

PHI 3800: Philosophy of the Arts
Florida State University

Course Description

From the FSU bulletin: "An introduction to central issues in philosophy of the arts and aesthetics. Topics may include the nature of beauty, the nature of art, realism in painting, interpretation in literature, the nature of dance, and expressiveness in music. Readings include both historical and contemporary sources."

To elaborate on the general description above, we will begin this course discussing four historical figures, including Plato, Aristotle, Kant, and Nietzsche. Our guiding question for each of these will be: What is the purpose of art?

As the semester progresses, we will discuss a number of contemporary readings, beginning with Hirsch, Bullough, Danto, and Marcuse. Our guiding question will shift with each of these. Respectively, we'll ask: How should we interpret a work of art? What does it mean to appreciate art? Who decides what is art? Can art liberate?

Towards the end of the semester, we will consider even more contemporary readings. Benjamin will offer insights into the role of reproduction in art, particularly in photography and film. Adorno will consider the role of commodification, particularly with respect to music. Cox will invite us to engage feminist theory via a discussion of matriarchal aesthetics. Lastly, Clifford will provide us with the opportunity to engage multicultural theory via a discussion of appropriation in art.