Introduction to Philosophy  
PHIL 101  
Fall 2007  
MWF 10:00 – 10:50; Clough 102

Dr. Terjesen  
terjesena@rhodes.edu  
Clough 402B; x3577  
Office Hours: M-Th 2-3 & By Appt.

Course Description:

This course will introduce students to philosophical analysis and argumentation through themes in aesthetics (particularly those involving visual narratives). Students will discuss such topics as the nature of beauty, what makes something art, the logic of visual narratives, the nature of humor, the suspension of disbelief when watching movies, the demarcation of reality from fiction and what [if anything] should be done about offensive humor. In the process of addressing these topics, students will become familiar with the fundamentals of logic, metaphysics, epistemology and ethics. Readings will be taken from classic authors and contemporary thinkers (and even a few non-philosophers). The focus of the course will be on developing students’ abilities to articulate and defend their own views on these topics and understand their relation to other philosophical positions.

Course Texts:

Will Eisner. The Best of the Spirit. DC, 2005. [BoS]
Albert Hofstadter and Richard Kuhns (eds.). Philosophies of Art and Beauty. UChicago, 1964. [PAB]
Some additional readings will be available online.
Some films will be shown as part of this class.

Course Website:

This class will make use of Blackboard [formerly WebCT] and you should check that regularly. To get to Blackboard, go to the Login page on the main Rhodes page and click on WebCT/Blackboard. Once there you login, using your email alias as your ID [the part before @rhodes.edu] and your Banner R number as your password. You will then be prompted to change your password. After changing you password (and logging in again), you will be taken to your overall page – to access the particular course site, click on the name.

Tentative Course Schedule (Subject to Revision If Class Discussion Warrants It):

Aug 22 Introduction to the Course
Aug 24 What Are Comics? (Philosophy and the Logic of Definition)  
Reading: UC Chap. 1  
PT 1.10, 3.9, 4.11  
Weitz, “The Role of Theory in Aesthetics” [APA Chap. 1]

Aug 27 How Do Comics Convey Information?  
Reading: UC Chap. 2  
Roger Scruton, “Photography and Representation” [APA Chap 31]  
Sections 1-5, and 10-11.  
PT 1.1,1.2,1.4, 4.15
29 Do We Identify More With Cartoons?
   Reading: Ethan Frome, “Identification in Comics” [online]
   Greg Cwiklik, “Understanding the Real Problem” [online]
   Gary Hatfield, “Thoughts on Understanding Comics” [online]

31 What Makes for a Valid Argument?
   Reading: PT 1.7 (formal fallacies only), 1.12, 3.23, 4.5, and 4.7

Sep 3 Labor Day – No Class

5 How Do Comics Tell A Story?
   Reading: UC Chap 3
   David Hume, Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding II, 11-15;
   and III [Online]
   PT 3.14, 4.1, 4.6, and 6.7

7 Can Anything Be a Montage?
   Reading: David Hume, Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding IV, i and
   VII, ii [Online]
   Sergei Eisenstein, “A Dialectic Approach to Film Form” [Online]
   Andre Bazin, “Cinematic Realism” [Online]
   PT 2.3
   “The Embezzler” [BoS]

10 How Do Inductive Arguments Work?
   Reading: David Hume, Enquiry IV, ii.
   PT 1.3, 1.7 (Informal), 2.1, 2.4, 3.5, and 6.8

12 Are Conspiracy Theories Justified?
   Reading: Brian Keeley, “Of Conspiracy Theories”
   PT 2.5, 3.1, 3.18, 3.28
   “Visitor” [BoS]

QUIZ#1 – Types of Arguments

FIRST WRITING ASSIGNMENT DEADLINE

14 Is Beauty Real?
   Reading: Plato, Symposium 201c-212a [“Love of Beauty,” PAB 68-77]
   Plotinus, Ennead I, Tractate 6, Sections 1-6 [“Beauty”, PAB 141-7]
   Marsilio Ficino, Commentary on Plato’s Symposium, Second Speech
   Chapters 2,3 and 5 [PAB 209-211 and 213]

17 What Does It Mean to Say “Beauty is Real”?
   Reading: Philip Pettit, “The Possibility of Aesthetic Realism” Sections II-IV
   [APA, Chapter 14]
   PT 4.13
   “Meet P’Gell” [BoS]

19 Is Beauty Imaginary?
   Reading: Benedetto Croce, “Aesthetics” [PAB 556-569]

21 Can Nature Be Beautiful? Or Artistic?
   Reading: Allen Carlson, “Appreciation and the Natural Environment” [APA,
   Chap. 45]
   PT 2.7 and 3.4

24 Is Aesthetic Experience the Same for Everyone?
   Reading: Immanuel Kant, Critique of Judgment 1.2,6,8,31, and 38
   [PAB 280-1,286, 288-90, 307-8, and 310-1]
   PT 2.10

26 What is Time?
   Reading: UC Chap 4
   Augustine, Confessions Book XI, 14-24 and 28 [Online]
“Ten Minutes” and “Fox at Bay” [BoS]

**Movie Event – 7 PM [Frazier-Jelke B] “300”**

28

**Is Time Objective?**

Reading: Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* Transcendental Doctrine of Elements,
First Part, Section II, SS 5-8 [Online]
PT 4.2, 4.3 and 4.12
“The Killer” [BoS]

Oct 1

**Is Time Travel Possible?**

Reading: David Lewis, “Paradoxes of Time Travel” [Online]
John Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* II, xxvii, 1,
9-10,16 and 19-21 [Online]
PT 2.6, 3.16, 3.19

3

**What is Possible?**

Reading: Jeff McLaughlin, “What If? DC’s Crisis and Leibnizian Possible Worlds” [Online]
Richard Hanley, “Identity Crisis: Time Travel and Metaphysics in the DC Multiverse” [Online]
PT 2.9, 4.4.4.10 and 6.4
“The Story of Gerhard Shnobble” [BoS]

QUIZ#2 – Metaphysical Concepts

4

**Movie Event – 7 PM [Frazier-Jelke B] “Bamboozled”**

5

**What is a Racist Image?**

Reading: Charles Johnson (intro) and Frederik Stromberg, *Black Images in Comics* [selections] [Online]
Charles Lawrence III, “Regulating Racial Speech on Campus” [Online]
“Origin of the Spirit” [BoS]
“Introducing Silk Satin” [BoS]

SECOND WRITING ASSIGNMENT DEADLINE

8

**Should Some Things Never Be Depicted?**

Reading: Plato, *Republic* 376d-383a and 595a-608b [“Imitative Art: Definition and Criticism,” PAB 8-14 and 30-45]
“The Last Trolley” and “Wild Rice” [BoS]

10

**MIDTERM EXAM**

12

**Are Some Things to be Depicted Because It’s Cathartic?**

Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1382a19-1383b11 and 1385b11-1386b9 [PAB 126-131]
Aristotle, *Politics* 1341b-1342a [Online]
PT 3.25

15

**Fall Break – No Class**

17

**What are Emotions?**

Reading: UC Chap 5 and 8
Rene Descartes, *Passions of the Soul* Articles 27-29,34-37 and 40 [Online]
William James, “What is an Emotion?” [Online]
PT 5.10

19

**Can We Really Be Moved By Fiction?**

Reading: Kendall Walton, “Fearing Fictions” Sect 1-4 and 6 [APA Chap 26]
22 Conference – No Class

23 Movie Event – 7 PM [Frazier-Jelke B] “American Beauty”

OR

Related Event – 7 PM [Blount Auditorium] Renaissance Art Lecture

What is Consciousness?
Reading: David Chalmers, “Self- ascription without Qualia” [Online]
Daniel Dennett, “Instead of Qualia” [Online]
“The Story of Rat-Tat, The Toy Machine Gun” [BoS]
The Walking Dead #1 [Online]

Philosophy Event – 6 PM [Tuthill Auditorium] “Ethical Reactions to Homelessness”

24 Who Is the Author?
Reading: Paisley Livingston, “Cinematic Authorship” [Online]
Andrew Sarris, “Auteur Theory” [Online]
A Distant Soil #1 [Online]
Jack Staff #1 [Online]
Fell #1 [Online]

PT 3.8, 3.26

26 Who Determines If It Is Art?
Reading: Arthur Danto, “The Artworld” Sections 1-3 [APA Chap 3]
M Chaps 1 and 2
PT 6.5

Is There A Difference Between “High” and “Low” Art?
Reading: UC Chap 7
Bruce Baugh, “Prolegomena to Any Aesthetics of Rock Music”
[APA Chap 42]
Stephen Davies, “Rock Versus Classical Music” Sections 1, 4 and 5
[APA Chap 43]
Absolute Sandman: Special Edition [Handout]

Who Determines If It Is Art?


2 Why Do We Read Genre Fiction?
Reading: Noel Carroll, “The Paradox of Junk Fiction” [Online]
“Sand Saref” and “Bring In Sand Saref” [BoS]
PT 3.10 and 3.21

5 Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good People?
Reading: J.L. Mackie, “Evil and Omnipotence” [Online]
Augustine, City of God selections [Online]
Heaven’s War [Online]
M Chaps 3 and 4
PT 3.3 and 3.13

QUIZ #3 - Epistemological Concepts

6 Movie Event – 7 PM [Frazier-Jelke B] “Big Fish”

7 What is Bullshit?
Reading: Harry Frankfurt, On Bullshit [Selections]
PT 2.11

THIRD WRITING ASSIGNMENT DEADLINE

9 Can I Have A Secret Identity?
Reading: Tom Morris, “What’s Behind the Mask? The Secret of Secret
12 When Am I Responsible?
   Reading: Kevin Kinghorn, “Questions of Identity: Is the Hulk the Same Person as Bruce Banner?” [Online]
   Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* III. 2 [Online]
   “Two Lives” [BoS]

14 Is It Okay To Take the Law into One’s Own Hands?
   Reading: Peter French, *Virtues of Vengeance* selections [Online]
   Aeon Skoble, “Superhero Revisionism” [Online]
   Cheyney Ryan, “The Morality of Pacifism” [Online]

**GROUP PRESENTATION OUTLINE DUE**

15 Philosophy Event – 4 PM [Tentative] Karen Gover Talk

16 Why Be Moral?
   Reading: James Rachels, “Ethical Egoism” [Online]
   Ayn Rand, “The Ethics of Emergencies” [Online]
   *Mr. A* [Online]
   52: *Week Seventeen* [Handout]
   PT 6.5

18 Movie Event – 3 PM [Frazier-Jelke] “Death Note”

19 Do the Consequences Matter?
   Reading: John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism* selections [Online]
   Bernard Williams, “Against Utilitarianism” [Online]
   *Civil War: the Confession* [Handout]
   PT 3.20

21 Thanksgiving Break – No Class

23 Thanksgiving Break – No Class

26 Does Character Matter?
   Reading: John Doris, “Persons, Situations and Virtue Ethics” [Online]
   M Chaps 5 and 6
   “Satin” [BoS]
   PT 3.15 and 4.16

**QUIZ #4 – Ethical Concepts**

28 Must I Be Moral?
   Reading: Susan Wolf, “Moral Saints” [Online]
   Umberto Eco, “The Myth of Superman” [Online]
   *Welcome to Tranquility*#1 [Handout]

**FOURTH WRITING ASSIGNMENT DEADLINE**

30 Why Are Things Funny?
   Reading: Andrew Terjesen, “What Are You Laughing At (And Why)?” [Online]

Dec 3 Group Presentations
5 Group Presentations
8 FINAL EXAM – 8:30 AM
Course Evaluation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Questions/Quizzes</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Assignments</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutorials</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation/Presentation</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EXAMS. Philosophy (like any other discipline) employs a conceptual framework that one must become familiar with. A midterm exam will test one’s mastery of the concepts introduced up until that point. The final exam will be a cumulative exam to test one’s mastery of all the concepts introduced in the course.

READING QUESTIONS/QUIZZES. Questions that are designed to highlight important aspects of the reading for that day’s class will be posted on Blackboard (at least 48 hours) before class. Students will drop off their answers to reading questions at the beginning of class. There will also be occasional in-class quizzes.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS. Throughout the course there will be 4 relatively short (about 3 pages) writing assignments [too short to be called “papers.”] These assignments will be designed to help you hone your skills in argument analysis. You will be required to submit all four assignments, but only three will be used to determine your final grade.

TUTORIALS. Twice during the semester I will meet with students in groups of three (modeled after the English system of tutorials) to discuss an article relevant to the class. In both instances you will write a summary beforehand and then revise it after a one-hour meeting outside of class (making up some of our lost time).

PARTICIPATION/PRESENTATION. Philosophy is not just about mastering what some people said several centuries ago. It is also about taking an active role in trying to understand the problems that these people were trying to answer, how that compares to the problems we face today and judging the strength of the responses to these problems. Consequently, philosophy cannot happen in a passive manner. This part of your course grade will measure the quantity and (much more importantly) quality of your participation inside and outside of class (including on Blackboard). And to encourage your active participation, you will be required to make short class presentations during the semester.

Specific details on expectations for assignments will be provided in separate documents.

Grading:

Student work will be assessed according to the grading regulations listed in the Rhodes College Catalogue:

- A – Excellent
- B – Good
- C – Satisfactory
- D – Passing
- F – Failure

P – To earn a passing grade, students must pass [get at least a D+] in each element of the course evaluation.

Disabilities Accommodation Policy (from the College Catalogue, p. 43):

Rhodes is committed to ensuring that educational programs are accessible to all qualified students in accordance with the provisions of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and expanded by Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). To guard against discrimination on the basis of disability,
reasonable and appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids are determined on a case-by-case basis for students who have a demonstrated need for these services. It is the student's responsibility to initiate any request for accommodation due to a qualifying disability. Once students are enrolled, the Coordinator of Student Disability Services is the point of contact for students with physical, psychological, learning and attentional disabilities. The Coordinator of Student Disability Services confers with students on an individual basis, then together with the Disability Support Committee, determines appropriate accommodations and identifies needed resources.

Attendance, Make-up and Lateness Policy:

Philosophy is as much a group-activity as it is a solitary one. Consequently, being in class is an important part of the learning process as we talk about various philosophical issues. You are expected to attend every class. Missing more than three classes will lower your participation/presentation grade by 1/3 per extra missed class ["excused" or “unexcused”].

Please note that I have put “deadlines” as opposed to “due dates” in the schedule. [Regardless of what changes there may be in material covered over the term, these dates will not change.] Each deadline comes with a 48 hour grace period – to allow for the things that sometimes happen. Some of you may be tempted to read the end of the grace period as the real due date, but bear the following things in mind: 1) I will not read drafts/outlines or discuss the content of assignment after the deadline; 2) No assignment will be accepted after the end of the grace period, unless the student was incapacitated by illness that began before the deadline and lasted through the grace period; and 3) If the final draft of an assignment is not able to be printed, you will be able to submit it after the grace period as long as you submit a printed draft with notes by the end of the grace period. Please note: In order to avail yourself of the grace period you must attend class the day of the deadline and during the grace period.

Make-ups for exam or quizzes will be granted only if you can provide appropriate documentation of severe illness, emergency, or reasonable extracurricular or academic-related activity.

Honor Code

The Honor Code states that all work submitted must be your own. You are encouraged to discuss the assignments with other students in the class, but only in order to help each other’s understanding. However, all work you submit must be the product of your own effort and you should never dictate to someone else the “best answer.”