Philosophy Department

AESTHETICS
SPRING 1996
KALAMAZOO COLLEGE

PROFESSOR: Chris Latiolais
Humphrey House #202
Office Hours: 1) Mon. 9:00 - 10:00 2) Wed. 2:00 - 4:00 3) By Appointment.

COURSE GOALS:
This course offers student an introduction to a variety of traditional, philosophical theories of art: for example, Platonic, Aristotelian, rationalist, empiricist, idealist, Marxist, phenomenological, existentialist, feminist and, finally, postmodernist aesthetics theories. Such theoretical positions inform, but are also tested by, critical and interpretive articles about particular types or examples of artworks: for example, painting, sculpture, film, architecture and Handcraft. We will focus our attention upon the visual arts -- as opposed to literary, musical, theatrical and the dance media. Students will gain an appreciation of the difficulties philosophers have encountered in framing a theory of "aesthetic perception" and, more importantly, of the remarkable variety of visual artforms.

EVALUATION:
Students will be evaluated on the basis of class participation, vocabulary quizzes, midterm examinations and a final paper.

Class Participation, seminar presentations and discussion=20%
Midterm examinations 2 @ 15% each=30%
Quizzes 5 @ 5% each=25%
Final Paper 10-15 pages=25%

POLICIES:
Open, respectful and critical discussion is the life-blood of this course. Quizzes offer students and teacher the opportunity to identify and to clarify central terms/concepts. The midterm examinations test comprehension
of key philosophical issues, and the final paper offers students the opportunity to respond in depth to a single topic. The final paper is due on the day scheduled for the final examination. 3 unexcused absences will result in a full grade reduction.

TEXTS:

READING SCHEDULE

WEEK ONE
TUESDAY, MARCH 26TH: Course Mechanics.

I. PICTORIAL ARTS: REPRESENTATION AND THE VISIBLE WORLD:

THURSDAY, MARCH 28TH:
1. Plato, Excerpts from The Republic (Alperson, pp. 63-72).

WEEK TWO
TUESDAY, APRIL 2ND:

THURSDAY, APRIL 4TH:

WEEK THREE
TUESDAY, APRIL 9TH:
1. Goodman, Nelson: Ways of Worldmaking (Cont.).

THURSDAY, APRIL 11TH:

WEEK FOUR
TUESDAY, APRIL 16TH:

THURSDAY, APRIL 18TH:
1. Walton (Handout): "Depictive Representation," Chapter 8 of Mimesis as Make-Believe: On the Foundations of the Representational Arts (Cont.)

WEEK FIVE
TUESDAY, APRIL 23RD:
3. Langer: "Feeling and Form" (Ross, pp. 221-237).

II. PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERPRETATIONS OF THE VISUAL ARTS:

THURSDAY, APRIL 25TH:
2. Freud, Sigmund: "Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood" (pp. 171-176).

WEEK SIX
TUESDAY, APRIL 30TH:
1. Read, Herbert: "The Forms of Things Unknown" (pp, 176-189).
2. Morgan, Douglas: "Psychology and Art Today: A Summary and Critique" (pp. 189-205).

III. RELIGIOUS MOTIFS IN PAINTINGS:

THURSDAY, MAY 2ND:
1. Gilson, Etienne: "The Religious Significance of Painting" (pp. 205-216).
2. Steinberg, Leo: "The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion" (pp. 216-235).

IV. SCULPTURE, ARCHITECTURE, AND HANDCRAFT: THE ARTICULATION OF SPACE.

WEEK SEVEN
TUESDAY, MAY 7TH:
1. Read: "The Discovery of Space" (Alperson, pp. 347-357).

THURSDAY, MAY 9TH:
1. Merleau-Ponty, Maurice: "Cezanne's Doubt" (Handout).

V. FILM AND NEO-MARXIST CRITICISM.

WEEK EIGHT
TUESDAY, MAY 14TH:
1. Merleau-Ponty: "Eye and Mind" (Ross, pp. 281-299).

THURSDAY, MAY 16TH:
3. Second Midterm Examination.

VI. FEMINIST AESTHETICS:

WEEK NINE
TUESDAY, MAY 21ST:

VII. MULTICULTURALISM AND TRADITIONAL AESTHETICS:

THURSDAY, MAY 23RD:

WEEK TEN
TUESDAY, MAY 28TH: Review.
THURSDAY, MAY 30TH: Review & Student Evaluations.

FINAL EXAMINATION