Bergen Community College  
Division of Arts & Humanities  
Department of Philosophy & Religion

Course Syllabus

PHR-107 Introduction to the Philosophy of Art

Basic Information about Course and Instructor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester and year:</th>
<th>Course and Section Number:</th>
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<td>Meeting Times and Locations:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instructor:</td>
<td>Office Location:</td>
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<td>Phone:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Departmental Secretary: [optional]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office Hours:</td>
<td>Email Address:</td>
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Course Description

PHR-107 Introduction to the Philosophy of Art is a study of the basic problems, issues, and questions with respect to the understanding, appreciation, interpretation, and evaluation of art and beauty. Readings may include philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Hume, Kant, Nietzsche, Beardsley, and Danto. Topics of discussion include: the nature and definition of art; the nature of expression and representation in the arts; environmental aesthetics; the connections between art and ethics and politics; and the nature of aesthetic value. 

3 lectures, 3 credits  
Putative General Education Course – Humanities Elective

Pre-requisites and/or co-requisites: None.

Student Learning Objectives: As a result of meeting the requirements in this course, students will be able to

1. analyze and evaluate the classic texts in the history of the philosophy of art;
2. identify and analyze the basic problems in aesthetics and the philosophy of art;
3. interpret, summarize, and paraphrase, both orally and in writing, the views of philosophers as expressed in philosophical aesthetics texts;
4. use the logical and critical thinking methods of philosophy to analyze and evaluate the ways in which philosophers attempt to solve the problems of aesthetics; and
5. state and support their own views on philosophical issues in aesthetics logically, coherently, concisely, and clearly, both orally and in writing.

In pursuit of the foregoing goals, the course is based on the reading and discussion of philosophical writings (i.e., primary sources, and secondary sources) in the field of aesthetics; the basic principles and
methods of logical reasoning are introduced; the techniques of philosophical research and writing are reviewed; students are given the opportunity and are encouraged to participate actively in class discussions; and students are required to do a substantial amount of expository and critical writing in response to the material presented in the course.

The Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) in this course are intended to be aligned with as many of the college's Core Competencies and General Education Goals as possible. They are also correlated with the overall Learning Goals of the Philosophy Program. In addition, student progress in reaching the course's SLOs is to be assessed through a variety of assessment types (tools) and on the basis of a variety of assessment criteria.

Course Content

The course is intended to introduce students to some of the history of aesthetics, to the basic problems and methods of philosophy in general, and to the writings and ideas of some of the major philosophers, critics and theorists in aesthetics. Therefore, the course includes the following (mandatory) components:

1. A review of the (at least general) history of aesthetics.
3. The study of the work of at least one philosopher from each of the following three groups:
   b. Hume, Kant.
   c. Contemporary aestheticians, such as Collingwood, Dewey, Beardsley, Weitz, Danto, Dickie, Wollheim, Goodman, Kivy, Carroll.

In addition, an instructor may study one subfield of aesthetics in more detail and depth. These may include the aesthetics of nature, the philosophy of music, literature, film, visual arts, dance, and theatre.

The course may be presented as an historically-ordered study of the writings of major philosophers in aesthetics, or as a topically-ordered study of the ways in which ancient, modern, and contemporary philosophers have approached the major problems of aesthetics.

Special Features of the Course (if any) [to be designated by the instructor]

E.g., the use of learning technologies in the course (Internet, PowerPoint, etc.); the inclusion of technological literacy and/or information literacy learning in the course; etc.

Course Texts and/or Other Study Materials

It is recommended that a basic, contemporary, introductory textbook in aesthetics, AND an anthology of primary source readings be used in Introduction to Aesthetics (or a book that includes both, e.g., Christopher Janaway, Reading Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art: Selected Texts with Interactive Commentary, Reading Philosophy Series (Malden, MA: Blackwell/Wiley, 2006).
**Introductory Textbooks**


**Primary Source Anthologies**


Helpful Reference Books for Students and Instructors


Writing and Critical Thinking Requirement(s)

Because PHR-107 is a (putative) General Education course, it requires students to complete a variety of critical thinking and writing assignments. These assignments may include class discussions and debates requiring the application of critical thinking skills, short in-class essays, out-of-class writing projects (journals, research papers, argument-analysis papers, book reviews, etc.), tests and examinations containing essay components, and so forth. Instructors will respond and comment on students' writing in detail.

Grading Policy

A student's final grade for the course is based primarily on his or her performance on the required work for the course (writing assignments, examinations, class presentations, etc.) and on his or her overall mastery of the material covered in the course. A student's class participation may also be evaluated, and the grade thereon may be used as a factor in determining the student's final grade for the course; but a class participation grade will count for no more than fifteen percent (15%) of the final grade.

Attendance Policy

BCC Attendance Policy:

All students are expected to attend punctually every scheduled meeting of each course in which they are registered. Attendance and lateness policies and sanctions are to be determined by the instructor for each section of each course. These will be established in writing on the individual course outline. Attendance will be kept by the instructor for administrative and counseling purposes.

Philosophy and Religion Departmental Attendance Policy:

Students are expected to attend class regularly and punctually. Attendance will be taken at each class session. It is expected that class will be conducted such that students will benefit in their written work by the lectures and class discussion. If students occasionally arrive late, they should be encouraged to enter quietly, not disturbing the class. If students miss class, they should be encouraged to use the course calendar to stay abreast of material. It is probably a good idea for students to find study partners and to exchange telephone numbers. Make-ups for examinations should be allowed by the instructor if, in the instructor's judgment, the student has presented a good excuse for missing the work. Instructors may
penalize work which is late; however, the instructor’s policies for make-ups and late work must be clearly specified on the student guide.

**Attendance Policy in this Course:**

[To be designated by the instructor]

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Other College, Divisional, and/or Departmental Policy Statements</th>
<th>[optional but recommended]</th>
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Examples:
Statement on plagiarism and/or academic dishonesty.
ADA statement.
Sexual Harassment statement.
Statement on acceptable use of BCC technology.
Statement on the purpose and value of faculty office hours.

**Student and Faculty Support Services** [optional but recommended]

List support services, e.g., the Writing Center, the Math Lab, the Tutorial Center, Online Writing Lab (OWL), Office of Specialized Services, etc. Include information on the BCC Library.

**Example:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student and Faculty Support Services</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Distance Learning Office – for any problems you may have accessing online courses Room C-334 201-612-5581 <a href="mailto:psimms@bergen.edu">psimms@bergen.edu</a></td>
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<td>The Tutoring Center – Room S-118 201-447-7908</td>
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<td>The Technology Assisted Learning Lab (Math and English) Room C-110 201-447-7988</td>
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<td>The Writing Center – Room C-110 201-447-7136</td>
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<td>The Online Writing Lab (OWL) – <a href="http://www.bergen.edu/owl">www.bergen.edu/owl</a></td>
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<td>The Office of Specialized Services (for Students with Disabilities) – Room S-153 201-612-5270</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Sidney Silverman Library – Reference Desk Room L-226 201-447-7436</td>
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Include the following statement on Logos – The BCC Philosophy Club

**Logos – The BCC Philosophy Club**

Logos usually meets on Tuesdays during the Activities Period, 12:30-1:25 PM, in Room L-342. I encourage you to join the club. Since you are interested in the study of philosophy, you should find the meetings and other activities of the philosophy club very interesting. For further information, check the Philosophy & Religion bulletin board adjacent to Room L-325A or contact LOGOS Advisor, Dr. Vanda
Include a Course Outline and Calendar [can be combined in a single syllabus section]

The Course Outline and Calendar must include all of the following elements:

- A daily or (at least) weekly schedule of topics to be covered.
- Dates for exams, quizzes, or other means of assessment. (This does not mean that all evaluation of students must be in groups and at the same time. Exams and other means of assessment can be listed as “to be scheduled individually.”)
- Due dates for major assignments – e.g., when is a paper due; if the topic has to be approved, when; if an outline or draft is an interim step, when it is due.
- Any required special events must be included in the outline/calendar, e.g., a lecture by a visiting speaker, a dramatic or musical performance, a field trip.
- Designation of Student Learning Objectives – by number – for each topic (see sample below).
- A note to students stating that the course outline and calendar is tentative and subject to change, depending upon the progress of the class.

Sample Format for Course Outline and Calendar

Note to Students: The following Course Outline and Calendar is tentative and subject to change, depending upon the progress of the class.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Week(s)</th>
<th>Date(s)</th>
<th>Topic/Activity</th>
<th>Learning Objectives</th>
<th>Assignments/Events</th>
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See the (1) Sample Course Outline and (2) Sample Course Outline and Calendar below.
SAMPLE COURSE OUTLINE

Readings will be assigned by the numbers below.

**Key:**


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**Introduction**

1. C: pp. 1-17

**Art, Value, and Philosophy**

2. J: pp. 5-55 (Plato, Nietzsche); C: pp. 19-32 (representation, mimesis), 58-106 (Chapter 2, Art and Expression)

**Essay 1:** What might be some reasons to ban art today? Which art forms? How would you define an art form? Would you, as Plato does, use mimesis? One may want to consider such phenomena as “gangsta” rap, violent video games, pornography, obscenity, ratings for film, broadcast radio and television.

**Aesthetics, Art, and Nature**

3. J: pp. 56-102 (Carroll, Hepburn)

**Essay 2:** We seem to appreciate nature aesthetically (give examples) among other ways we engage with the natural (non-synthetic) world. For this to occur, did humans have to make art and learn to appreciate it, or did our appreciation of engagement with nature first cause us to make and appreciate artifacts/art? Why? Why not? In other words, does art appreciation follow from nature appreciation or vice versa?

**Aesthetic Judgments**

4. J: pp. 103-143 (Hume, Kant); C: pp. 155-204 (Chapter 4, Art and Aesthetic Experience), pp. 107-154 (Chapter 3, Art and Form)

**Essay 3:** (a) Are there experts or connoisseurs whose judgments about art count more, i.e., have more validity, and possess cognitive authority over others? Who might these people be? Do we have any today? How does one obtain such credentials and/or status? (b) To fully and appropriately appreciate and evaluate art, must one engage with art disinterestedly as Kant says? Why or why not?

**The Nature of Art (Definition, Function)**

5. J: pp. 143-185 (Collingwood, Dickie); C: pp. 205-268 (Chapter 5, Art, Definition, and Identification)

**Essay 4:** Can art be defined? Why or why not? What is the purpose of attempting to define art anyway?
### Authors and Works


**Essay 5:** How important is an author to his/her text? Does the author have “authority” over interpretations of his/her text? Why or why not? Are the author’s intentions relevant to interpretation? Can we always have access to intentions?

### Depiction (Representation)

7. J: pp. 224-270 (Goodman, Wollheim); C: pp. 18-57 (Chapter 1, Art and Representation)

**Essay 6:** What does it mean for one thing to represent another thing? Are there differences among representation, presentation, re-presentation, documentation, exemplification, depiction, resemblance?

### SAMPLE COURSE OUTLINE AND CALENDAR

[with designation of Student Learning Objectives – by number – for each topic]

**Note to Students:** The following Course Outline and Calendar is tentative and subject to change, depending upon the progress of the class.

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<th>Week(s)</th>
<th>Date(s)</th>
<th>Topic/Activity/Assignments</th>
<th>Student Learning Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Sep 6, 8, 13, 15</td>
<td>Introduction: The Nature of Philosophy &amp; Aesthetics Read #1 (above) and handouts</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>Sep 20, 22, 27, 29</td>
<td>Art, Value, &amp; Philosophy Read #2 (above), Plato, Nietzsche Essay #1 assigned (due by 10/10)</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>Oct 4, 6, 13</td>
<td>Aesthetics, Art, and Nature Reading #3 (Hepburn, Carroll) Essay #2 assigned Essay #1 Due</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-10</td>
<td>Nov 1, 3, 8, 10</td>
<td>The Nature of Art (Definition and Function) Reading #5 (Collingwood, Dickie) and handouts Essay #4 assigned Essay #3 Due</td>
<td>1-5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 11-12 | Nov 15, 17, 22, 24  
 | Nov 15  
 | Nov 22  
 | Nov 25-28 | **Authors and Works**  
Reading # 6 (Barthes, Danto, handout: Foucault)  
**Essay # 5 assigned**  
**Essay # 4 due**  
**Thanksgiving Weekend** |
| 13-14 | Nov 29,  
 | Dec 1, 6, 8  
 | Nov 29  
 | Dec 8  
 | Dec 13 | **Depiction and Representation**  
Reading # 7 (Goodman, Wollheim)  
**Essay # 6 assigned**  
**Essay # 5 due**  
Reading: Aristotle's *Poetics* (excerpt) (handout)  
**Essay # 6 Due** |
| 15 | Dec 13, 15 | **Final Review and Final Examination** |

1-5

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