

Aesthetics 109

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OVERVIEW

These tutorials will cover core topics in aesthetics, thereby preparing you to sit the Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Criticism finals paper as well as further sharpening your philosophical skillset.

- Week 1 - Hume and the Standard of Taste
- Week 2 - Kant's *Critique of Judgment*
- Week 3 - Formalism and its Foes
- Week 4 - The Ethical Criticism of Art
- Week 5 - The Definition of Art
- Week 6 - Literary Interpretation
- Week 7 - Music and Expression
- Week 8 - Aesthetic Realism

WORK TO BE UNDERTAKEN

You will produce 6 essays of a length between 1500-2500 words. **You are expected to write an essay for Week 1.** Most papers/chapters listed below are available online via SOLO. **Do** email me if you have difficulty getting hold of any.

POLICIES

- **Please ensure your essay is emailed to me before 7.00 am on Friday (obviously, you may email it to me anytime before then and not necessarily that morning!)**
- There are no 'silly questions' and tutorials are not formally assessed. **Be bold.** Be inquisitive.
- If you miss a tutorial, or arrive late, no compensating tutorial can be arranged. It *may* be possible to reschedule a tutorial in advance, but such requests will not necessarily be granted.

READINGS AND SPECIFIC ISSUES

NOTE: **Faculty lists** are comprehensive. Below are readings that I think are useful and interesting; they are sufficient for writing your tutorial paper, but you should feel free to explore other papers/books. Almost all papers/books are accessible online. Don't expect to be able to cover all readings or to get to grips with all issues in one week.

Also, Dr. James Grant's Aesthetics lectures from previous years are available as podcasts here:

<https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/series/aesthetics-and-philosophy-art-lectures>

Abbreviations:

BJA = British Journal of Aesthetics.

JAAC = Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism.

RCA = Gaut, B. & Lopes, D. (eds.) (2013). *Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*. 3rd Ed. Routledge.

ACA = Cahn, S. & Meskin, A. (eds.) (2008). *Aesthetics: A Comprehensive Anthology*. Blackwell.

General readings to dip into:

Budd, M. (1995). *Values of Art: Painting, Poetry, and Music*. Penguin.

Carroll, N. (1999). *Philosophy of Art: An Introduction*. Routledge.

Davies, S. (2005). *The Philosophy of Art*. Wiley.

Levinson, J. (1996). *The Pleasures of Aesthetics*. Cornell.

Levinson, J. (2006). *Contemplating Art*. OUP.

Sheppard, A. (1985). *Aesthetics: An Introduction*. OUP.

Zangwill, N. (2001). *The Metaphysics of Beauty*. Cornell.

Anthologies and Collections of Survey Articles:

Cahn, S. & Meskin, A. (eds.) (2008). *Aesthetics: A Comprehensive Anthology*. Blackwell.

Davies, S., Higgins, K., Hopkins, R., Stecker, R. & Cooper, D. (eds.) (2009). *A Companion to Aesthetics*. 2nd Ed. Blackwell.

Gaut, B. & Lopes, D. (eds.) (2013). *Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*. 3rd Ed. Routledge.

Goldman, A. (2013). "The Aesthetic." In RCA.

Kieran, M. (ed.) (2006). *Contemporary Debates in Aesthetics*. Wiley.

Lamarque, P. & Haugom Olsen, S. (eds.) (2003). *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art: The Analytic Tradition - An Anthology*. Blackwell.

Levinson, J. (ed.) (2005). *The Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics*. OUP.

McMahon, J. (2013). "Beauty." In RCA.

Sartwell, C. (2012). "Beauty." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

Shelley, J. (2013). "The Concept of the Aesthetic." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

Zangwill, N. (2014). "Aesthetic Judgement." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

Week 1 - Hume's "Standard of Taste"

Issues: comparison between gustatory taste and/or colour perception and aesthetic taste; emotional basis of aesthetic judgment; standard of taste as intersubjective; qualities of the judges; possibility of disagreement between judges; role of reason in aesthetic judgement.

Overviews:

Shelley, J. (2013). "Empiricism: Hutcheson and Hume." In **RCA**; skip to section on Hume.
Schellekens, E. (2009). "Taste and Objectivity." *Philosophy Compass* 4: 734-743.

Primary text:

Hume, D. "Of the Standard of Taste." In **ACA** and many other anthologies.

Secondary material:

Budd, M. (1995). *Values of Art*. Penguin. ****From p.16 "Hume and Kant" to end of p.25.**

Carroll, N. (1984). "Hume's Standard of Taste." *JAAC* 43: 181-194. ****Recommended**

Levinson, J. (2002). "Hume's Standard of Taste: The Real Problem." *JAAC* 60: 227-238.

Essay questions (pick one):

- "What is the problem taste, as Hume sees it? How successful is his solution?"
- "Hume's approach to aesthetic judgement is subverted by his decision to model his account of good taste on his account of the sensory faculty of taste." Discuss.

Week 2 – Kant’s *Critique of Judgment*

Issues: free vs dependent/adherent beauty; disinterestedness; universalizability; free play of the imagination/harmony of the faculties; non-conceptual nature of appreciation; purposiveness; beauty vs the agreeable vs the good.

There’s no getting around it—this week’s topic will be difficult. We will be reading “The Analytic of the Beautiful,” which is split into four sections (“moments”). I suggest that you intersperse your reading of each section with the accompanying relevant chapters/sections in Crawford (2013) and most especially Wenzel (2008). Janaway (1997) is also recommended for clarifying the role of concepts in the judgment of taste. Note how Kant is constantly engaged in comparing and contrasting the beautiful with both the agreeable and the good.

Primary text:

Kant, I. *Critique of Judgment*. “The Analytic of the Beautiful.” (sections 1-22). I recommend Guyer’s Cambridge edition, which is available online:

- http://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/OXVU1:LSCOP_OX:oxfaleph016725486

Secondary material:

Wenzel, A. (2008). *An Introduction to Kant’s Aesthetics*. Blackwell. Intro and Chs.1-4.

Crawford, D. (2013). “Kant.” In RCA. ****Concise overview of each ‘moment.’**

Janaway, C. (1997). “Kant’s Aesthetics and the ‘Empty Cognitive Stock’.” *Philosophical Quarterly* 47: 459-476.

Budd, M. (1995). *Values of Art*. Penguin. ****pp.26-38.**

For later (if revising this topic):

Guyer, P. (1997). *Kant and the Claims of Taste*. CUP.

Allison, H. (2001). *Kant’s Theory of Taste*. CUP.

Essay question:

- “What does Kant argue for in each of the four moments in his Analytic of the Beautiful? How far do you agree with his claims?”

Week 3 – Formalism and its Foes

Issues: concept of significant form; form as what is immediately perceptually manifest and/or structural, never what is part of representational content; what should/can the formalist say about perfect copies/forgeries? can a formalist/empirical theory of aesthetic value acknowledge difference(s) in provenance? do artworks have aesthetic value that is non-perceptual?

Formalism/Empiricism:

Bell, C. (1914). *Art*. Chatto and Windus. “The Aesthetic Hypothesis.” Reprinted in ACA and Neill & Ridley (eds.) *The Philosophy of Art*.

Zangwill, N. (2000). “Defusing Anti-Formalist Arguments.” *BJA* 40: 376-383.

****Note that ‘formalism’ sometimes denotes a theory about the definition of art. This week we are only interested in it as a theory of appreciation. Bell (1914) flits between the two.**

Fakes and Forgeries:

Stalnaker, N. (2013). “Fakes and Forgeries.” In *RCA*.

Lessing, A. (1965). “What is Wrong with a Forgery?” *JAAC* 23: 461-471

Denis Dutton (1979). “Artistic Crimes: The Problem of Forgery in the Arts.” *BJA* 19: 302-314.

Enlightened Empiricism/Formalism:

Lamarque, P. (2010). “Aesthetic Empiricism.” in his book *Work and Object*. OUP.

Graham, G. (2006). “Aesthetic Empiricism and the Challenge of Fakes and Ready-Mades.” In Kieran (ed.) *Contemporary Debates in Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art*. Blackwell.

Anti-Empiricism:

Davies, D. (2006). “Against Enlightened Empiricism.” In Kieran (ed.) *Contemporary Debates in Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art*. Blackwell. ****Recommended.**

Sharpe, R. (2000). “The Empiricist Theory of Artistic Value.” *JAAC* 58: 321-332

Essay questions:

- “Whether a work of art is a forgery or a fake is a non-perceptual fact about it and so cannot possibly matter for its aesthetic value.” Discuss
- “Do facts about an artwork’s production matter for its aesthetic value? If so, how? If not, then why not?”

Week 4 – The Ethical Criticism of Art

Issues: the autonomy of art thesis; radical autonomism vs moderate autonomism; differences between Carroll’s moderate moralism and Gaut’s ethicism; Gaut’s merited response argument; whether morally good works must be aesthetically good works; whether morally bad works can be aesthetically good.

Overviews:

Kieran, M. (2005). “Art and Morality.” In Levinson (ed.) *Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics*. Sec.1-5

Kieran, M. (2006). “Art, Morality and Ethics: On the (Im)Moral Character of Art Works and Inter-Relations to Artistic Value.” *Philosophy Compass* 1: 129-143.

Ethicism and Moderate Moralism:

Gaut, B. (1998). “The Ethical Criticism of Art.” In Levinson (ed.) *Aesthetics and Ethics: Essays at the Intersection*. CUP. ****Recommended**

Carroll, N. (1996). “Moderate Moralism.” *BJA* 36: 223-238.

Kieran, M. (2001). “In Defence of the Ethical Evaluation of Narrative Art.” *BJA* 41: 26-38. ****Criticisms of Gaut and Carroll.**

Autonomism:

Anderson, J. & Dean, J. (1998). “Moderate Autonomism.” *BJA* 38: 150-166

Carroll, N. (1998). “Moderate Moralism Versus Moderate Autonomism.” *BJA* 38: 419-424.

Immoralism:

Eaton, A. (2012). “Robust Immoralism.” *JAAC* 70: 281-292. ****Highly recommended – an award-winning paper.**

Essay questions:

- “Could an immoral work of art be aesthetically good *in virtue* of its immorality? If so, how? If not, why not?”
- “Can the moral flaws or merits of a work of art affect its aesthetic value?”

Week 5 – The Definition of Art

Issues: failure of classic definitions (emotional, representational, formalism); Weitz's anti-essentialism – impossibility of defining art (logical impossibility); open vs closed concepts; Wittgenstein's concept of 'family resemblance'; originality as precluding definition; non-aesthetic/conceptual works as second-order works (Zangwill); notion of a 'cluster' concept and why Gaut says he is not offering a definition; the notion of an 'artworld' and who its members are; Dickie's amendment in his 'new' theory; Wollheim's dilemma for the institutional theory; Levinson on intending for regard-as-a-work-of-art and why that is not circular.

Overviews:

Stecker, R. (2005). "Definitions of Art." In Levinson (ed.) *Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics*.

Adajian, T. (2012). "The Definition of Art." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

- <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/art-definition/>

Weitz' Anti-Essentialism:

Weitz, M. (1956). "The Role of Theory in Aesthetics." Reprinted in ACA. ****Central paper on this week's topic.**

Mandelbaum, M. (1965). "Family Resemblances and Generalizations Concerning the Arts." *American Philosophical Quarterly* 2: 219-228.

Davies, S. (1991). *Definitions of Art*. Cornell. Ch.1.

Cluster Theory (contemporary anti-essentialism):

Gaut, B. (2005). "The Cluster Account of Art Defended." *BJA* 45: 273-288.

The Institutional Theory:

Dickie, G. (1974). "What is Art? An Institutional Analysis." Reprinted in ACA.

Dickie, G. (1984). "The New Institutional Theory of Art." Reprinted in In Lamarque and Haugom Olsen (eds.) (2005). *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art*.

Wollheim, R. (1980). *Art and its Objects*. 2nd Ed. CUP. "The Institutional Theory of Art." ****Influential criticism.**

The Historical Theory:

Levinson, J. (1979). "Defining Art Historically." Reprinted in Neill and Ridley (eds.) and Lamarque and Haugom Olsen (eds.). ****Contains further criticisms of the institutional theory.**

Davies, S. (1991). *Definitions of Art*. Cornell. Ch.7, section: "Levinson's Definition."

The Aesthetic Theory (these are best saved for when revising):

James Shelley (2003). "The Problem of Non-Perceptual Art." *BJA* 43:363-378

Zangwill, N. (2002). "Are There Counterexamples to Aesthetic Theories of Art?" *JAAC* 60: 111-118.

Essay questions:

- "[A]esthetic theory is a logically vain attempt to define what cannot be defined." (Weitz) Discuss.
- Compare and contrast the institutional and historical theories of art. Which is to be preferred?
- Can we define art aesthetically?

Week 6 – Literary Interpretation

Issues: the intentional fallacy; internal vs external evidence; dilemma regarding whether intentions fulfilled; inaccessibility of intentions; ‘death of the author’ thesis; problem of changing meanings over time; humpty-dumpty objection to extreme intentionalism; moderate intentionalism; utterance meaning vs utterer meaning; Carroll’s conversation argument for actual intentionalism (Huddleston’s objections); hypothetical intentionalism; (dis)continuity between ordinary linguistic/behavioural interpretation and literary interpretation; representing vs performing an illocutionary act; how much difference is there between actual and hypothetical intentionalism? What can an anti-intentionalist say about irony and metaphor?

Overviews:

Livingston, P. (2005). “Intention in Art.” In Levinson (ed.) *Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics*. Sec.2:

“Intention and Appreciation of the Artwork.” ****Recommended.**

Currie, G. (2005). “Interpretation in Art.” (2005). In Levinson (ed.) *Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics*. Sec.3-5

Anti-Intentionalism/Formalism:

Wimsatt, W. & Beardsley, M. (1954). “The Intentional Fallacy.” Reprinted in ACA and Neill & Ridley (eds.) *The Philosophy of Art*. ****Central paper on this topic, but very obscure. In some places, they are concerned to argue that intentions don’t bear on evaluation or ‘aesthetic success.’ Our concern is whether it bears on interpretation, so be clear on which claim is being attacked in which passages.**

Nathan, D. (2006). “Art, Meaning and Artist’s Meaning.” In Kieran, (ed.) *Contemporary Debates in Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art*. ****Section “Proving Anti-Intentionalism” is particularly recommended.**

Extreme Actual Intentionalism:

Hirsch, E. (1976). “In Defense of the Author.” Reprinted in Neill & Ridley, (eds.) *The Philosophy of Art*. And in G. Iseminger (ed.) *Intention and Interpretation*. Temple. ****Most actual intentionalists are moderate ones, but there are interesting ideas here.**

Moderate Actual Intentionalism:

Carroll, N. (1992). “Art, Intention and Conversation.” Reprinted in ACA. ****This is a very thorough and, to my mind, a highly readable paper, which criticises anti-intentionalism. But it is slow to advance the conversation argument, which appears a few pages into Section IV.**

Huddleston, A. (2012). “The Conversation Argument for Actual Intentionalism.” *BJA* 52: 241-256. ****Criticism of Carroll (1992).**

Hypothetical Intentionalism:

Levinson, J. (2002). “Hypothetical Intentionalism: Statement, Objections, Replies.” Reprinted in Levinson (ed.) *Contemplating Art*.

Carroll, N. (2001). “Interpretation and Intention: The Debate between Hypothetical and Actual Intentionalism” *Metaphilosophy* 31: 75-95.

Essay questions:

- “Do the intentions of the author have any relevance for literary interpretation? If so, what is their relevance? If not, why not?”
- “What, precisely, is the intentional fallacy? How should intentionalists respond to the objection?”

Week 7 – Music and Expression

Issues: general puzzle/problem of musical expression; distinction between ‘being expressive of E’ and ‘being an expression of E’; Tolstoy’s transmission/contagion theory (arousal condition, sincerity condition); Budd’s resemblance theory (minimal concept); Kivy’s resemblance theory (contours and conventions); Levinson’s musical persona theory; formalism’s scepticism about musical expression.

****If one thinks of the issue as being ‘how can we correctly say that a piece of music is, e.g., ‘sad’?’ then it is tempting to think the answer must lie in metaphor (though see Davies (2005)). But note that most of the philosophers you will read here think of the issue as a *perceptual* problem, rather than a linguistic one: ‘how can we *hear* sadness in music?’**

Overviews:

Davies, S. (2005). “Music.” In Levinson (ed.) *Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics*. Sect.11: “Expressiveness in Music.”

Matravers, D. (2013). “Art, Expression and Emotion.” In RCA.

Musical Expression:

Budd, M. (1995). *Values of Art*. Penguin. Ch.IV Sect: “Music and the Expression of Emotion” to end of “Musical Expression and Music’s Enigma.” ****Experienced resemblance theory of musical expressiveness.**

Kivy, P. (2002). “Emotions in the Music.” Reprinted in ACA. ****Different version of the resemblance theory.**

Levinson, J. (2006). “Musical Expressiveness as Hearability-as-Expressiveness.” In Kieran (ed.) *Contemporary Debates in Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art*. ****Defends a view akin to his hypothetical intentionalism, on which musical expression is a matter of hearing a persona in the music.**

Davies, S. (2006). “Artistic Expression and the Hard Case of Pure Music.” In Kieran (ed.) *Contemporary Debates in Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art*. ****Critical discussion of resemblance and persona theories. (Davies calls them ‘appearance’ and ‘hypothetical’ theories.)**

Formalism and the Denial of Musical Expressiveness:

Zangwill, N. (2004). “Against Emotion: Hanslick was right about Music.” BJA 44: 29-43.

Hanslick, E. (1891). *The Beautiful in Music*. Extracts in ACA.

Essay questions:

- “What is it to hear emotion in music?”
- “Can we intelligibly claim that music expresses emotion?”

Week 8 – Aesthetic Realism

Issues: normativity of aesthetic judgements; disagreement as favouring anti-realism; phenomenology of aesthetic judgements; truth-aptness of aesthetic judgements; evaluative vs descriptive nature of aesthetic judgements.

Overview:

Carroll, N. (1999). *Philosophy of Art*. OUP. ****Ch.4, sections “Aesthetic Properties” and “Detection or Projection?”**

Realism:

Zangwill, N. (2005). “Aesthetic Realism.” In Levinson (ed.) *Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics*. OUP. ****Recommended.**

Pettit, P. (1983). “The Possibility of Aesthetic Realism.” In Schaper (ed.) *Pleasure, Preference and Value*. CUP. Reprinted in Lamarque and Haugom Olsen (ed.), *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art, An Anthology*. Blackwell.

- <https://www.princeton.edu/~ppettit/papers/Possibility%20of%20Aesthetic%20Realism.pdf>

McNaughton, D. (1988). *Moral Vision*. Blackwell. ****pp.55-57 only; insightful criticism of Humean anti-realism**

Zemach, E. (1991). “Real Beauty.” *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 16: 249-265. ****See Goldman (1993) for a reply.**

Anti-Realism:

Scruton, R. (1974/1998). *Art and Imagination: A Study in the Philosophy of Mind*. St. Augustine's Press.

Bender, J. (1996). “Realism, Supervenience, and Irresolvable Aesthetic Disputes.” *JAAC* 54: 371-381.

Young, J. (1997). “Aesthetic Antirealism.” *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 35: 119-134.

Goldman, A. (1993). “Realism About Aesthetic Properties.” *JAAC* 51: 31-37. ****A reply to Zemach (1991).**

****Recall Hume’s and Kant’s arguments against realism as well.**

Essay questions:

- Compare and contrast realism and anti-realism about the aesthetic. Which is to be preferred?
- “There are disagreements in science, yet the subject matter of science is objective. Therefore, disagreement about aesthetic matters can lend no support to aesthetic anti-realism.” Discuss.