



Philosophy of Art and Aesthetic Experience in Rome

PHIL 277 – Spring 2025

Instructor: Dr. Stefano Giacchetti
M/W 2.15-3.30 – Office hours M/W 1.00-2.00 (by appointment)
E-Mail: sgiacch@luc.edu

SUMMARY

Short Description: This course will explore one or more of the following philosophical questions in aesthetics: What is art? What is good art (art evaluation or critical theory)? What is beauty? What is it about human nature that allows us to experience beauty?

Outcome Statement: Students will be able to demonstrate understanding of the various approaches to the philosophical study of beauty and the arts.

THIS COURSE AND THE UNIVERSITY CORE CURRICULUM

Knowledge Area(s) satisfied:	Philosophical Knowledge
Skill(s) Developed:	Critical Thinking Skills and Dispositions
Values Requirement(s) satisfied:	None

CORE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Knowledge Area (Philosophical Knowledge):

In addition to the general competencies associated with the Philosophical Knowledge area, students in this course will:

1. Learn how beauty as a major philosophical question has been examined by major philosophers in western philosophy. They will be able to explain, to contrast, and to compare the presentations of beauty by major historical figures such as Kant, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Adorno and Marcuse. Students will be tested on these historical views, will apply them to art in oral and written exercises, and will compare/contrast them in written assignments.
2. Learn about the way philosophers have analyzed beauty. In this competency, students will examine beauty, not as a major historical philosophical question, but as a major problem central to philosophical inquiry. They will learn the “elements” of beauty and the contributions of beauty to the human experience. Students will write a series of essays presenting the “elements” of beauty and the place of beauty in the human experience.

3. Examine the theoretical foundations of the nine basic arts. They will be able to explain the ontological roots of each art (the uniqueness of each art form) and the philosophical object of each art (the elements employed by the art to realize its uniqueness).
4. Evaluate philosophical arguments on beauty, to compare the philosophers' views (with each other and with the student's view), and to challenge simplistic and naïve viewpoints. They will do this by analyzing the arguments of others and providing their own arguments. This will be accomplished via written assignments.

Skills (Critical Thinking Skills and Dispositions):

Students will develop the skills necessary to:

1. Comprehend and summarize the meaning of varying forms of communication
2. Analyze relationships among statements, questions, and concepts
3. Evaluate various points of view
4. Generate new ideas and proposals.

These competencies will be developed by reading primary philosophical texts on aesthetics, applying philosophical concepts to works of art, comparing various aesthetic philosophies, and developing and critiquing each other's philosophy of aesthetics. Students will develop their critical thinking skills through essays and oral presentations.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Full Course Description: This course will explore one or more of the following philosophical questions in aesthetics:

What is art?

What is good art (art evaluation or critical theory)?

What is beauty?

What is it about human nature that allows us to experience beauty?

More specifically, the course focuses on fundamental philosophical writings on art, artists, and the social significance of aesthetics. Crucial concepts such as beauty, harmony, creativity and judgement of taste will be analyzed in the theoretical framework of modernity and supported by an insight into some of the most representative works of art in Rome.

We will start with a selection of paragraphs from Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, which will provide us with the terminological tools for analyzing aesthetics. Through his writings we will be able to clearly define an appropriate use of such concepts as "beautiful," "pleasant," "good" and "sublime." An insight of Italian Renaissance art will support his perspective.

We will then analyze sections of the third book of Schopenhauer's most important work, *World as Will and Representation*, in which he outlines his conception of art as the model for an ethical behaviour. The analysis of Italian Baroque music will help us in understanding his definition of music as "language of the will."

The third part of the course will focus on the section four of Nietzsche's *Human, All Too Human*, a work which immediately relates to Schopenhauer's ideas, proposing a new interpretation of the origins and function of art. Nietzsche's idea of art as "exaltation of life" will be related to classical Roman architecture and to the raising of 20th century artistic movements.

In the final part of the course we will analyze the works on aesthetics of one of the most influential members of the so called “Frankfurt School”; Marcuse. Through his writings we will define the social relevance of art as the model for a utopian interpretation of future. To support their perspective, we will focus on contemporary artistic movements such as “futurism,” “abstractionism” and the “atonal” musical composition.

Required Texts:

- Kant’s *Critique of Judgement*. (available online)
- Schopenhauer’s *The World as Will and Representation. Vol.I* (available online)
- Nietzsche’s *Human, All Too Human*. (available online)
- Marcuse’s *The Aesthetic Dimension*. (also available for borrowing from the professor)

Assessment Components:

Student’s final grade will be based on:

- One in-class test (Midterm): 40% of the final grade.
- One take-home paper (Final): 40% of the final grade.
- In-class presentations and participation: 20% of the final grade. Students will be requested to make presentations (15-20 min.) for one of the scheduled readings assigned.

Grading Policy:

The following grading scale will be applied for determining the final grade:

Presentation: A=20; A-=18; B+=17; B=16; B-=15; C+=14; C=13; C-=12; D+=12; D=11; F=10

Midterm and Final (each): A=40; A-=37; B+=36; B=34; B-=33; C+=32; C=30; C-=29; D+=27; D=26; F=24

Final Grade: A = 94-100; A- = 90-93; B+ = 87-89; B = 84-86; B- = 80-83; C+ = 77-79; C = 74-76; C- = 70-73; D+ = 67-69; D = 60-66; F = 59 and below

Attendance Policy:

Students should plan to regularly attend the class, since we will often broaden the topics contained in the texts to contemporary issues, and since this class is mainly intended to the rousing of students’ personal thoughts and ideas.

In accordance with the JFRC mission to promote a higher level of academic rigor, all courses adhere to the following absence policy:

- For all classes meeting twice a week, students cannot incur more than two unexcused absences.

This course meets twice a week, thus a total of two unexcused absences will be permitted. Unexcused absences beyond these will result in 1% lowering of the final course grade, for every absence after the “approved limit”. DO NOT ATTEND CLASS IF YOU ARE ILL.

Class Conduct:

One important aspect of a Jesuit education is learning to respect the rights and opinions of others. Please respect others by (1) allowing all classmates the right to voice their opinions without fear of ridicule, and (2) not using profanity or making objectionable (including gendered, racial or ethnic) comments, especially comments directed at a classmate.

Sakai:

All course materials will be located on Sakai which can be accessed at <https://sakai.luc.edu> Sakai is a web based learning management system. You will be able to access it from any computer connected to the internet. Instructional guides and video tutorials for using Sakai are available at: <http://www.luc.edu/itrs/sakai/sakai-student-tutorials.shtml> Course content, including syllabi, reading material etc. will be available online. Students should check Sakai often for announcements, assignments, and other course content.

Student Support Resources:

- ITS Service Desk: helpdesk@luc.edu 773-508-4487
- Library Subject Specialists: <http://libraries.luc.edu/specialists>
- Student Accessibility Center: sac@luc.edu
- Writing Center: <http://www.luc.edu/writing/>
- Ethics Hotline: <http://luc.edu/sglc/aboutus/> 855.603.6988

Email Messages:

All email messages sent to students about this course will be sent to their Loyola email address. Students are expected to check their Loyola email address on a regular basis. You can access your web based LUC email account at <https://outlook.luc.edu>

Special Circumstances--Receiving Assistance:

Students are urged to contact their instructors should they have questions concerning course materials and procedures. If you have any special circumstance that may have some impact on your course work, please let your instructors know so they can establish a plan for assignment completion. If you require assignment accommodations, please contact your instructors early in the semester so that arrangements can be made with Student Accessibility Center (SAC) (<http://www.luc.edu/sac/>).

Copyright:

Copyright law was designed to give rights to the creators of written work, artistic work, computer programs and other creative materials. The Copyright Act requires that people who use or reference the work of others must follow a set of guidelines designed to protect authors' rights. Unfortunately, copyright law is complex and too often incomprehensible; that does not, however, excuse users from following the rules. The safest practice is to remember (1) to refrain from distributing works used in class (whether distributed by the professor or used for research); they are likely copyright protected and (2) that any research or creative work should be cited. For LUC's copyright resources check online: <http://www.luc.edu/copyright>

Intellectual Property:

All lectures, notes and other instructional materials in this course are the intellectual property of the professor. As a result, they may not be distributed or shared in any manner, either on paper or virtually without my written permission. Lectures may not be recorded without my written consent; when consent is given, those recordings may be used for review only and may not be distributed. Recognizing that your work, too, is your intellectual property, I will not share or distribute your work in any form without your written permission.

Privacy Statement

Assuring privacy among faculty and students engaged in online and face-to-face instructional activities helps promote open and robust conversations and mitigates concerns that comments made within the context of the class will be shared beyond the classroom. As such, recordings of instructional activities occurring in online or face-to-face classes may be used solely for internal class purposes by the faculty member and students registered for the course, and only during the period in which the course is offered. Students will be informed of such recordings by a statement in the syllabus for the course in which they will be recorded. Instructors who wish to make subsequent use of recordings that include student activity may do so only with informed written consent of the students involved or if all student activity is removed from the recording. Recordings including student activity that have been initiated by the instructor may be retained by the instructor only for individual use.

Accessibility Accommodations

Students registered with the Student Accessibility Center requiring academic accommodations should contact the Office of the Dean at the John Felice Rome Center, the first week of classes.

Harassment (Bias Reporting):

It is unacceptable and a violation of university policy to harass, discriminate against or abuse any person because of his or her race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, age or any other characteristic protected by applicable law. Such behavior threatens to destroy the environment of tolerance and mutual respect that must prevail for this university to fulfill its educational and health care mission. For this reason, every incident of harassment, discrimination or abuse undermines the aspirations and attacks the ideals of our community. The university qualifies these incidents as incidents of bias.

In order to uphold our mission of being Chicago's Jesuit Catholic University-- a diverse community seeking God in all things and working to expand knowledge in the service of humanity through learning, justice and faith, any incident(s) of bias must be reported and appropriately addressed. Therefore, the Bias Response (BR) Team was created to assist members of the Loyola University Chicago community in bringing incidents of bias to the attention of the university. If you believe you are subject to such bias, you should notify the Bias Response Team at this link:

<http://webapps.luc.edu/biasreporting/>

Technology:

Students are expected to know how to use Sakai and its features, be able to navigate the internet

to explore resources, and to use the electronic resources available through LUC's library homepage.

Workload Expectations:

As an average, students should expect to dedicate about 8 hours per week to fulfill course activities, including readings/review of materials, assignments, lessons, etc.

Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest, and responsible manner. Academic integrity is a guiding principle for all academic activity at Loyola University Chicago, and all members of the University community are expected to act in accordance with this principle.

Failing to meet the following academic integrity standards is a serious violation of personal honesty and the academic ideals that bind the University into a learning community. These standards apply to both individual and group assignments. Individuals working in a group may be held responsible if one of the group members has violated one or more of these standards.

1. Students may not plagiarize; the use of AI is considered plagiarism too and treated as such.
2. Students may not submit the same work for credit for more than one assignment (known as self-plagiarism).
3. Students may not fabricate data.
4. Students may not collude.
5. Students may not cheat.
6. Student may not facilitate academic misconduct.

Follow this link for more details about these standards, sanctions, and academic misconduct procedures: (https://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml)

Late or Missed Assignments

Late or missed assignments will not be accepted for grading without the authorization of the instructor.

Course Schedule:

01/20 Introduction

01/22 Introduction to Kant

01/27 Kant §1 to §5

01/29 “ “ §43 to §47

02/03 “ “ §48 to §50

02/07 “ “ §51 to §53

02/10 Introduction to Schopenhauer

02/12 Schopenhauer Ch. 30 to 32

02/17 “ “ Ch. 36

02/19 “ “ Ch. 37 & 38

02/24 “ “ Ch. 39

02/26 “ “ Ch. 52

03/03 Study Day

03/05 Midterm Exam

03/17 Introduction to Nietzsche

03/19 Nietzsche §145 to §162

03/21 “ “ §163 to §190

03/24 “ “ §191 to §215

03/26 “ “ §216 to §223

03/31 Slide Show

04/02 Documentary

04/07 Introduction to Marcuse

04/09 Marcuse Ch. I

04/14 “ “ Ch. II

04/16 “ “ Ch. III & IV

04/23 “ “ Ch. V & Conclusions

04/28-05/01 Final Exam