

PHIL 390 A01
CRN#12636

September – December 2024
TWF: 10:30pm – 11:20pm

Selected Topics: Ethics & Art

Instructor: Scott Woodcock [he/they]
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Office Hours: Wed 1:30-2:30pm open hours + individual zoom meetings by appointment

Provisional Draft: This

Course Description:

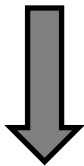
The aim of this course will be to offer a survey of some of the fascinating questions that arise at the intersection of art and ethical theory. We will begin by reading essays on the different perspectives on ethics and art across different cultural/historical traditions. We will then discuss how our analysis of art is related to contemporary debates in metaethics (e.g. motivational internalism) and how it relates to the three main positions in normative ethics: Kantian ethics, consequentialism, and virtue ethics. Next, we turn to a principal concern in the literature on ethics and art. This is the notorious *interaction* debate, which revolves around whether moral merits/deficits in art tend to affect their aesthetic qualities and vice versa. We will look at applications of the positions at stake in this debate when it comes to humour, race, and gender. Finally, we will discuss recent work on the ethics of video games and cultural appropriation. In general, the aim will be to provide a highly interactive lecture format that both (a) gives students an overview of the key issues found in the literature on ethics and art, and (b) allows them opportunities to critically reflect on their own preferred examples of artistic expression and consider them with new tools for understanding their moral and aesthetic properties.

Course Website: Online course materials will be available via Uvic *Brightspace*.

Texts: *The Oxford Handbook of Ethics and Art*, edited by James Harold

Note: this handbook is currently available online via Uvic Library holdings

Requirements: Attendance/Participation (10%)
Quote & Comment Assignments (10%)
Two Case Study Reports (10% x2)
Midterm Test (20%)
Term Paper (40%)



Note: Due dates are posted below in the course schedule. *You are responsible for knowing these dates.* Plan ahead, and manage your workload accordingly.

Important Dates: Please consult Uvic [Academic Year Important Dates](#) for information about last dates to withdraw from courses without penalty, etc.

Grading System

Percentage	Letter Grade	Grade Point	Grade Definition
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Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Do I need to read the material before class? It is very hard to understand.

A: Yes, *make the effort*. We can sort things out in class, but reading the material on your own first will prepare you for class and help you to understand the content at stake.

Q: Do I need to complete each of the course requirements to pass the course?

A: No, in this particular course (unlike some other courses at Uvic), I do not require each of the various tests/assignments to be completed for an overall pass. So, for example, if you are unable to complete a certain assignment, you can still pass the course.

Q: I'm over the word count. Does this really matter?

A: Would I include it in the instructions if it didn't? If you are only a few words over I won't give you a zero, but still: use the opportunity to work on *editing* your writing.

Q: Are you willing to look over drafts of our assignments?

A: In principle, yes, but in a large class it is not always feasible. It is preferable to send me a provisional outline of your argument so that I can make suggestions.

Q: I'm not feeling well, but *maybe* I'm ok to write the test. Should I just try and see what happens? I can always just quit and write it again later, right?

A: No. I respect students trying to tough things out, but think it over procedurally from the perspective of the university: it is 100% reasonable to delay a test due to student illness, but it is another thing entirely to let a student see the contents of that test and then have a second try at it. Therefore, if you think you might not be well enough to write an exam, then *do not write that exam*. Contact me instead.

Q: When is the last day to start handing in Q&C's if I want to get full marks?

A: This term it would be Nov. 1. Read the Q&C instructions so you understand why.

Q: I didn't read the instructions for the Q&C Assignments. Now it's the last week

of class-- Can I hand in (re)lative assignments (on)seve Tassign (Fe) (9) (a) B. SL 122 (6) DIT (T) 120 (a) 0