“There is no other aesthetic problem than that of the insertion of art into everyday life.”
—Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 293.

**Course Time and Location**
TTh 10:30-11:45am
BRNG 1268

**Description of Course**
This is an introductory course in the *philosophy* of art, and not a course in art history or on the techniques of art. We will survey a variety of philosophical theories of art from classical times to the present, concentrating on several central debates in the history of aesthetics: the definition of art, the question of taste and aesthetic judgment, the nature of sensation, the function of “representation,” and the status of “popular” art. Our focus will be primarily on the visual arts (such as painting, cinema, and photography), though we will also have occasion to consider media such as literature, music, theater and dance, and architecture. The aim of the course is to introduce students to the *philosophical* problems posed by the various arts, and the ways these problems have been discussed and analyzed (though rarely resolved) in the philosophical tradition.

**Texts**

**Course Requirements**
1. Class Participation (10%). You are expected to attend every class and to participate in discussions. Students will be penalized for excessive absences. Unannounced quizzes may be given at any time, and will be factored into your class participation grade.
2. Two Papers (20% each). You will be required to write two short (5-7 pages) papers that examine in further detail one of the aesthetic issues or problems discussed in the course. A list of possible topics will be distributed in class; you may also write on a topic of your own choosing in consultation with the instructor.
3. Exams. There will be a mid-term (20%) and a final examination (30%) in the course. The exams will be comprehensive and will consist primarily of essay questions.

Final letter grades will be assigned on the basis of the following scale: A 93-100%, B 85-92%, C 78-84%, D 70-77%, F below 70%.

**On-Line Resources**
There are numerous on-line resources for aesthetics and the philosophy of art, including many concerned with digital media. A good starting point is the official web site of the American Society for Aesthetics, “Aesthetics On-Line” at <http://aesthetics-online.org/>. Students, however, must exercise care when accessing and using on-line sites. Do not copy material from the Web into your papers. Plagiarism is an extremely serious offense, and instances of plagiarism will be referred to the relevant university authorities.
Tentative Course Outline
This is a tentative schedule of readings, which may be altered during the course of the semester.

I. INTRODUCTION

Week 1: Aug 23: Introduction
Readings: See “Comments on Andreas Serrano by Members of the United States Senate,” online at <http://www.csulb.edu/~jvancamp/361_r7.html> (handout).

II. ANCIENT AESTHETICS

Aug 25: Ancient Aesthetics I (Plato’s Theory of “Forms”)
Readings: Plato, Republic (SDR, pp. 9-44)
For a general discussion, read Carole S. Vance, “The War on Culture” (G&B, pp. 542-549).

Week 2: Aug 30: Ancient Aesthetics II (Plato and the Artists)
Readings: Plato, Republic (reread pp. 9-44, but focus on Book X, pp. 32-44)

Sep 01: Ancient Aesthetics III (Contemporary Reactions to Plato)
Readings: Jean Baudrillard, Simulations (G&B, 413-416) [This is an excerpt from the book that inspired the film “The Matrix”; use this as an excuse to see it]
Alexander Nehemas, “Plato and the Mass Media” (G&B, pp. 417-425)

Week 3: Sep 06: Ancient Aesthetics IV (The Problem of Tragedy)
Readings: Aristotle, On Tragedy (G&B, pp. 363-366)
Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy (G&B, pp. 366-377)
Freud, On “Oedipus Rex” and “Hamlet” (G&B, pp. 378-381)

III. AESTHETIC JUDGMENT

Sep 08: Aesthetic Judgment I (Hume and the Problem of “Taste”)
Readings: David Hume, “On the Standard of Taste” (SDR, pp. 77-92)

Week 4: Sep 13: Aesthetic Judgment II (Kant on the ‘Beautiful’)

Sep 15: Aesthetic Judgment III (Kant on the ‘Sublime’)

Week 5: Sep 20: Aesthetic Judgment IV (The ‘Modern’ and the ‘Postmodern’)
Readings: Jean-Francois Lyotard, “What is Postmodernism?” (SDR, PP. 561-564), and
The Postmodern Condition (G&B, pp. 403-405)
Clement Greenberg, “Modernist Painting” (G&B, pp. 17-23)

→ FIRST PAPER DUE: Thursday, Sep 22 (at the beginning of class)

IV. ANALYTIC AESTHETICS

Sep 22: What is Art?
Readings: Arthur Danto, “The Artworld” (SDR, pp. 469-481); also look at “The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art” (G&B, pp. 46-50), and “Aesthetics and the Work of Art” (G&B, pp. 50-56)
Week 6: Sep 27: When is Art?  

V. THE QUESTION OF ‘STYLE’

Week 7:  
    Sep 29: The Question of Style I: The Role of Perceptual ‘Schemata’  
Readings: Ernst Gombrich, “The Limits of Likeness” (G&B, pp. 35-39)

Week 7: Oct 04: The Question of Style II: ‘Aspects’ and ‘Seeing as…’ (Perspective)  
Readings: Ludwig Wittgenstein, excerpts from ‘Philosophical Investigations’ (handout)  
Michel Foucault, “Las Meininas” (SDR, pp. 440-454)

Oct 06: Mid-Term Exam (in class)

→ MID-TERM EXAM: Thursday, Oct 06 (in class)

VI. ‘CONTINENTAL’ AESTHETICS

Week 8:
    Oct 11: No Class, October Break (Oct 10-11)

Week 8: Oct 13: Art and Ontology  
Reading: Martin Heidegger, “The Origin of the Work of Art” (SDR, pp. 253-280)

Week 9:
    Oct 18: Art and Ontology (Ontology of the Work of Art)  
Reading: Martin Heidegger, “The Origin of the Work of Art” (SDR, pp. 253-280)

VII. A CASE STUDY: FRANCIS BACON

Week 10: Oct 20: Francis Bacon and the Logic of Sensation I  
Screening of video “Francis Bacon”  
Reading: Gilles Deleuze, Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation, chaps. 1-5

Week 10: Oct 27: Francis Bacon and the Logic of Sensation II  
Reading: Gilles Deleuze, Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation, chaps. 6-10

Week 11: Nov 01: Francis Bacon and the Logic of Sensation III  
Reading: Gilles Deleuze, Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation, chaps. 11-17

Nov 03: No Class

→ SECOND PAPER DUE: Tuesday, Nov 8 (at the beginning of class)

VIII. PHOTOGRAPHY, CINEMA, AND DIGITAL MEDIA

Week 12:
    Nov 08: The ‘Mechanical Reproduction’ of Art I  
Nov 10: The ‘Mechanical Reproduction’ of Art II  

**Week 13:**  
Nov 15: **Cinema I** (Space and Time in Film)  
**Readings:** Alexander Sesonske, “Space, Time, and Motion in Film” (G&B, pp. 136-142)  
Stanley Cavell, “Audience, Actor, and Star” (G&B, pp. 134-136)

Nov 17: **Cinema II** (The Action Image)  
**Readings:** Gilles Deleuze, “The Action-Image,” from The Movement-Image (handout)

**Week 14:**  
Nov 22: **The New Media and Digital Aesthetics**  
**Readings:** Lev Manovich, “What is Digital Cinema?,” on-line at  
http://www.manovich.net/index.html  
Lawrence Rinder, “Art in the Digital Age,” on-Line at  

Nov 24: No Class (Thanksgiving Break, Nov 23-26)

IX. ART AND FEMINISM

**Week 15:**  
Nov 29: **Art and Feminism**  
**Readings:** Laura Mulvey, “Woman as Image: Man as Bearer of the Look” (G&B, pp. 127-134)  
Linda Nochlin, “Why Are There No Great Women Artists?” (G&B, pp. 74-81)

X. ‘POPULAR’ ART

Dec 01: **Popular or “Mass” Art**  
**Reading:** “Theodor W. Adorno, “On the Fetish-Character in Music and the Regression of Listening” (SDR, 539-547)  
Lee B. Brown, “Adorno’s Case Against Popular Music” (G&B, pp. 426-432)

**Week 16:**  
Dec 06: **Popular or “Mass” Art**  
**Reading:** Umberto Eco, “Television and Aesthetics” (G&B, pp. 408-413)  
Diana Raffman, “A Wealth of Wordless Knowledge” (G&B, pp. 414-421)

Dec 08: **Review for Final Exam**

**Week 17:**  
Exam Week: FINAL EXAM (Dec 12-17)