#### *Formalism and materialism*

Mon 2/22 Bell: "The Aesthetic Hypothesis"  
 Greenberg: "Modernist Painting"  
 [optional: Kandinsky and Malevich excerpts]

#### *Art as idea*

Wed 2/24 Collingwood: *Principles of Art*, chs. 2 & 7  
 Mon 3/1 LeWitt: "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art"  
 Lippard: "Escape Attempts" (on Blackboard)  
 Vogel: "Swimming with Famous Dead Sharks" (on Blackboard)  
**First papers due**

#### *Medium and Meaning*

Wed 3/3 Dewey: "Experience and Expression"  
 Bosanquet: "The Importance of the Medium"  
**3/8-3/10 NO CLASS: Spring Break**  
 Mon 3/15 Brooks: "The Heresy of Paraphrase"  
 Stolnitz: "On the Cognitive Triviality of Art"  
 Keats: "Ode on a Grecian Urn"  
 [optional: Levinson: "Messages in Art"]

***What determines aesthetic value?***

*Whose judgment matters?*

- Wed 3/17 Hume: "On the Standard of Taste"
  - Mon 3/22 Kant: *Critique of Judgment* §§32-42
  - Wed 3/24 Babbitt: "Who Cares if You Listen?"  
Tolstoy: *What is Art?* (excerpts)  
Weingarten: "Pearls Before Breakfast" (on Blackboard)
- Second paper topics handed out**

*Does morality matter?*

- Mon 3/29 Gaut: "The Ethical Criticism of Art"  
**Watch *A Clockwork Orange* (screening outside of class)**
- Wed 3/31 Nussbaum: "Fancy"
- Mon 4/5 Posner: "Against Ethical Criticism"  
**Second papers due**
- Wed 4/7 Kieran: "Forbidden Knowledge"

*Does originality matter?*

- Mon 4/12 Kant: *Critique of Judgment* §§46-50  
Eliot: "Tradition and the Individual Talent"  
Borges: "Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote"
- Wed 4/14 Goodman: "Art and Authenticity"  
Lessing: "What is Wrong with a Forgery?"  
Russell: "As Long as Men Make Art..." (on Blackboard)

*Why should we care about aesthetic judgment and criticism?*

- Mon 4/19 Nehamas: "Essay on Beauty and Judgment"
- Wed 4/21 Harrison: "Some Uses of 'Good' in Criticism"  
Walton: "How Marvelous! Toward a Theory of Aesthetic Value"
- Mon 4/26 *Review and Conclusion*  
**Final Paper Topics Handed Out**
- Fri 5/11 **Final Paper Due**