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Office Hours: Mon, Wed, Fri, 11 a.m. – 12 p.m. Monday 2-4:30 p.m., and 6-6:30 p.m.
Email: presbegm@udmercy.edu  Home page: http://presbegm.faculty.udmercy.edu/

Required Text: (available in University Bookstore)
Photocopies: distributed in class when needed.
Film viewing, to be announced (available in the library and/or at Blockbuster’s)

PURPOSE OF THE COURSE:

Content of this course: This course centers on the philosophy of art. It addresses the following themes/questions: What is art? Has this concept changed throughout history? In what ways? What do artists do? What is the aesthetic? How is the aesthetic related to beauty, and to nature? Are there many aesthetics? How can we understand the aesthetic sensibilities of other cultures? What is the role of art, and more specifically the museum, in society? Can we understand a work of art? How can we evaluate art? And, what emotions are invoked by art?

Objectives of the Course/ Skills Development: Be able to recognize and articulate philosophical questions, and philosophical observations, both in texts and in daily life and conversation. Be able to recognize an informal argument: its thesis/main claim, its supporting evidence. Be able to recognize and/or construct counter-arguments, and to take a position (however tentative) on philosophical issues. Be able to expand one’s view by (at least temporarily) seeing an issue from another’s perspective. Develop increased awareness of, and sensitivity to, issues of cultural differences in aesthetic taste, and different social roles for art within various communities. Be able to apply insights from class to one’s own appreciation of art, as well as to daily life. Become acquainted with and participate in the “art world” in the Detroit area.

Schedule of Readings: (subject to change)
9/5: Introductions. What is philosophy? Syllabus.
   Show and tell: bring in an everyday object which you see artistically. Explain.
9/10: Elements of Design, Gerald Brommer (line, form, shape, color, value, texture, space)
9/12: Principles of Design, Gerald Brommer (balance, movement, rhythm, contrast, emphasis, pattern, unity)

9/24, 26: Andy Goldsworthy, “River and Tides,” (DVD) and discussion

9/28: No class.

10/1 and 3: Gordon Graham, "Aesthetic Empiricism and the Challenge of Fakes and Ready-mades" (Xerox)


10/15: MIDTERM ESSAYS DUE. (Note: even if we are behind on the readings, the essay will still be due this day).


10/22: discuss videos. Reading: excerpt from Maybury-Lewis, “Millennium” (xerox)


10/31, 11/2: no class


11/23: No class – Thanksgiving break.


Show and Tell: appropriate scene from *Streetcar Named Desire;* Ingrid Bergman’s tank scene in
The Silence; (if any other of Sontag’s brief allusions appeal to you more, you can suggest them).
11/26, 28, 30, 12/3; 5, 7: To be announced.
12/11 (Tues): Final exam period 2-3:50 p.m.

GRADING: There are 100 possible points.
40 points - **20 small in class assignments**, 2 points each. Many will be reading quizzes; some will be in-class writing exercises or small group exercises.
10 points - **5 show and tell**, 2 points each. Bring an example in to class which illustrates a point of the author we are currently covering. This will probably be a reproduction of an art work, but it may be another kind of object. Verbalize to the class what your object is, and what point of our author it illustrates.
10 points - **midterm** assignment: dialogue, 4-5 pp.
15 points - **3 field trips**, 5 points each.
15 points: **final** take-home exam/ paper, incorporates reflections on several of our authors applied to your research on a particular artist. 5-7 pp.
10 points - **class participation**, including in-class group work.

Grading Scale: Final grade based on total points out of 100.

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Further descriptions of the above assignments:

**In-class Quizzes and Assignments:** There are basically two kinds of (almost) daily assignments:
**READING QUIZ:** Will happen as we begin a new author (not after we have covered the author). This means you should be reading the assignments ahead of time. You will be given reading review questions ahead of time to help you prepare for the quiz. The quiz will take a variety of formats, from true/false, matching, multiple choice, identify the passage, fill in the blank or short answer. Students who missed the quiz for whatever reason, or who are unhappy with their quiz grade, have a strict time limit of two weeks in which to complete a make-up assignment. The assignment consists of a one page typed and double spaced paper on the author who was covered by the quiz. Explicitly follow this outline: A) What is the main claim of the author? B) What is a supporting argument or piece of evidence the author puts forward in defense of his/her main claim? C) What is a possible counter-argument to the main claim (either one mentioned in the article itself, or one you think up)? D) What is your personal evaluation of the author’s main claim? -- Give reasons for your view. An upper limit of five make-up papers per student will be allowed. The paper may not receive the full points possible if it is inaccurate or poorly written. In the case of those who took the quiz, the paper grade will take the place of the quiz grade whether it is better or worse.

**IN-CLASS INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP ASSIGNMENTS:** You or a small group of 3-4 students will be assigned a study, writing, or drawing task to complete during the course period. At the end of the class a written account of the work must be signed and handed in, in order to get credit. These are in-class opportunities and so can’t be made up at a later date (includes those
who sign up late for the course). Those who want to do something to cover a missing assignment of this sort are encouraged to do extra credit.

**Show and Tell**: Many of our authors make references to certain famous works of art. You can find a copy of that work of art and bring it to class. In the case of film it may be a famous scene from a film, which you can bring as Video or DVD (cued to the scene in question). Or, the author may be referring to certain kinds of works of art, and not naming a specific art. In that case, you can find an example of the kind of art the author is talking about, and bring that to class. Or, it may be a natural object of a certain kind, or a human-made object. Whatever object you bring, you must explain the author’s commentary on the object in your own words. You will be graded on your accuracy, thoroughness and liveliness of presentation. Presentations are expected to be brief, less than five minutes. Tell the instructor before class starts that you have a show and tell presentation, and you will be called on during the class to make your presentation. To ensure that two students don't choose the same show and tell project, go to the Blackboard website at [http://knowledge.udmercy.edu](http://knowledge.udmercy.edu), and post your show and tell to the Discussion Board. The first student to post that particular art work will get to make the presentation.

Show and tell assignments will be graded according to this criteria:

1) relevance to the topic at hand

2) depth of explanation (2-3 minute discussion, explaining the name, author, and context of the art work, and getting to the heart of the aesthetic issues)

3) Clarity of explanation/presentation: is the oral presentation clear and organized? Is the art work clearly visible?

4) Participation in ongoing discussion, answering questions about the work.

Each of the above criteria is worth .5 points. If it is done well it will receive .5, otherwise you might receive .25 or 0, for a possible total of 2 points.

**Field trips**: You will make three field trips to art museums, galleries, events, festivals, or art film theatres during the semester. You will write a two page reflection on your experience, tying in at least one quote/ significant idea of one of our philosophers to your experience. You are encouraged to go to the places with other people, perhaps others from class. Here are some ideas:

1) ongoing, Thurs-Sun. Films at the Detroit Film Theatre, at the Detroit Art Institute. (Note: specifically relate films to article by Michael Roemer, pp. 78-86 in our book).
   [http://www.dia.org/dft/](http://www.dia.org/dft/)

2) First Fridays at the Detroit Art Institute, open in the evening

3) Plays, theatre in the area (including UDM productions)

4) A visit to Tyree Guyton's Heidelberg Project. [http://www.heidelberg.org/](http://www.heidelberg.org/)

5) art openings at the Zeitgeist theatre [http://www.zeitgeistdetroit.org/](http://www.zeitgeistdetroit.org/)

Various opportunities for field trips will be announced during the semester. If you hear of an event that you would like to have count as one of your field trips, check with me. If it counts, I will also announce it to the whole class. Papers due within two weeks of the event.
**Class Participation:** There are many opportunities for class participation. As we go over each author, I do not expect to just lecture on material while the class just copies what I said. Since I expect you have read the authors, I will be asking the class to tell me what the author said. Your participation at this point by volunteering answers will help the class in learning the material. Again, your volunteering of interesting reflections on the author’s ideas will help the class and improve your grade.

The class participation grade can be adversely affected by absences, repeated tardiness, silence, sleeping in class, or distracting side conversations. Also, dominating class discussion so that others do not have a chance to speak is a grave shortcoming. Speak your ideas and then give the teacher a chance to solicit answers and views from others as well. Your grade can also be harmed by showing disrespect to other students or the teacher. In philosophy class, very different views will be presented, and you are encouraged to put forward whatever position you hold on the topic. But if you disagree with others, do not turn it into personal animosity. Just state your counter-argument in a way that the debate in class can continue productively.

At certain points during the semester the class will be broken up into small groups to work on a group project, usually finding answers in the reading or to a puzzle or assignment given in class. During these times you should participate, cooperating with others in reaching the group’s goals. Those who do not engage in the project, who stay at a distance from the rest of the group in total silence, who decide to nap or stare at their textbook, or go for a long break to the rest room, are not properly participating. Such actions will be noticed, and will affect one’s class participation grade negatively. Those who galvanize their group to engage in the project with enthusiasm will also be noticed and their grade will be enhanced.

**Midterm Dialogue:** Write a dialogue, 3-4 pp. typed and double spaced. Begin with a title, then a paragraph that describes your characters and the setting. After that, put the name of each speaker at the beginning of the line with a colon, and follow with what they say. Stage directions in parentheses.

Example:
Joe: Charles is a master painter; don’t you just love how he splotches paint with such astute carelessness?
Sue: I don’t know, Joe, this doesn’t look like art to me. What makes you think it’s so great?

Be sure your two characters have differing views on art, and that they challenge each other in their evaluation of the art work. Each character should represent the views of one of our authors (and should be introduced as such in the opening paragraph). Resolve the debate however you would like.

Your characters can be...
– in an art gallery
– in an artist’s studio
– in a natural setting (where a variety of objects are discussed)
– on a trip far from home

The point is to demonstrate to me that you know the theories of two of our philosophers well, and you can demonstrate it by having the characters paraphrase and apply each of their views. Also, you demonstrate the ability to compare and contrast the views of two of our authors. The
best dialogs challenge the philosopher to defend their view against skeptics, and involve a setting or context where a dilemma arises on which the philosopher has something important to say.

Dialogs will be judged by the following criteria: 1) Accuracy: does the dialog represent the philosopher’s views accurately? You may have them in a context which they would not have had during their lifetime, but knowing what we know about their philosophy, is it believable that they would say what you have them say? 2) The level of challenge/debate: do you raise the “tender” or controversial points of the person’s philosophy in your dialog? This is better than putting them on a pedestal to spout their ideas to adoring fans who merely say “tell me more.” 3) Imagination: do you demonstrate that you have a special imaginative ability to see a certain philosophy applied in a new context? 4) Clarity: will the dialog’s reading audience be able to follow your point?

Final Paper: Choose an artist and do some research on their art. Choose a few key pieces to describe in your paper. Include copies of the art work if possible. Then, choose 2-3 of our authors during the semester whose aesthetic theories can be applied to your artist. What does this tell us about the art work? Are you inclined to agree or disagree with one or more of the philosophers, based on the application of their views to this artist?

Extra Credit Policy: If there is a public event on campus or in the community that is related to our course material, you can attend the event, and write a two page typed double spaced paper on it (within 14 days of the event). For example, an event on Sept. 15 must be handed in during class on Sept. 29. However, the deadline for papers for events that happen within 14 days of the last class, is the last class. Extra credit papers will only be accepted if they are handed in according to this time frame. Events must be announced in class so that other students know that it is an extra credit opportunity. You can receive up to 3 points for your paper, depending on the quality of the entry. NOTE: Do not EXPECT 3 points for your paper if you only recount incidentals while avoiding the philosophical importance of the presentation. To receive credit, you must attend the entire event. This means staying during question and answer periods as well as the main lecture or film. Extra credit is primarily for on-campus events. You might want to use your first three trips off campus as “field trips” rather than extra credit. Note: there is a ceiling of 4 extra credit papers accepted during the semester.

Policy on e-mailing papers: E-mailing of papers should only be done in emergency, in case of illness or some other serious event which prevents the student from handing in the paper in person. A broken printer is an excuse for e-mailing one paper, but not for more than one. Send your paper as an MS Word or Word Perfect attachment. Do not send MS Works attachments; rather, block and copy your paper into the body of the e mail message.

Resources Available on Campus: Students with difficulty understanding the course material or writing the papers should seek help at the Learning Center (University Academic Services office, basement of Student Union) and/or the Writing Center (Briggs). Free tutors are available to all registered students at the Learning Center. Appointments are recommended but walk-ins are possible. Call 313-993-1143 for an appointment. Peer review of papers is available at the Writing Center. Call their hotline at 313-993-1022 or write tutor Stuart Tucker at <tuckerst@udmercy.edu>.
GENERAL CLASSROOM POLICIES:

Timeliness: Students should arrive to class on time. Those who, on rare occasion because of difficulties, must come in late to class, must do so quietly, using a back entrance if possible, and take the closest seat available. Repeated and/or noisy tardy entry to the classroom is bound to disrupt students’ attention and will attract the attention of the teacher, and is therefore discouraged.

Leaving the Classroom During Class: This is to be done only due to crisis or illness. If you leave the class and return, let me know the cause of the emergency at the end of class. If you leave and don’t return, let me know what happened at the beginning of the next class.

Talking during class: Talking to others while classroom lecture or discussion is going on is disruptive to the teacher and other students. You will be asked to discontinue your conversation.

Attendance: Attendance at all classes except in illness or other emergency is expected. Those who miss a paper deadline, and wish to make up the paper, will need written documentation for their absence (doctor’s note, tow truck receipt etc) as a precondition in order to negotiate with the teacher for a rescheduled deadline. The instructor has the right to follow up and check on the veracity of written documentation. Those who begin to lose points for missed quizzes or missed in-class assignments (traffic jam, personal or family crisis, headache, etc.) are encouraged to do extra credit to make up any points missed.

Bringing children to class: Sometimes arrangements for child care fall through at the last moment. However, it is a university policy that children are not allowed in class. If you are interested in joining a student and faculty organization that will look into solutions to the child care problem on McNichols campus, let me know, and I will put you in touch with the group.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty: Cheating on exams is wrong. Those found looking at others’ quizzes, or consulting notes during the quiz, will receive a “0” for the quiz grade. Two cases of such cheating in the same semester will result in failing the course.

Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty. Plagiarism entails “submitting the words or style of another author or source without acknowledgment or formal documentation. Plagiarism occurs when specific phrases or entire passages, whether a sentence, paragraph, or longer excerpt, are incorporated into one’s own writing without quotation marks or documentation.” (UDM Policy on Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty). Do not copy sentences out of books, magazines, newspapers etc. or off the internet. Be careful when creating your paper assignments, to use your own words to express ideas, and to use quotation marks and references when using the words of others. At the same time, do not overdepend on quotes; show me that you understand what you’re writing about, by translating the ideas into your own words. Using papers written by other students, your friends, strangers, or people you hire to write for you is still plagiarism. Do not do this - you will receive the same plagiarism penalty!
Those who plagiarize will get a “0” for their first plagiarized assignment. This applies to extra credit papers as well. Handing in extra credit papers for events which one did not attend is also academic dishonesty. Such papers will receive a “0.” It is your duty, when attending extra credit, to look for me, and to report to me in person when I am at the venue. A person who plagiarizes twice in the same semester will fail the course. Signature forgery is also a form of academic dishonesty. Those submitting false notes without authentic signatures or any kind of false document will not get credit for the assignment and face possible failure of the course.

Policy on Incompletes: University policy stipulates that the grade of “I” or incomplete should be used in the case of students who have already completed most of their work, but have yet to hand in some of their assignments or take the final exam. In this course, a student must have a valid emergency which made an extension necessary, and have already collected at least 40 points in order to get an “I” extension. Students who have emergencies early on before they have been able to accumulate 40 points are encouraged to drop the course.

Complete Course Evaluation at the end of the semester: “Student course evaluations are an important source of information for curricular and teaching improvement in the College of Liberal Arts and education. As such, all students enrolled in CLAE courses are required to complete an online course evaluation. You will receive e-mails explaining how to complete the evaluation online. In addition, your instructor will remind you of the deadline for completing this course requirement. Should a student fail to complete the evaluation, their grade for the course will not be posted until the evaluation is completed.” -- CLAE policy on student evaluations

Special Accommodations: “Disability Support Services are available to all currently enrolled students. Students with a permanent or temporary documented, qualified disability requiring accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act should contact Emilie Gallegos, Director of University Academic Services, at (313) 578-0310 or <gallegem@udmercy.edu> upon admission to the University. Students must complete the intake and disability verification process to receive accommodations. Documentation of the condition must be provided. Once verified, UDM will work with the student and the faculty to determine appropriate accommodations.” (Student-Faculty Handbook)
READING REVIEW QUESTIONS

VIDEOS:
1) Based on Aesthetics, episode 1a:
a) describe an aesthetic experience from your daily life (similar to coffee and cream example)
One paragraph long.
b) describe your painting (reproduction handed out in class) in terms of an aesthetic experience
(as demonstrated in the video).

KRISTELLER: What is the author's main claim? When were these words coined?
1) Aesthetics; 2) Philosophy of Art; 3) Beaux Arts / Fine Arts. What is the modern system of arts
- its categories and subcategories? In what ways did the ancient Greek and Roman
understanding of art differ from our contemporary understanding? List at least five ways.
List one contribution each for Batteux, D'Alembert, and Anthony Earl of Shaftsbury to the
development of aesthetic theory during the Renaissance. Did aesthetic theory play an important
role in Kant's philosophy? In summary, what were the main contributions to aesthetic theory by
the ancient, renaissance, 17th century, 18th century, and late 18th century? What is the role of the
amateur in aesthetic theory? Have the status of various arts changed over time 1) as regarding
their status in the culture 2) comparatively to the other arts? In contemporary times does
"aesthetic" take on an even wider meaning?

ELEMENTS OF DESIGN: Describe a painting (reproduction) in terms of the seven elements of
design.

PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN: Describe your painting (reproduction) in terms of four of the seven
principles of design.

KANT: What is the author's main claim? What is Kant's definition of art? What are its key
attributes? Contrast agreeable art with fine art. Contrast natural beauty with art.
What is the role of genius in constructing art? Can the disgusting be beautiful? If an art work is
soulless, what is it missing? Can art be completely intelligible? How important is the
communication of ideas to others in an art work?

ZIFF: What is Ziff's main claim? What is Ziff's definition of art? Is crafting necessary for
something to be considered art? What is the role of framing in art? Why is aesthetic value
dependent on both the object and the person? Explain. In what way do popular art and modern
art make different demands of their audience? Can all found objects be art? Explain. Can even
nauseating objects be art?

GOLDSWORTHY: What do you think would be Goldsworthy's commentary on Ziff? In what
way does Goldsworthy change nature while working with it? What elements and principles of
design does Goldsworthy use in his art creations? What is the significance of ephemerality in his
art works?
GRAHAM: What kind of challenge do "fakes" and "Ready-mades" make to various aesthetic theories? What is the role of "attention" and "engagement" in experiencing an art work? What argument would be needed to advance the position that Duchamp's "Urinal" is a work of art?

ROEMER: What does the viewer bring to a film that affects the way they will perceive the film's meaning? What is the relation between film and real life? Why does film depend on conventional gestures, dialogs, and actions? What is Roemer's position on the use of the following approaches in film: low key or dramatic, making large claims or being concrete, direct dialog versus implied or exhibited meaning, obvious director's editorializing versus unnoticed guidance of the viewer, explicit showing of all events or have viewer use his/her imagination. How can a film maker create an illusion of audience primary participation?

GEERTZ: What are some of the cultural concerns surrounding art works that may be just as important as formal considerations? What does it mean to say that a feeling for life and a means of art may be intertwined? Why do the Abelam people of New Guinea use the recurring shape of the pointed oval in their art works? What is the significance of strong colors for the Abelam? What is the "period eye" described by Baxandall? What skills do viewers bring to paintings? What was the role of painting in 15th century Italian art? What is the significance of the performance of oral poetry in Morocco? Is there a universal sense of beauty, or not? Explain.

OKAKURA: List many of the attributes/virtues of the tea room, and of the tea ceremony. In what way is this Japanese aesthetic presented a criticism of other kinds of aesthetic sensibilities?

TANIZAKI: In what way does Japanese music and architecture appeal to a particular aesthetic sensibility?

TAYLOR: How does viewing the art of other cultures challenge us to develop our viewing skills? If anthropologists are making critical judgments about art, what should be done about it? What are the aesthetic virtues of Haida art of the Northwest Coast Indians?

KARP: How is art of the "other" often displayed in museums? What is the overarching theme of presentations of art from non-colonizing cultures? When modern people look at primitive art, what important aspects of the art object do they usually overlook? What does Karp find problematic in the MOMA art exhibit on primitivism? What was the problem with the Pompidou Center's show on “Magiciens de la Terre”? What new policies of art museums would address and solve the problems associated with these two shows?

VIDEOS: (short writing assignments instead of in-class quizzes)
1) Based on Aesthetics, episode 1a (1 point each, total of 2 pts):
   a) describe an aesthetic experience from your daily life (similar to coffee and cream example)
      One paragraph long.
   b) describe your painting (reproduction handed out in class) in terms of an aesthetic experience
      (as demonstrated in the video). One paragraph long.

2) Based on Elements of Design (1/2 point each, total 2 pts):
   Describe your painting (reproduction) in terms of four of the seven elements of design.
3) Based on Principles of Design (1/2 point each, total 2 pts):
Describe your painting (reproduction) in terms of four of the seven principles of design.

AFRICAN ART VIDEO: Why is context important in African art? In what way did collectors of African art appreciate the art from a Western perspective? Is this valid or not? How does the tourist industry change art and culture in Africa, for example, among the Bambara in Mali?

APPIAH: What was problematic about the judging procedure used by the curators of the 1987 show on African art? What is controversial about the art of Francis Akwasi? What are Karp’s criticisms of David Rockefeller’s criteria for judging art? What do we learn about African art by the fact that Rockefeller is considered a judge of African art? What does Appiah think of Baldwin’s commentary on the “Yoruba man with a Bicycle”? What is neotraditional art, and who is it created for?

NOCHLIN: Nochlin says that a discourse of gender difference is filled with assumptions about women that are presented as common sense, part of the natural and eternal order of things. What are some of her examples of those assumptions? How do the art works she discusses show examples of those assumptions about women? According to Nochlin, is there a problem with men’s inclusion of sexuality in art? What is the common defense used by men when women complain of the use of women as sex objects in their works?

CHADWICK: What aspect of the founding of the British Royal Academy, and their practices of teaching art, does Chadwick find problematic from a feminist point of view?

POLLOCK: Is the study and history of modern art from a certain male point of view? Explain. How does the myth of modernity influence the idea of modern art? What is the contrast between subject matter of paintings by men and women of the period? How do different ideas of public and private space underlie these differences?

BEARDSLEY: How do we discover the intention of an artist in creating an art work? Explain the distinction between internal and external evidence. Should the artist’s intention be the “final court of appeal” regarding our perception of the art work? What role does the artist’s intention play in the interpretation of the art work?

DANTO: What is deep interpretation, and how is it different from surface interpretation? How is the practice of divination related to the Greek god Hermes an example of a kledon? (What is a kledon?). Is Vonnegut’s radio announcer an example of kledonizing? Explain. What is the role of the interpreter (prophet)? Be able to explain how the approaches of Marxism, Psychoanalysis, Structuralism (Lacan) and Hegel are examples of engaging in deep interpretation. Is it important to engage in deep interpretation?

SONTAG: What work do art critics do when they interpret art? Is interpreting a liberating event, or not, according to Sontag? Explain. What does Sontag want contemporary experience of art to be like? What would be the characteristics of a valuable aesthetic criticism?