**Philosophy 544: Aesthetics** Carolyn Korsmeyer

**Fall, 2013** 110 Park Hall

 645-0144

 ckors@buffalo.edu

**Texts**:

Stephen Davies, *The Artful Species: Aesthetics, Art, and Evolution*

Jenefer Robinson, *Deeper than Reason:*

Peter Lamarque, *Work and Object: Explorations in the Metaphysics of Art*

Supplementary articles (noted on schedule below) available online or on UBLearns.

**Description:**

This seminar will introduce advanced students to the large and diverse field of aesthetics and will explore in detail a few of the major issues under current discussion. These issues include: (1) the possibility of an evolutionary account of aesthetic sensibility and artistic creativity, and whether art is a global concept or one that is historically and culturally specific (Davies, *The Artful Species*). (2) The role of emotional response to the understanding and appreciation of artworks (Robinson, *Deeper than Reason*). And (3) and the ontology of works of art and the nature of aesthetic properties (Lamarque, *Work and Object*).

Background materials and additional entries to the field of aesthetics will be interleaved with these three books, as is indicated in the schedule of readings below.

Seminar meetings will include a bit of lecture, a lot of discussion, and student presentations.

**Office hours**: Thursdays 2-3 and by appointment. I am best reached by e-mail. (If at all possible, please let me know beforehand if you intend to come to an office hour.)

**Requirements and Assessment:**

1. Attendance at seminar meetings and participation in discussion.

2. Presentation of one of the supplemental readings (your choice of bulleted items).

3. Brief presentation of research project.

4. Research paper (approximately 15 pages) with preliminary prospectus to be approved. Deadlines noted below.

Assessment of the paper will judge thoroughness of research, clarity of exposition and argument, and accuracy of writing skills.

Prospectus should be on time and thoughtful.

Presentations will be judged in terms of care in preparation and responsibility.

Participation will be noted in terms of engagement (brilliant points not required for speaking up).

(Students taking the course “extensively” on an S/U basis are required to do everything except the final paper.)

**Schedule of readings and assignments**

Aug. 27 Introduction and background to aesthetics as a branch of philosophy.

**Concepts of Art and the Aesthetic; Evolutionary Analyses**

Sept. 3 Davies, *The Artful Species,* Part I: Key Concepts

 Introduction

 1. The Aesthetic

* Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, “The Analytic of the Beautiful” (1790) Read “The Four Moments of Beauty,” especially §1-§11 and §16-§19. Widely available, including at <http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/k/kant/immanuel/k16j/>.

Sept. 10 Davies, 2. The Nature of Art

* Larry Shiner, “Western and Nonwestern Concepts of Art” (UBLearns)
* Berys Gaut, “Art as a Cluster Concept” (UBLearns)
* Denis Dutton, “But They Don’t Have Our Concept of Art” (UBLearns)
* Jerrold Levinson, “Extending Art Historically” (UBLearns)

 Davies, 3. The Theory of Evolution

 Davies 4. How Might the Aesthetic, Art, and Evolution be Related?

Sept. 17 Davies Part II: The Aesthetic, chapters 5-7

* Nancy Etcoff, from *The Survival of the Prettiest*
* Carolyn Korsmeyer, “Terrible Beauties” (UBLearns)
* Jerrold Levinson, “Art and Pleasure” (UBLearns)

Sept. 23 Davies Part III: The Arts, chapters 8-12.

* Geoffrey Miller, from *The Mating Mind* (UBLearns)
* George Dickie, “The Institutional Theory of Art” (UBLearns)
* Arthur Danto, from *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace.*

**Expression in Art and the Arousal of Emotions**

Oct. 1 Robinson, *Deeper than Reason,* Introduction and Chapters 1-3.

* Plato, *Republic* II and III.
* Aristotle, *Poetics* (Both widely available; any translations.)
* R.G. Collingwood, from *The Principles of Art* (UBLearns)

Oct. 8 Robinson, Chapters 4-7

* Kendall Walton, from *Mimesis as Make-Believe*, (UBLearns).

Oct. 15 Robinson, Chapters 8-9

* Edmund Burke, from *Enquiry on the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757) (widely available) [on the arousal of fear]
* Kant, from the *Critique of Judgment*, “Analytic of the Sublime” (widely available). [on the arousal of fear]
* Korsmeyer, from *Savoring Disgust,* (UBLearns) [on the arousal of disgust]

Oct. 22 Robinson, Chapters 10-14.

 **Ontology of art and aesthetic properties**

Oct. 29 Lamarque, *Work and Object*

Chapters 1-3

* David Hume, “Of the Standard of Taste” (widely available)
* Arthur Danto, from *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace* (UBLearns)
* Frank Sibley, “Aesthetic Concepts” *Philosophical Review* 68 (1959) 421-50, JSTOR.
* Nick Zangwill, “The Beautiful, the Dainty, and the Dumpy,” *British Journal of Aesthetics* 35(1995) <http://www.dur.ac.uk/nick.zangwill/PapersSortedByTopic.html>.

Nov. 5 Lamarque, Chapters 4-6

* David Davies, “Against Aesthetic Empiricism” (UBLearns)
* Kendall Walton, “Categories of Art,” *Philosophical Review* 79:3 (1970) 334-67, JSTOR.
* Carolyn Korsmeyer, “Touch and the Experience of the Genuine” (UBLearns)

Nov. 12 Lamarque, Chapters 7-8

* Robert Stecker, “Interpretation and the Problem of the Relevant Intention,” (UBLearns)

PROSPECTUS FOR RESEARCH PAPER DUE.

Nov. 19 Lamarque, Chapters 9-11.

 Begin research project presentations

Nov. 26 Research project presentations

Dec. 3 Research project presentations

FINAL PAPER DUE TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10, BY 2 PM.

 Hard copy only, please. Early papers accepted.