# PHIL 360: Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art

Fall 2017, Coastal Carolina University
Class meeting times: [date], [time], [location]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professor</th>
<th>Dennis Earl</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email, phone</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dearl@coastal.edu">dearl@coastal.edu</a>, (843-349-4094)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office hours</td>
<td>Edwards 275: T/Th 10:00 am-2:00 pm; also by appointment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moodle</td>
<td>Moodle login page: [link] (for submitting papers, any homework/discussion I might require outside of class, and supplementary materials)</td>
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## Catalog description

PHIL 360 Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art (3) This course addresses questions concerning the nature of art, aesthetic value, aesthetic experience, and the ontology of art, along with aesthetic questions specific to artforms such as music, theatre, painting, architecture, and poetry. Topics may also include the aesthetics of the natural world and of everyday objects.

### Course objectives

(General things you will do in the course)

Students will:

1. understand some of the central philosophical issues of interest in aesthetics and philosophy of art
2. understand the most significant and influential theories concerning the issues in (1), along with their defenses
3. be able to critically analyze such theories and arguments
4. formulate and defend your own philosophical views concerning the issues, views, and arguments in (1), (2) and (3)

### Student learning outcomes

(Specific things you will learn, and on which you’ll be evaluated):

Students will be able to:

1. describe some of the central philosophical issues in aesthetics and philosophy of art, including those in the following areas of interest:
   - the nature of art
   - the nature of aesthetic experience
   - the nature of aesthetic evaluation
   - the lessons art provides
   - the aesthetics of tragedy
   - the aesthetics of the sublime
   - the aesthetics of nature
   - the aesthetics of horror and violence
   - aesthetic questions concerning particular genres of art
   - the aesthetics of everyday objects
2. explain the main views with respect to the issues listed in (1)
3. explain some of the main defenses of such views
4. explain some of the main objections to such views and their defenses
5. critique/critically analyze such views and arguments
6. formulate one’s own justified views with respect to the issues discussed in the course

PHIL 360 syllabus, Fall 2017—p. 1 of 6
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course requirements</th>
<th>Quizzes/in-class assignments/homework</th>
<th>20%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Papers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Papers #1-#4: 2 pp. each (30% in all)</td>
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<td>50%</td>
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<td>Paper #5: 5-7 pp. (20%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Test 1 (on topics 1-4; see the course outline on p. 5)</td>
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<td>Test 2 (on topics 5-7)</td>
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<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Test 3/Final exam (on topics 8-11)</td>
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<td>10%</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
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I reserve the right to make adjustments to the grading scheme, the number of assignments, due dates, and the overall course plan as necessary.

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<tr>
<th>Grading scale</th>
<th>A≥90%; 85%≥B+&gt;90%; 80%≥B&gt;85%; 75%≥C+&gt;80%; 70%≥C&gt;75%; 65%≥D+&gt;70%; 60%≥D&gt;65%; F&lt;60%</th>
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<tr>
<th>Attendance policy</th>
<th>According to CCU’s class attendance policy,(^1) “an instructor is permitted to impose a penalty, including assigning the grade of F, for unexcused absences in excess of 25 percent of the regularly scheduled class meetings.”</th>
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<td>For our course, attendance is not formally part of the course grade. However, we will have lots of graded assignments in class, and you get no credit for those if you miss class due to unexcused absences. You’ll also miss the necessary practice for doing well on the papers, and that risks a poor result too. Your policy should be to attend class every single time. Missing class even every now and then risks not learning what you need to learn here, and that’s important.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• other texts made available on Moodle or handed out in class</td>
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| Descriptions of course requirements | |
|-------------------------------------| |
| Reading | It’s very important to have the discipline to do all of the reading for the course, for it’s crucial not only to your doing well and understanding what’s going on in class, but also so we have good and productive class sessions. |
| | I’ll provide you with some “prereading” questions for most every reading assignment ahead of time. That will help you know what to be looking for, and directed reading is usually easier. It’s ok if you don’t understand every little thing. |
| | Try to answer the prereading questions and bring your answers/notes with you to class. Come with questions to ask, either by way of clarifying something or by way of raising possible criticism of what you’ve read. Speaking of criticism, read with an eye for that—you’ll be asked to think critically when it comes time to write our papers, and that process starts from the beginning. On your mind should be questions like “Is this claim correct?” “Could there be a counterexample to this?” “What support is being given for this conclusion here?” and “Is this argument sound?” |

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<tr>
<th>Quizzes, in-class assignments, homework</th>
<th>Expect a lot of these. In-class assignments will often concern the material assigned for the day in question (i.e., the reading), but might include material from earlier class meetings too. I'll often ask you to apply something you should have learned from the reading (if it’s at the beginning of class), or from what we’ve learned that particular day in class (if it’s later in class or at the end). I might ask you to complete a short homework assignment (on that day’s work or on the upcoming reading). (For the grading, I'll use a point system: Each assignment is X number of points, and whatever the total number of points available is by the end, the proportion of points earned determines the grade overall. This is 20% of the course grade.)</th>
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<td>Short papers</td>
<td>You’ll do four of these, with the length for each being no more than two pages (and at least 1 1/2). I’ll give much more complete guidelines separately. Each paper requires you to defend a thesis of your own with respect to a position or argument we’ve studied in the course over the time since the previous paper. Papers #2-#4 will also require you to consider and respond to an objection to your own argument. Expect to write brief but very sharply focused essays here. You’ll turn these in on Moodle.</td>
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<td>Longer paper</td>
<td>I’ll give out detailed guidelines separately, but the fifth paper for the course should be a 5-7 pp. essay with the same overall structure as the earlier papers. Paper #5 needs to be on a topic different than for any of papers #1-#4. You’ll turn paper #5 in on Moodle as well.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tests and final exam</td>
<td>We will have three tests, the last one being the final exam and including material from the whole course. (The final exam/test 3 is in our usual classroom during the scheduled exam period for our course, which is [date], [time].)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes, in-class assignments, and other homework-type assignments or discussion on Moodle {lowest two scores dropped} (25% of course grade)</td>
<td>Expect a lot of these. In-class assignments will often concern the material assigned for the day in question (i.e., the reading), but might include material from earlier class meetings too. I'll often ask you to apply something you should have learned from the reading (if it’s at the beginning of class), or from what we’ve learned that particular day in class (if it’s later in class or at the end). I might ask you to complete a short homework assignment (on that day’s work or on the upcoming reading). This part of the course is also crucial to your getting some meaningful practice at the different aspects of argumentative writing. I may also have you complete some of these as online discussions on Moodle. You might have to post something in response to a prompted question, finish an assignment we started in class, post something about one of your short papers or someone else’s, comment on what your peers have said already, or some combination of these.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course policies</td>
<td>CCU’s class attendance policy states that “The following are considered to be valid circumstances for student absence.</td>
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| Excused absences and extensions       | a. Incapacitating illness or condition—limited to the number of absences that a faculty member determines to be a balance between accommodating the illness/condition and ensuring sufficient participation in class activities.  
   b. Accommodation for a disability, working in conjunction with Accessibility and Disability Services.  
   c. Official representation of the University (excuses for official representation of the University should be obtained from the official supervising the activity). |
d. Death of a close relative.
e. Religious holidays (A list of primary sacred times for world religions can be found online at http://www.interfaithcalendar.org.)
f. Active military duty or assignment.
g. Official University closings.
h. Compliance with a subpoena.”

Pregnancy- and childcare-related absences count here too.

I’ll decide on other types of circumstances as they might arise, but please don’t expect me to be accommodating concerning what goes much beyond those given in the Catalog. The reason for the policy concerning excused absences is this: Quizzes missed due to excused absences won’t be included in the final quiz grade calculation (and thus your other quiz grades will count proportionately more). Quizzes missed due to unexcused absences get a zero.

**Note to athletes and others with CCU-related travel obligations:** I know some of you have travel, and the expectation is that you’ll be able to keep up with the online assignments while you’re away. Making up any missed tests needs to be done very soon upon your return. Let me know well before your travel if you need this last arrangement.

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<tr>
<th>Late papers</th>
<th>Late papers suffer a 10-point penalty per calendar day, starting at the deadline and losing an additional 10 points each 24 hours thereafter. You can expect some leniency for documented excuses of the types given on p. 6, and perhaps others, the leniency being at my discretion.</th>
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<tr>
<th>Academic misconduct</th>
<th>The CCU Student Code of Conduct (URL: <a href="http://www.coastal.edu/media/studentaffairs/deanofstudents/2015-2016%20Code%20of%20Student%20Conduct%20WEB.pdf">http://www.coastal.edu/media/studentaffairs/deanofstudents/2015-2016%20Code%20of%20Student%20Conduct%20WEB.pdf</a>) includes a statement of community standards for academic integrity, which reads as follows: Coastal Carolina University is an academic community that expects the highest standards of honesty, integrity, and personal responsibility. Members of this community are accountable for their actions and are committed to creating an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust. I’m obligated to report all cases of academic misconduct to the CCU Office of Academic Integrity. For such cases I’ll almost always apply my standard sanction: an FX grade for the course. See the Code of Conduct for examples of plagiarism and cheating, as well as procedures and your rights as a student regarding charges of misconduct.</th>
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| Class atmosphere, civility | Our class meetings need to be focused on our material, with very few distractions. Important maxims to keep in mind are these:

- Come to class prepared, having read the material for the day very carefully. I'll have given you “prereading” questions to help with the reading—have those answered as best you can ahead of time. Have questions of your own ready to ask, either by way of clarification or by way of raising a criticism of the content of the reading.
- **Electronics policy:** Please keep your phone away during class with the notifications set to ‘off’, ideally with your phone powered down altogether. This is about not distracting you: Academics requires your sole attention, and even with |
your phone on the ‘vibrate’ setting, that will distract you. I’m sorry, but I have to be strict about this. Science has shown convincingly that humans are really bad at multitasking, and I need your mind on what’s happening in class. Thanks ahead of time for observing this rule.

- Don’t arrive late or leave early, unless you’ve cleared it with me beforehand.
- Be ready to participate in class and discuss our material actively and critically, and be ready to be called upon, both for facilitating discussion and for my gauging your understanding of our material. If you’re not attentive, I’ll let you know.
- I’ve never actually had to do this, but I would handle excessive cases of incivility as a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

Communications

If I need to contact you, I’ll use your coastal.edu address unless I’m replying to a message you’ve sent using another address. Use your coastal.edu account or have its email forwarded to an account you check regularly. (“Regularly” means “multiple times daily.”) Email I send to everyone in the course will go to your coastal.edu address. In emailing me, please observe the standards of professional writing. This is a writing course!

Special needs

If you have a physical or documented mental disability and need accommodations, see me to make the appropriate arrangements. Note that in order to receive such compensation, you need to register with the Office of Accessibility and Disability Services, phone 349-2503, URL http://www.coastal.edu/disabilityservices/. The office is in 106 Kearns Hall.

Course outline by week

Unless otherwise specified, all readings are in the anthology by Korsmeyer. An (M) indicates that the reading can be found on Moodle (either as an external link or as a pdf). As we go along, read the prefaces to each major section as needed.

1. **Introduction to aesthetics and the philosophy of art**
   1.1. Introduction, course outline and policies, what aesthetics is, identifying aesthetic questions
   Reading: Korsmeyer, Introduction

2. **The ontological question: What is art?**
   2.1. What is art?
   Reading: Arthur Danto, “The Artworld”
   Reading (M): Steven Davies, excerpt from *Definitions of Art*
   2.2. Arts vs. crafts
   Reading: Razisika Parker and Griselda Pollock, “Crafty women and the hierarchy of the arts”
   2.3. Art and ritual
   Reading: Daisetz Suzuki, “Zen and the art of tea”

3. **Aesthetic experience and appreciation I: the meaning of ‘aesthetic’**
   3.1. The aesthetic attitude, aesthetic experience
   Reading: Jerome Stolnitz, “The aesthetic attitude”
   Reading: Marcia Eaton, “Locating the aesthetic”
   Reading: Hans-Georg Gadamer, excerpt from *Truth and Method*

4. **Aesthetic experience and appreciation II: the presentation of art**
   4.1. Public art and aesthetic experience
   Reading: Hilde Hein, “Museums: From object to experience”
   Reading: Arthur Danto, “The Vietnam veterans memorial”

5. **Aesthetic evaluation**
5.1. Is aesthetic evaluation merely “a matter of taste”?  
   Reading: David Hume, “Of the standard of taste”
5.2. “Disinterestedness”  
   Reading: Peggy Brand, “Disinterestedness and political art”  
   Reading: Ted Cohen, “High and low thinking about high and low art”

6. Learning from art  
6.1. The Good  
   Reading: Iris Murdoch, “The sovereignty of good over other concepts”
6.2. The ontological question again, for two genres of art  
   Reading: Martha Nussbaum, “Form and content, philosophy and literature”  
   Reading: Susan Feagin, “Paintings and their places”

7. Tragedy  
7.1. Aristotle on tragedy  
   Reading: Sophocles, Choral ode from Oedipus at Colonus  
   Reading: Aristotle, excerpt from Poetics  
7.2. Nietzsche on tragedy  
   Reading: Friedrich Nietzsche, excerpt from The Birth of Tragedy

8. Sublimity  
8.1. Burke on sublimity  
   Reading: Edmund Burke, excerpt from A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful  
8.2. Kant on sublimity  
   Reading: “Analytic of the sublime” (from the Critique of Judgment)

9. The aesthetic of nature  
9.1. Aesthetic appreciation of nature  
   Reading (M): R.W. Hepburn, “Contemporary aesthetics and the neglect of natural beauty” (in Lamarque and Olsen)  
   Reading (M): Malcolm Budd, “Models of nature appreciation” (in Neill & Ridley, also in Lamarque & Olsen?)

10. Horror and the aesthetic of violence  
10.1. Horror  
   Reading: Noel Carroll, excerpt from The Philosophy of Horror  
10.2. War  
   Reading: Cynthia Freeland, “Realist horror”

11. Other questions concerning specific genres of art, and of the aesthetic of everyday things [if time permits]  
11.1. Fashion  
   Reading: Karen Hanson, “The philosophic fear of fashion”
11.2. Food and drink  
   Reading (M): Elizabeth Telfer, “Food as art” (in Neill & Ridley)  
11.3. Photography  
   Reading (M): Roger Scruton, “Photography and representation” (in Neill & Ridley, also in Lamarque & Olsen)  
11.4. Everyday things  
   Reading (M): Thomas Leddy, “The aesthetics of junkyards” (Contemporary Aesthetics (6), 2008)  
   (also in Goldblatt & Brown)