

PHIL 4327: Great Texts
John Dewey's *Art as Experience*
Fall 2020 Syllabus
Mondays, 7:00-9:45pm

Professor Matthew J. Brown

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Office Location and Hours: Mondays 4-5pm and by appointment

Appointments: <https://doodle.com/mm/matthewjbrown/book>

Course Modality and Expectations

Instructional Mode Remote/Virtual - Synchronous online learning at the day and time of the class.

Course Platform

- Blackboard Collaborate - Synchronous class discussion
- eLearning - Prerecorded lectures, assignments, discussion board
- Microsoft Teams - Office hours, informal discussion

Expectations All students are expected to do the weekly readings and turn in all assignments on eLearning, and to participate in class discussion either synchronously (Bb Collaborate) or asynchronously (eLearning discussion board). More details below under “Assignments and Grades.”

(But reasonable expectations) The pandemic is causing difficulties for all of us, some of which we have cannot have planned for, and none of which we deserve. I promise generosity and flexibility, and I ask it from you in return. We've had time to prepare, but unanticipated issues are to be expected. Let's not treat this as business as usual. If you can, I encourage you to participate synchronously. Staying in touch that way can help. I would like you to use your cameras if possible; it seems to me to make the whole thing more humane, and I'm fine if you need to show up to class in pajamas and unkempt hair. Of course, some of you will have bandwidth problems and can turn the camera off when they flare up. If you need to be asynchronous some or all of the time, I completely understand.

Asynchronous Learning Guidelines Asynchronous students will have access to any lecture materials via written or video recorded versions of the lecture. They will be able to participate in online asynchronous discussions and turn in all materials online.

Description

This seminar focuses on one of the most important and influential works in aesthetics and philosophy art of the twentieth century: John Dewey's *Art as Experience*. We will carefully examine the book chapter by chapter and consider it in relation to both everyday aesthetic experience as well as the practice of art. We will also discuss its connection to Dewey's larger body of philosophical work and the tradition of American philosophy.

Textbooks

Required

- John Dewey's *Art as Experience* (ISBN 978-0809328208)
 - Note that the collected works of John Dewey are available online through the library, via Intelix Past Masters. The pagination there matches our textbook.

Additional recommended texts:

- John Dewey, *Experience and Nature* ISBN 978-0809328116
- Thomas M. Alexander, *John Dewey's Theory of Art, Experience, and Nature: The Horizons of Feeling* ISBN 978-0887064265
- Tom Leddy, "Dewey's Aesthetics", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*
- Larry A Hickman, *Reading Dewey: Interpretations for a Postmodern Generation* ISBN 978-0253211798
- David Hildebrand, *Dewey: A Beginner's Guide* ISBN 978-1851685806
- Mary Jane Jacob, *Dewey for Artists* ISBN 978-0226580449
- Jay Martin, *The Education of John Dewey* ISBN 978-0231116763

There will be no assigned readings from these texts, but some of them may help you understand the background of the readings, and others may help you apply the work in your presentation or final paper.

Student Learning Objectives

1. Students will demonstrate close reading skills.
2. Students will demonstrate advanced skills in engaging, unpacking, and evaluating philosophical arguments.
3. Students will demonstrate an ability to make and defend, as well as recognize and critique, philosophical claims and arguments.

4. Students will apply philosophical ideas about art and aesthetic to works of art.
5. Students will demonstrate a knowledge of the philosophical tradition of American Pragmatism.

Assignments and Grades

Assignment Categories and Instructions

1. Class preparation

When you read the chapter, I recommend that you start by reading the whole chapter through quickly. If you come across any passages that are particularly interesting or confusing, just make a light pencil mark in the margin and move on. Read through a second time, this time attending carefully both to passages you find powerful or interesting and passages you find difficult to understand. Mark them in your text with marginalia, underlines, or highlights. On this second read through, take copious notes about your reactions and the structures of ideas and arguments in the text.

Each week, by the night before class, you should turn in all of the following in a post to the weekly discussion board in eLearning:

- a. Passages you find powerful or interesting - one or more transcribed or copy-pasted from Past Masters.
- b. Passages you find difficult to understand - one or more transcribed or copy-pasted from Past Masters, and write some notes about why they are difficult and different possible interpretations.
- c. Questions you have about the ideas or argument of the chapter as a whole - write at least one.
- d. Terms and names you do not know - look them up before class and write down some notes. (This includes names of artists, artworks, or philosophers you may have heard of but are not familiar with.)

2. Participation

Asynchronous discussion of each chapter will begin the Wednesday before the synchronous class discussion. During this time, besides turning in the components of the class prep assignment, you can discuss the book via the discussion board or via Microsoft Teams. During class time, we will discuss the week's readings and presentations live via Blackboard Collaborate. After class, through Tuesday night, you can continue to discuss the text for credit.

3. Presentation

Connect some idea or argument in the chapter for the day to an artwork of your choice that exemplifies it. You must exhibit the artwork in some way, with appropriate A/V aids. This presentation will be turned in online, and format is up to you. You can do a written presentation or record a video. Your presentation should include several prompts for further discussion.

Ordinarily this course would involve in-class presentations where you communicate your application of the reading material to the artwork to the class during the class period. Because we are meeting virtual and some students are participating asynchronously, “presentations” will have a flexible format and will be made available for all students to view asynchronously. This might consist of a blog post with embedded audio/visual components. It might involve a pre-recorded video using PowerPoint or any video platform of your choice. These “presentations” will be required viewing.

4. Term paper

2500-4000 words, on some topic within philosophy of art or the history of philosophy related to *Art as Experience*. Includes a required one-on-one consultation and 500-word formal proposal with a bibliography of 5+ sources.

Grades

1. Class preparation - 65 points (5 per week)
2. Participation - 70 points
3. Presentation - 100 points
4. Term paper - 200 points
 - Consultation - 20 points
 - Formal Proposal - 20 points
 - Final Paper - 160 points

Total points available: 435.

Final grade is your point total \div 100, converted to a 4.0 grade scale (4.0 = A, 2.67 = B-, etc.).

Rubrics for these assignments will be provided in advance.

Schedule

We have 14 weeks of class, and *Art as Experience* has 14 chapters. We'll work through one chapter a week. There will be no assigned readings from secondary sources, though you are welcome and encouraged to consult them.

1. The Live Creature
 - Su 8/16: No assignment

- M 8/17: In-class and asynchronous discussions
 - Continue asynchronous discussion through next week
2. The Live Creature and “Ethereal Things”
 - Asynchronous discussion of Ch 1 continues into this discussion
 - W 8/19: Asynchronous discussion begins of Ch 2
 - Su 8/23: Class preparation assignment & presentations due
 - M 8/24 7pm: In-class discussion
 - T 8/25: Final asynchronous participation due
 3. Having an Experience
 - W 8/26: Asynchronous discussion begins
 - Su 8/30: Class preparation assignment & presentations due
 - M 8/31 7pm: In-class discussion (view student presentations beforehand)
 - F 9/4: Final asynchronous participation due
 - S 9/5 - M 9/7: *Labor Day Holiday, No Class*
 4. The Act of Expression
 - T 9/8: Asynchronous discussion begins
 - Su 9/13: Class preparation assignment & presentations due
 - M 9/14 7pm: In-class discussion (view student presentations beforehand)
 - T 9/15: Final asynchronous participation due
 5. The Expressive Object
 - W 9/16: Asynchronous discussion begins
 - Su 9/20: Class preparation assignment & presentations due
 - M 9/21 7pm: In-class discussion (view student presentations beforehand)
 - T 9/22: Final asynchronous participation due
 6. Substance and Form
 - W 9/23: Asynchronous discussion begins
 - F 9/25: Last day for One-on-one Term Paper Consultation
 - Su 9/27: Class preparation assignment & presentations due
 - M 9/28 7pm: In-class discussion (view student presentations beforehand)
 - T 9/29: Final asynchronous participation due
 7. Natural History of Form
 - W 9/30: Asynchronous discussion begins
 - Su 10/4: Class preparation assignment & presentations due
 - M 10/5 7pm: In-class discussion (view student presentations beforehand)
 - T 10/6: Final asynchronous participation due
 8. Organization of Energies
 - W 10/7: Asynchronous discussion begins
 - Su 10/11: Class preparation assignment & presentations due
 - M 10/12 7pm: In-class discussion (view student presentations beforehand)
 - T 10/13: Final asynchronous participation due

9. The Common Substance of the Arts
 - W 10/14: Asynchronous discussion begins
 - Su 10/18: Class preparation assignment & presentations due
 - M 10/19 7pm: In-class discussion (view student presentations beforehand)
 - T 10/20: Final asynchronous participation due
10. The Varied Substance of the Arts
 - W 10/21: Asynchronous discussion begins
 - F 10/23: Term Paper - Formal Proposal Due
 - Su 10/25: Class preparation assignment & presentations due
 - M 10/26 7pm: In-class discussion (view student presentations beforehand)
 - T 10/27: Final asynchronous participation due
11. The Human Contribution
 - W 10/28: Asynchronous discussion begins
 - Su 11/1: Class preparation assignment & presentations due
 - M 11/2 7pm: In-class discussion (view student presentations beforehand)
 - T 11/3: Final asynchronous participation due
12. The Challenge to Philosophy
 - W 11/4: Asynchronous discussion begins
 - Su 11/8: Class preparation assignment & presentations due
 - M 11/9 7pm: In-class discussion (view student presentations beforehand)
 - T 11/10: Final asynchronous participation due
13. Criticism and Perception
 - W 11/11: Asynchronous discussion begins
 - Su 11/15: Class preparation assignment & presentations due
 - M 11/16 7pm: In-class discussion (view student presentations beforehand)
 - T 11/17: Final asynchronous participation due
14. Art and Civilization
 - W 11/18: Asynchronous discussion begins
 - Su 11/22: Class preparation assignment & presentations due
 - M 11/23 7pm: In-class discussion (view student presentations beforehand)
 - T 11/24: Final asynchronous participation due

Final Exam Week: Term Paper Due

Course and Instructor Policies

Class Meeting expectations

You are expected to have **read the assignments *before* class**, and it would be to your benefit to also read them again after class. You are expected to **bring a copy of assigned readings** for each day's class, and have them available to refer to. You are expected to **listen respectfully** to the professor and your fellow students, and **participate** in class discussions and activities.

Failure to abide by these expectations will result in you being asked to leave the class meeting.

Late Work, Make-Up, and Completion

It is important to stay on track with the class schedule, or else you will fall behind and not be able to complete the work to a satisfactory standard. That said, our lives are under a lot of stress and turmoil at the moment. Extensions will be given upon request whenever asked, for any reason, as long as you ask ahead of time or as soon as possible after the deadline.

Cheating and Plagiarism

Don't do it! If you incorporate any work that is not your own into any project that you do, and you do not cite the source properly, this counts as plagiarism. This includes someone doing the work for you, taking work done by another student, verbatim copying of published sources, *paraphrasing* published work without citation, and paraphrasing in an inappropriate way even with citation. Re-using work created for another course also counts as plagiarism in most contexts. Unless group work is *explicitly* permitted or required, it is expected that all of the work that you turn in is original and your own, and that any sources that you make use of are correctly cited.

If you are caught cheating or plagiarizing, it is absolutely mandatory for me to turn you in to the Dean of Students Office of Community Standards and Conduct.

University Policies

The information contained in the following link constitutes the University's policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus: <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>

A syllabus is a living document. This descriptions, timelines, and policies contained in this syllabus are subject to change in the interest of improving the quality of the course, at the discretion of the professor. Adequate notice will be provided for any changes, and in many cases they will be discussed with the class.