

PH9F7-30 Topics in Philosophy and the Arts

23/24

Department

Philosophy

Level

Taught Postgraduate Level

Module leader

Andrew Huddleston

Credit value

30

Module duration

10 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

PH9F7 Topics in Philosophy and the Arts

Module aims

This module introduces students to substantive and methodological issues in philosophical engagement with art. Can art be defined, and does philosophy of art need such a definition? How basic is art to human life? What is its value as a practice? What sort of cognitive or ethical value, if any, do works of art have? How are they properly to be interpreted? What might they express, and how? In the module, 'the arts' are taken to encompass a wide spectrum of artistic activity, but including the visual arts, literature, cinema, music, etc. A further question will be about the divide between the mass arts (popular cinema or music, etc.) and the so-called 'high' arts.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Topics:

1. Defining Art
2. Art as a Human and Historical Practice
3. The Value of Art
4. Mass Art
5. Art & Knowledge
6. Art & Morality
7. Interpreting Art
8. Expression in Art
9. Truth, Authenticity and Sentimentality

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- understand and reflect on general methodological and substantive issues raised by approaching art philosophically.
- show an advanced conceptual grasp of issues that link different art practices, that explore theoretical problems in relation to specific art forms, and that bring philosophical concerns into dialogue with the arts
- demonstrate advanced expertise in interpreting and analysing complex texts and critiquing their ideas and arguments
- develop and defend their own views on relevant issues, drawing on autonomously initiated and conducted research.

Indicative reading list

Arthur Danto, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*, Ch. 5

G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on Fine Art*, Vol. I, trans. T.M. Knox (Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 1-14.

Margaret Macdonald, "Art and Imagination," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, New Series*, Vol. 53 (1952 - 1953), p. 205-226.

Ellen Dissanayake, "Art as a Human Behavior: Toward an Ethological View of Art," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 38:4 (1980), pp. 397-406

Paul O. Kristeller, "The Modern System of the Arts: A Study in the History of Aesthetics Part I," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 12:4 (1951), p. 496-527.

Leo Tolstoy, *What is Art?*, trans. by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (Penguin, 1995), Chs. 1-IX.

Kendall Walton, "How Marvelous: Towards a Theory of Aesthetic Value," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 51:3 (1993).

Noel Carroll, *A Philosophy of Mass Art* (Oxford, 1998), Introduction and Ch. 3

Kathleen Higgins, "Mass Appeal," *Philosophy and Literature* 23:1 (1999), p. 197-205

T.W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception" in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford, 2002 [1947]).

John Gibson, "Cognitivism and the Arts," *Philosophy Compass* 3:4, p. 573-589 (2008).

Eileen John, "Reading Fiction and Conceptual Knowledge: Philosophical Thought in Literary Context," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 56:4, (1998), p. 331-348.

Jerome Stolnitz, "On the Cognitive Triviality of Art" *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, Volume 32, Issue 3, July 1992, Pages 191–200,

Anne Eaton, "Robust Immoralism" *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 70 (3):281-292 (2012).

Berys Gaut, "The Ethical Criticism of Art," *Aesthetics and Ethics: Essays at the Intersection*, ed. Jerrold Levinson (Cambridge University Press (1998), pp. 182–203.

Erich Hattala Matthes, "Immoral Artists," in *Oxford Handbook of Ethics and Art*, ed. James Harold (Oxford, forthcoming).

Sherri Irvin, "Authors, Intentions and Literary Meaning," *Philosophy Compass* 1 (2):114–128 (2006)

Sherri Irvin, "The Artist's Sanction in Contemporary Art" *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 63:4, p. 315-326 (2005).

Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," trans. Stephen Heath in *his Image, Music, Text* (Fontana, 1987)

Derek Matravers, "Art, Expression and Emotion," in *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*. Routledge, ed. Berys Gaut & Dominic Lopes (eds.), (Routledge, 2000).

Jenefer Robinson, "Expression and Expressiveness in Art," *Postgraduate Journal of Aesthetics* 4:2 (2017), pp. 19-41.

Vanessa Brassey, "The Expression of Emotion in Pictures," *Philosophy Compass* 16:9 (2021).

Marcia Eaton, "Laughing at the Death of Little Nell: Sentimental Art and Sentimental People," *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 26:4 (1989), p. 269-282.

Deborah Knight, "Why we enjoy condemning sentimentality: A meta-aesthetic perspective," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 57 (4):(1999), p. 411-420

Research element

A summative research essay is a requirement.

Interdisciplinary

The module incorporates multiple disciplines in studying art, art theories and criticism, and histories of art practices.

International

Non-UK and non-European artworks and aesthetic theories are studied on the module.

Subject specific skills

Students will:

develop understanding of recent work in philosophy of art and theorising about specific art practices

develop their capacity for critical response, analysis and argument in philosophy of art.

develop an advanced capacity for interpretation of difficult materials, including work reflecting theoretically on artworks and creative practices

develop understanding of the challenges of philosophising about art and what it means to do substantive aesthetics

Transferable skills

Students will:

hone their ability to express themselves clearly and concisely both orally and in writing

develop their skills of criticism, interpretation, synthesis of complex materials, analysis of ideas and issues, and argument

learn to bring the results of one discipline or practice to bear on those of another, assessing similarities and relevance

develop their capacities for writing, formulating a research project and carrying out independent research

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Seminars	9 sessions of 2 hours (6%)
Private study	282 hours (94%)
Total	300 hours

Private study description

No private study requirements defined for this module.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Students can register for this module without taking any assessment.

Assessment group A3

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Assessment component			
5000 word essay	100%		Yes (extension)
Reassessment component is the same			

Feedback on assessment

Feedback on essays will be provided on the coversheet for the essay, addressing standard areas of evaluation and individual content.

Availability

Courses

This module is Core for:

- Year 1 of TPHA-V7PN Postgraduate Taught Philosophy and the Arts

This module is Option list A for:

- Year 1 of TPHA-V7PM Postgraduate Taught Philosophy
- Year 1 of TPHA-V7PN Postgraduate Taught Philosophy and the Arts

This module is Option list E for:

- Year 1 of TPHA-V7PM Postgraduate Taught Philosophy