

English 7026
Aesthetics: Philosophy, Politics, Art
Stokes Hall 363-S
T 4:30-6:50pm

Instructor: Dr. Robert Lehman
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Hours: TBA

This course will be a discussion-driven survey of *aesthetics*—that subdiscipline of critical thought that attempts to answer the fundamental questions of what art is and what role it plays in our lives. Over the course of the semester, we will likely read texts by philosophers and critics including Immanuel Kant, Friedrich Schiller, G.W.F. Hegel, Theodor Adorno, Hannah Arendt, Paul de Man, Stanley Cavell, and others; and we will consider works by writers and visual artists. Specific topics to be addressed will include: the relationship between subjective and objective claims about beauty; the connection of aesthetic experience to political activity; the challenge of modernism to classical standards of taste; and the so-called “end of art.” This class should be of interest to students of literature, music, visual art, and philosophy.

Required Texts (n.b. it is important that you purchase print copies of the correct editions/translations! You need to be on the same page, literally and figuratively, as the rest of the class)

Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* (9780226025957)
G.W.F. Hegel, *On Art, Religion, and the History of Philosophy* (0872203700)
Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgment* (0872200256)
Ben Lerner, *10:04* (9781250081339)
Robert Pippin, *After the Beautiful* (9780226325583)
Friedrich Schiller, *Essays* (0826407137)

Course Requirements

You must **attend class**, **bring the assigned reading** with you, and **participate** in discussion. It is not acceptable, in a graduate class, to miss class more than once or to show up late. If you think that this will be a problem, you shouldn't enroll in the class. Participation is not the same as attendance. Participation involves posing and responding to questions in class. Come to class prepared to speak! (20/100)

Discussion posts (ten out of a possible twelve) will be due over the course of the semester. These should be short (200-300 word) responses to the day's readings and must be uploaded by 8pm the day before the class in which the readings are to be discussed – the Canvas discussion board will be “locked” at 8pm, since I want to be sure that the class and I can know when all of the posts are available for viewing. **Don't email me late posts.** The aim of these posts is to initiate discussion, not just to summarize the readings, so feel free to pose questions about the readings that you cannot answer. (20/100)

A **4-5 page book review** will be due in the tenth week. The review must deal with a recent—that is, published no earlier than 2021—scholarly book dedicated wholly or in part to the subject matter of the class (which I take to be the work of any of the figures from class or work on philosophical aesthetics more generally). The book should be published by a reputable academic press or equivalent. I'm happy to discuss your selections with you. I will provide the class with a handout dealing with the conventions of the academic book review early in the semester. (20/100)

A **research paper** will be due May 12. The topic is open, but it must relate to the themes of the course. Papers should be roughly 15pp. Students should plan to meet with me to discuss the topic of their

papers at some point during the second half of the semester. A 2-3pp **proposal** laying out the argument of the paper and describing some of the likely sources should be emailed to me by April 30—I'll distribute them and we'll have a mini-conference dedicated to these proposals on the last day of class. (40/100)

Participation	20%
Web Posts	20%
Book Review	20%
Research Paper	40%
Total	100%

Schedule (subject to change)

WK 1 Jan 20	Introductions Plato, selections from <i>Republic</i> (PDF) Danto, “The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art” (PDF)
WK 2 Jan 27	Kant, <i>Critique of Judgment</i> , Introduction, §§1-22 (n.b. these are section, not page numbers). Ginsborg, “Kant’s Aesthetics and Teleology” (in <i>Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy</i> , free online)
WK 3 Feb 3	Kant, <i>Critique of Judgment</i> §§23-29 Ginsborg, “Kant’s Aesthetics and Teleology” (in <i>Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy</i> , free online) Lyotard, “After the Sublime: The State of Aesthetics” (PDF)
WK 4 Feb 10	Kant, <i>Critique of Judgment</i> §§30-54 Ginsborg, “Kant’s Aesthetics and Teleology” (in <i>Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy</i> , free online)
WK 5 Feb 17	Arendt, <i>Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy</i> 7-77
WK 6 Feb 24	Schiller, <i>Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man</i> , Letters 1-22
WK 7 Mar 3	Schiller, <i>Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man</i> , Letters 22-27 Rancière, “Schiller and the Aesthetic Promise” (PDF) Menke, “On the Fate of Aesthetic Education” (PDF)
WK 8 Mar 10	NO CLASS
WK 9 Mar 17	Schiller, “On the Sublime” Kleist, “On the Marionette Theater” (PDF) de Man, “Kant and Schiller” (PDF) de Man “Aesthetic Formalization: Kleist’s <i>Über das Marionettentheater</i> ” (PDF)
WK 10 Mar 24	BOOK REVIEW DUE Hegel, Hölderlin, Schelling (?), “Oldest Programme for a System of German Idealism” (PDF) Hegel, <i>On Art, Religion, and the History of Philosophy</i> 22-87

WK 11 Mar 31	Hegel, <i>On Art, Religion, and the History of Philosophy</i> 87-127 Pippin, <i>After the Beautiful</i> 1-62
WK 12 Apr 7	Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art" (PDF) Pippin, <i>After the Beautiful</i> 96-130
WK 13 Apr 14	NO CLASS
WK 14 Apr 21	Cavell, "Music Discomposed" (PDF) Beardsley, "Response" (PDF) Cavell, "A Matter of Meaning It" (PDF)
WK 15 Apr 28	Lerner, "Damage Control" (PDF) Lerner, <i>10:04</i>
WK 16 May 5	MINI-CONFERENCE ON WORKS IN PROGRESS
May 12	FINAL PAPER DUE