

ART CRITICISM AND VALUE

INSTRUCTOR:

Dr. E. Hande Tuna

EMAIL:

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CLASS MEETINGS:

T / Th 11:40 am - 1:15 pm

OFFICE HOURS:

Th 2:00 pm, or by appointment



Rembrandt, *Satire on Criticism*, 1644

Course description and objectives

This seminar offers an introduction to various theories of art criticism and theories concerning the nature of aesthetic and artistic value as well as their relation to other kinds of values. In the first half of the course we will read some of the most influential writings on art criticism. We will investigate what the function of art criticism might be, whether critical discourse is descriptive, evaluative, or prescriptive, whether art critics can appeal to general reasons in grounding their judgments or whether each judgment is specific to a particular work of art, what aesthetic properties are, whether or not they supervene on natural properties, etc. In the second half of the course we will examine some debates on the relationship between art and cognition, art and disgust, art and race, and art and morality. Some of the questions that our discussions will center around will be whether or not truth or knowledge has anything to do with aesthetic or artistic value, why and how we aesthetically appreciate works that arouse the feeling of disgust, how artworks contribute to the experience of being racialized, what some effective responses to racialized encounters might look like, what the relationship between aesthetic and ethical properties is, and whether or not ethical merits/defects can count as aesthetic merits/defects in our aesthetic evaluations of a work. This will provide us with an opportunity to reevaluate the theories of criticism we read in the first half of the course.

Throughout the quarter, while learning about aesthetics and philosophy of art, you will be progressively developing the following skill-set:

- ▶ Ability to read moderately difficult philosophical texts closely;
- ▶ Ability to ask good critical questions about a philosophical

text;

- ▶ Ability to unpack complex philosophical positions and to construct step-by-step arguments in their defense, or to raise strong and charitable objections;
- ▶ Ability to represent and communicate complex ideas in short, succinct, accessible pieces of writing.

All the Readings are available on Canvas.

Grade distribution

Reading Notes	20%
Blogposts	20%
Participation	15%
Leading class discussion	15%
Essay (+Revisions)	20% (5%)
Peer Review	5%

Expectations and evaluation

Reading Notes (20%), Blogposts (20%): Assigned readings are usually not too long but they all demand close attention. It is always good practice to focus on the parts of a reading that attracts your attention most while keeping in focus what the philosopher is aiming to accomplish in the piece in general. To facilitate this type of engagement with texts, you will take notes on each reading and write blogposts.

Everyone usually has their own preferred method of note-taking and perhaps you might even like to experiment with

different methods throughout the quarter. That's why I will not privilege one method over another. You can write your notes on the text, write a short summary or an annotation, create an outline, or you can take Cornell style notes. Whatever method you choose, you will submit your notes on **each** reading before **each** class on Canvas. For each reading that you do not submit notes on, **0.75 point** will be subtracted from your overall grade. For a useful source on note-taking see <https://learningcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/taking-notes-while-reading/>.

On the blogposts, you will have the chance to explain the aspects of the reading(s) that attracted your attention most and articulate your reflections. You will have eight opportunities to submit a blogpost (300-750 words, typed). You need to submit total of **four** blogposts. They are due the night before the class. Please make sure you upload them to Canvas with accompanying image(s) if you like by 11:59 pm on the dates marked in the schedule below. I will upload them to the class website. You can choose either to write a new blogpost responding to the readings assigned for that week or to submit a revised version of a previous post with substantial revisions based on the new readings assigned for that week. You also have the option of collaborating with your classmates and co-authoring blogposts. For each blogpost you do not submit or did not substantially revise, **5 points** will be subtracted from your overall grade. Here are some blogpost examples, [one on imaginative resistance](#), [one on art criticism](#), [one on fake news](#),

and [one on incrementalist imagination](#).

Taking notes and writing blogposts will not only help you to understand and retain the material better but will also prepare you for contributing to classroom discussions. These goals are only attainable if you do the reading and the writing before class. There is no point in doing them after class. Hence, **no late submissions** of notes or blogposts are accepted.

Participation (15%): Participation involves attendance, engaging in class discussion, and commenting on your classmates' blogposts on the class website. Indicators of successful participation include the ability to think theoretically and express theoretical ideas in an accessible way but also openness to diverse perspectives and engaging in thoughtful conversation and sometimes respectful criticism, and quite possibly self-criticism. I try hard to make sure the classroom is a positive environment for students of all genders / sexualities and cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and this effort cannot be successful without the good faith, compassion, and generosity of all participants.

Good, B-range participation requires that you

- ▶ Show up to every class
- ▶ Take part in class discussions, without dominating
- ▶ Offer contributions that relate to what is being talked about, and connect with course themes
- ▶ Show awareness of the week's readings in your contributions, and refer to them from time to time



Jenny Saville, *Host*, 2000

What explains the lure of artworks that arouse negative emotions, such as disgust?

The A-range denotes excellence. Excellent participation indicates that you

- ▶ Have a strong understanding of course readings and themes: You are not showing off about what you know, but are bringing in nuances from the week's and the quarter's readings where these help to focus and advance conversation.
- ▶ Develop a critical complex stance: You are connecting with nuances of core issues in the course and advancing your own views with an awareness of strong arguments on different sides.
- ▶ Are attuned to what others are saying and draw connections between them and course themes: your contributions show that you've listened well, and you help to clarify, focus, and move the conversation forward.

You probably merit less than B-range if you have missed classes without making prior arrangements, dominated discussions in ways that prevented others from having a say, repeatedly dragged things off topic, failed to engage with course content and themes, and so on.

Leading Class Discussion (15%): You will be asked to lead one class discussion. You will start with a 5-10 minute summary of the reading(s) assigned for the class. Everyone in the classroom is expected to do the readings for each week so your summary should just aim to remind people of what they have already read instead of detailing the article(s) to an audience that is unfamiliar with the piece. You will also prepare a set of questions to direct the discussion. These questions can bring out...

- ▶ problematic aspects of the reading(s)
- ▶ points of comparison with the other readings; their relative strengths or weaknesses
- ▶ strengths of a successful argument
- ▶ nuances of the answers they provide to the core questions discussed in the course
- ▶ relevance/irrelevance of the reading(s) in understanding specific practices of art criticism, (aesthetic, ethical, cognitive) engagement with specific works of art, and so on.

Exception: If you are experiencing problems with accessibility and you are foreseeing that the task of leading class discussion might create unnecessary burden for you due to these problems, please let me know at your earliest convenience and we will work out on alternatives to leading discussion.

Essay (+Revisions) (20% (5%)) and Peer-Review (5%): You will write approximately 2500-3000 words on a topic of your own choosing. The point of this exercise is to apply the skills you will be cultivating throughout to course to one assignment where you have the opportunity not only to respond to the philosophers' arguments but to construct your own. You are required to consult with me at least one week prior to the deadline for the draft submission. The essay is due at the beginning of class on **May 28. No late submissions** of your first

draft will be accepted since otherwise your classmate will not have enough time to work on their peer-review of your essay.

To encourage collaboration, you are asked to peer-review one of your classmates' essays. It is due on **June 4, 11:40 am**. I will provide a checklist to use to do the peer-review. Since most writers—whether they are neophytes or professionals—struggle with the same sorts of problems, you will find the peer review pertinent to your own work, even while you examine that of your classmates. Indeed, responding to your peers' work will help you become a sharper critic of your own writing.

The final draft of your essay is due on **June 11**. The final draft will be partially evaluated on the basis of how well you responded to your classmates comments on your first draft and the improvements you made on it.

Final drafts that are handed in late will be docked 5% per day. Essays will not be accepted more than 5 days after the deadline. So please make sure to hand them in on time.

Grading scale

Percentage	Letter grade	Grade point value	Description
97-100	A+	4.00	Excellent
94-96	A	4.00	
90-93	A-	3.70	
87-89	B+	3.30	Good
84-86	B	3.00	
80-83	B-	2.70	
77-79	C+	2.30	Adequate
74-76	C	2.00	
70-73	C-	1.70	
67-69	D+	1.30	Needs work
64-66	D	1.00	
61-63	D-	0.70	
0-60	F	0.00	Unsatisfactory

Policies & Resources

Note on Accessibility: I aim to create a learning environment that supports its diverse student body. This means that I am committed to providing accessible materials and opportunities for different kinds of engagement. If you experience a barrier to your participation, please bring this to my attention and I will gladly work with you to ensure accessibility. If you are a student with a disability who requires accommodations to achieve equal access in this course, please submit your Accommodation Authorization Letter from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to me by email, preferably within the first two weeks of the quarter. I would also like us to discuss ways we can ensure your full participation in the course. I encourage all students who may benefit from learning more about DRC services to contact the DRC by phone at 831-459-2089 or by email at drc@ucsc.edu.



Why do we like rough hero or heroines who are selfish psychopaths with no remorse?

Why do we want them to win?

And what does this say about us?

Note on Academic Honesty: To use others' ideas either directly or by paraphrasing them without giving proper references constitutes plagiarism. To copy text or ideas from your own previously or concurrently submitted coursework, without providing references also constitutes a case of plagiarism. I have a very strict plagiarism policy. I report each instance without any exceptions to the Academic Tribunal in order to maintain fairness to each student. If you are under stress and not sure what to write or how to write it, come to me directly or consult other resources within the university, such as the writing center or other

centers that can provide the help you need to deal with the issues that are preventing you from performing your best. The best way to avoid last minute panic is not to leave things to the last minute but be prepared. If you explain to me what you are going through, I will do my best to help you. Personal problems, the difficulty of the material or the course in general are never excuses for plagiarism. If you are unsure about what constitutes plagiarism, please feel free to talk to me.

For additional information on plagiarism, self-plagiarism, and how to avoid it, here are some additional resources:

- ▶ The **UCSC policy** on Academic Dishonesty
- ▶ The UCSC library resources on **source citation**, **tutorials** on how to avoid plagiarism, **checklists** for ensuring that you have properly cited your sources

Title IX and CARE: UC Santa Cruz is committed to providing a safe learning environment that is free of all forms of gender discrimination and sexual harassment, which are explicitly prohibited under Title IX. If you have experienced any form of sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking, know that you are not alone. The Title IX Office, the Campus Advocacy, Resources & Education (CARE) office, and Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) are all resources that you can rely on for support.

Please be aware that if you tell me about a situation involving Title IX misconduct, I am required to share this information with the Title IX Coordinator. Although I have to make that notification, you will control how your case will be handled, including whether or not you wish to pursue a formal complaint. The goal is to make sure that you are aware of the range of options available to you and that you have access to the resources you need.

Confidential resources are available through CARE. Confidentiality means CARE advocates will not share any information with Title IX, the police, parents, or anyone else without explicit permission. CARE advocates are trained to support you in understanding your

SCHEDULE

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	WHAT TO READ	WHAT'S DUE
1	T 3/31	Introduction		
	TH 4/2	True Judges	David Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste" (1757)	
2	T 4/7	Sameness of Vision	Arnold Isenberg, "Critical Communication" (1949), Mary Mothersill, "Critical Reasons" (1961)	
	TH 4/9	Kinds of Art	Kendall Walton, "Categories of Art" (1970)	BPD 1
3	T 4/14	The Artworld and the Critic	Arthur Danto, "The Artworld" (1964) Arthur Danto, "The Fly in the Fly Bottle: The Explanation and Critical Judgment of Works of Art" (2005)	
	TH 4/16	Evaluation and Reasons	Noël Carroll, Selections from <i>On Criticism</i> (2008)	BPD 2
4	T 4/21	Reinstating Reception Value	E. Hande Tuna, "A Kantian Hybrid Theory of Art Criticism: A Particularist Appeal to the Generalists" (2016)	
	TH 4/23	Reinstating Process Value	Thi Nguyen, "Autonomy and Aesthetic Engagement" (2019)	BPD 3
5	T 4/28	Art and Knowledge	Jerome Stolnitz, "On the Cognitive Triviality of Art" (1992)	
	TH 4/30		Berys Gaut, "Art and Cognition" (2006)	BPD 4
6	T 5/5	Art and Disgust	Carolyn Korsmeyer, "Varieties of Aesthetic Disgust" (2011)	
	TH 5/7		Skim through: Michelle Meagher, "Jenny Saville and a Feminist Aesthetics of Disgust" (2003) Carolyn Korsmeyer, "The Magnetism of Disgust"	BPD 5
7	T 5/12	Art and Race	Alia Al-Saji, "Glued to the Image: A Critical Phenomenology of Racialization through Works of Art" (2019)	
	TH 5/14	Art and Morality	Noël Carroll, "Moderate Moralism" (1996)	BPD 6
8	T 5/19		A. W. Eaton, "Robust Immoralism" (2012)	
	TH 5/21	Imaginative Resistance	Kendall Walton, "Morals in Fiction and Fictional Morality" (1994)	
9	T 5/26		Tamar Szabó Gendler, "The Puzzle of Imaginative Resistance" (2000)	BPD 7
	TH 5/28		Shen-yi Liao, Nina Strohminger, and Chandra Sekhar Sripada, "Empirically Investigating Imaginative Resistance" (2014)	ESSAY
10	T 6/2		Adriana Clavel-Vazquez, "Sugar and Spice, and Everything Nice: What Rough Heroines Tell Us about Imaginative Resistance" (2018)	BPD 8
	TH 6/4		E. Hande Tuna, "Imaginative Resistance and Care"	PEER REVIEW
	TH 6/11	ESSAY - FINAL DRAFT		

rights and options, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more. You can contact CARE at (831) 502-2273 or care@ucsc.edu. <https://care.ucsc.edu/>

Slug Support: If you are facing financial challenges, food and housing insecurity, or other concerns, and you are not sure how to find the resources you need, contact **Slug Support** at (831) 459-4446.

Basic Needs: If you are experiencing challenges related to basic needs, such as food, housing, health & wellness, or financial security, visit the **Basic Needs** hub for information about food pantries, accessible housing, mental health support, and financial aid options.

Student Success Centers: UC Santa Cruz has a variety of resources to support your overall success at UC Santa Cruz, ensure accessible living and learning environments, help you when you're experiencing personal or academic challenges, and support you in building community. If you do not find what you're looking for on the list at this [link](#), you are encouraged to contact a college advisor, or to go directly to Slug Support.

CAPS (Counseling and Psychological Services): If you are in distress, managing heightened stress and anxiety, or want to get more support and a counselor's perspective on something you're going through, **CAPS** provides a variety of services for your needs—including immediate crisis support, scheduled individual appointments, group counseling, and workshops led by peer advisors.

DISCLAIMER: Information in this syllabus is subject to change and any changes will be announced on Canvas.