

Normandale Community College
Common Course Outline

Identifying Information

Phil 1160, Philosophy of Art

Program in Philosophy; Department of History, Philosophy, and Political Science

Fall, Spring, and Summer terms

Three credit hours

Pre-requisites: Read 0960 (or placement in Read 1106) and Comp 0900 (or placement in Comp 1101)

MnTC Goals 2, 6

Course Description

The study of the nature of art, the character of our experience of works of art, and standards for the interpretation and evaluation of works of art. May include examination of the nature of beauty, culturally bounded conceptions of the nature of art, the nature of artistic expressiveness and imagination, and the possibility that there are objective criteria for the evaluation of works of art. Readings will be primarily contemporary.

Course Objectives

The student will demonstrate an awareness of the scope and variety of contemporary and classical readings on the nature and meaning of works of art, and an awareness of a variety of works of art in various media (6a).

The student will learn and apply various sets of standards for the interpretation and evaluation of works of art, sets of standards which reflect various cultural, political, moral, and intellectual values (6b).

The student will be able to critically evaluate proposed theories of the nature of art and artistic expression, the objectivity of aesthetic merit, and the relationships between aesthetic import and political, cultural, and moral import of works of art. (6c).

The student will be able to engage in argumentative art criticism by relying upon their own intuitions, reactions, and experiences informed by engagement with the course topics (6e).

The student will be able to imagine various different responses to theses proposed in the course of study, will be able to formulate interpretations of them from a variety of perspectives, will construct various accounts of the aims of art criticism, and will be able to identify underlying assumptions in the philosophical works considered (2b).

The student will be able to use techniques from formal and informal logic in the analysis of the philosophical positions and arguments considered. These techniques will enable the student to identify valid and invalid and inductively strong/weak arguments, to spell out logical implications of theses, and identify logical scope ambiguities (2c).

The student will learn and construct theories of aesthetic value and be able to identify where they drive views about the course subject matter; the student will also consider relationships between aesthetic and other types of value and formulate methods for weighing their relative importance in particular cases (2d).

Topics

Should include examination of the distinction between aesthetic value and other sorts of value (such as moral value and religious value), the nature of beauty, culturally bounded conceptions of the nature of art, the independence of aesthetic value from moral, social, political, and epistemic import of works of art, the nature of artistic expressiveness and imagination, the role of emotion in aesthetic appreciation, and the possibility that there are objective criteria for the evaluation of works of art, all from primarily a contemporary perspective.

Assignments and evaluation

Evaluation of student understanding will take the form of essay examinations, objective examinations, reading quizzes, the preparation of a reading portfolio, group discussion, and/or philosophical papers.