

# PH9F7-30 Topics in Philosophy and the Arts

**24/25**

**Department**

Philosophy

**Level**

Taught Postgraduate Level

**Module leader**

Eileen John

**Credit value**

30

**Module duration**

10 weeks

**Assessment**

100% coursework

**Study location**

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

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## 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. General issues such as the following will be addressed. Can art be defined, and does philosophy of art need such a definition? How basic is art to human life? Do works of art have cognitive or ethical value, and does this matter to their value as art? What is relevant to interpretation of art? In the module, 'the arts' are taken to encompass a wide spectrum of artistic activity, including the visual arts, literature, cinema, music, etc. The module will also raise questions arising from specific works, genres, oeuvres, and trends in artistic practice. The module aims to carry out philosophical theorising about art that incorporates concrete attention to the 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.

Possible topics:

Defining art

Art in human evolution

Artistic value and critical practice

Art & knowledge

Art & ethics

Expression in art

Creativity

Second half of module focusing on case studies, with topics such as:

Shame and photography

Short stories and rationality

Art and stupidity

Food as art

Aesthetics and non-western art

Art and artificial intelligence

Cultural appropriation

## **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 surrounding the nature of art, as well as theoretical problems relevant to specific art forms.
- 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*

Ellen Dissanayake, 'Art as a Human Behavior: Toward an Ethological View of Art'

Stephen Davies, *The Artful Species*

Paul O. Kristeller, 'The Modern System of the Arts'

Kendall Walton, 'How Marvellous: Towards a Theory of Aesthetic Value'

Ajume Wingo, 'African Art and the Aesthetics of Hiding and Revealing'

Susan Mullin Vogel, 'Baule: African Art Western Eyes'

Kathleen Higgins, 'Comparative Aesthetics'

John Gibson, 'Cognitivism and the Arts'

Eileen John, 'Literature and Philosophical Progress'

Anne Eaton, 'Robust Immoralism'

Berys Gaut, 'The Ethical Criticism of Art'

Marcia Eaton, 'Integrating the aesthetic and the moral'

Erich Hattala Matthes, 'Immoral Artists'  
Sherri Irvin, 'The Artist's Sanction in Contemporary Art'  
Diarmuid Costello, 'STUPID ART'  
Derek Matravers, 'Art, Expression and Emotion'  
Jenefer Robinson, 'Deeper than Reason'  
Carolyn Korsmeyer, 'Making Sense of Taste'  
Yuriko Saito, 'Everyday Aesthetics'  
Claire Bishop, 'Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics'  
C. Thi Nguyen, 'Games: Agency as Art'  
Mary Mothersill, 'Beauty and the Critic's Judgment: Remapping Aesthetics'  
Richard Wollheim, 'Criticism as Retrieval'  
Noel Carroll, 'On Criticism'  
Richard Shusterman, 'Of the Scandal of Taste: Social Privilege as Nature in the Aesthetics of Hume and Kant'

## **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

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## 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.

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## Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Students can register for this module without taking any assessment.

### Assessment group A4

	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.

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## Availability

### Courses

This module is Core for:

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

This module is Optional for:

- Year 1 of TPHA-V7P2 Postgraduate Taught Continental Philosophy

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 D for:

- Year 2 of TPHA-V7PM Postgraduate Taught Philosophy

This module is Option list E for:

- Year 1 of TPHA-V7PM Postgraduate Taught Philosophy