

**Course:** Philosophy & Art

**Teacher:** Gina Dominick

**COURSE**

**Description:**

This course examines the intersections of art and philosophy through objective analysis and creative interpretations that explain and challenge philosophical topics, including reality and illusion, space and time, truth, beauty, sacrifice, justice, ethics, race, gender, individuality, politics, and freedom. Students consider philosophy through art as well as the philosophy of art, applying fundamental terminology (“aesthetics,” “transcendence,” “sublimity,” “value,” etc.) in the interpretation of film, literature and poetry, visual arts, and architecture. This class imitates the expectations and rigor of an introductory college course, being discussion based with two formal essays per semester and several shorter written responses. Students will examine a number of mature (TVMA, R, explicit) artworks and read several challenging philosophical texts and are encouraged to discuss material with family, friends, and classmates outside of the classroom.

**Curriculum:**

- Writing and Debate:
  - Argument development and presentation
  - Interpretation
  - Critical judgment
  - Considerate and invested discussion methods
- Logic:
  - Forms of philosophical reason
  - The “Law”
  - Logical fallacies
  - Logic puzzles
- Reading and Vocabulary:
  - Critical reading of philosophical and literary texts
  - Application of philosophical, theoretical, and literary lexicons
  - Introduction to film analysis

**Special Techniques:**

Students will be introduced to important concepts and debates in the history of philosophy, understanding the major philosophers and movements in, mostly, the Western/continental tradition. Students then apply fundamental aesthetic and critical terminology in two formal essays per semester and weekly informal writing and revision assignments that engage with, especially, the close reading of literature and film. Students will also develop college-level discussion skills, learning how to prepare notes

to be shared with peers during class and the importance of citation, bibliographical construction, and scholarly due diligence. As such, a portion of class will be dedicated to identifying and avoiding logical fallacies in philosophical arguments and using logic to solve puzzles and real-world problems.

## **CONTENT**

### **Outline of Philosophical Topics:**

- **Epistemology** (Knowledge)
- **Theology / Philosophy of Religion** (God)
- **Logic** (Reasoning)
- **Philosophy of Mind** (Mind)
- **Ethics** (What to Do)
- **Philosophy of Science** (Free Will)
- **Political Philosophy** (The Self and The World)

### **Materials (Subject to Expand/Contract/Change):**

#### **Novels/Novellas/Drama**

Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* (1915)  
William Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* (1623)  
Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1952, 54)  
Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughter House Five* (1969)  
Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890)  
Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49* (1965)  
Nella Larsen's *Passing* (1929)  
Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952)

#### **Film**

*The Matrix* (Lana and Lilly Wachowski, 1999) (2.5hr)  
*The Cabin in the Woods* (Drew Goddard, 2011) (1hr, 35min)  
*Seventh Seal* (Ingmar Bergman, 1958) (1hr, 36min)  
*Fantastic Planet* (René Laloux, 1973) (1hr, 12min)  
*Un Chien Andalou* (Luis Buñuel, 1929) (21min)  
*Rope* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1948) (1hr, 21min)  
Episodes from *Black Mirror* (2011-present) Netflix  
*Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (Michel Gondry, 2004) (1hr, 48min)  
*Dr. Strangelove* (Stanley Kubrick, 1964) (1hr, 42 min)  
*The Price of Everything* (Nathaniel Kahn, 2018) (1hr, 45 min)  
*Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott, 1982) (2hr)

*Gattaca* (Andrew Niccol, 1997) (2hr)  
*Alien* (Ridley Scott, 1979) (2hr)  
*Get Out* (Jordan Peele, 2017) (1hr, 45 min)  
*Us* (Jordan Peele, 2019) (2hr)

**Visual Arts:**

Mequitta Ahuja  
Banksy  
Hieronymus Bosch  
Salvador Dali  
Marcel Duchamp  
Damien Hirst  
Frida Kahlo  
Maya Lin  
René Magritte  
Andres Serrano

**Philosophy:**

*The Republic* (375 B.C.E.), Plato  
*Poetics* (335 B.C.E.), Aristotle  
*Critique of Judgment* (1790), Immanuel Kant  
*A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), Edmund Burke  
*On Beauty and Being Just* (1999), Elaine Scarry  
*Pre-Raphaelitism* (1853, 59), John Ruskin  
*Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873), Walter Pater  
*The Critic as Artist* (1890, 91), Oscar Wilde  
*The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), Friedrich Nietzsche  
*Culture and Anarchy* (1869), Matthew Arnold  
*Preface to Lyrical Ballads* (1802), William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge  
*The Consolation of Philosophy* (523 C.E.), Boethius  
*On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth* (1823), Thomas de Quincey  
"Murder as a Fine Art" (1887) Thomas De Quincey  
"Modern Fiction" (1921), Virginia Woolf  
"The Commodity Fetish" (1867), Karl Marx  
"The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1935), Walter Benjamin  
"The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception" (1947), Theodor Adorno  
Footage from the PMRC hearings (1985)  
*Ugly Feelings* (2005), Sianne Ngai  
*Feeling Beauty: The Neuroscience of Aesthetic Experience* (2013), G. Gabrielle Starr  
*Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s* (1985), Donna Haraway  
*Men, Women, and Chainsaws* (1992), Carol Clover  
"Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1973), Laura Mulvey

*Poetry is not a Luxury* (1985), Audre Lorde

*Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (1995), Judith Butler

“The Uncanny” (1919), Sigmund Freud

“On the Souls of Black Folk” (1903), W.E.B. Dubois