GONZAGA-IN-FLORENCE SYLLABUS
Course: Philosophy of Art (PHL 472, VART 466)
Credits: 3 Credits
Instructor: Martino Traxler, mtrax@tiscali.it

OFFICE HOURS: M-W: 13:15-14:00 OR BY APPOINTMENT

SCHEDULE: MON., TUE., WED., THU., 11:40-13:15

ROOM:

PREREQUISITES: AS FOR ANY 400-LEVEL PHILOSOPHY CLASS

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course, seeking to incite reflection on art and life and much in between, concentrates on three topics: 1) what counts as art? 2) what makes art good or bad? 3) should art objects and other cultural heritage remain where they were made or be returned to the place they were re-discovered?

The course will mix sessions in class with some visits to lesser known or visited sites, collections, or buildings. Students are additionally tasked with spending time with the more famous and revered sites and objects so as to bring to class their impressions of these paradigm art objects particularly in connection with the second and third course topics.

Requirements: two presentations 1) one about what makes a particular object or event art, the other evaluating a work of art or craft or performance you have seen in Florence during this summer session (25% each), one presentation is to be written up as an argumentative paper (30%), and a final exams (20% of course grade each). Presentations and papers may result from group work (of up to three).

As a philosophy class, this course will pay close attention to the persuasive presentation of thought, both orally and in written form. Students should consider this an opportunity to refine their skills of critical analysis and discernment, and to practice examining a question from all sides.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
By the end of the course, students are expected to:
- have developed their critical faculties, particularly regarding art, perhaps even to have abandoned merely emotional reactions in favour of logically grounded argumentation
- refined their skills in reflecting and evaluating objects of art and their function in human life and activity
- improved their argumentative skills

TEACHING METHOD
Sessions consist of some lecturing followed, preceded, and accompanied clarifying, questioning, rebuttals, and discussion of the cases or arguments under examination. Students are expected to have read the relevant texts in advance. Students will also be tasked with presenting material (cases, arguments, analyses) to the class.
Several class on-site visits are planned. Students are also responsible for visiting other local sites, museums, collections on their own.
LEARNING OUTCOMES
By the time we have covered the related topic, students are expected to be able to:

- Convincingly present their reasons for judging something to be art or not (and the strongest objections to one’s judgment) employing the concepts studied in our readings
- Persuasively present their reasons for evaluating a particular work or performance as they do (and considering the strongest objections to one’s evaluation)
- Persuasively argue, in written form for the final exam, in favour or against the return of some particular piece of cultural heritage or some particular collection of the same (while also considering reasons against one’s own conclusion), taking into account the various considerations presented in class and in our readings on this topic.

GRADING AND OTHER POLICIES
The final grade may take into account any or all of the following:

Attendance
Attendance is taken at the beginning of class from the first day of the semester. The student entering class after attendance is taken has to contact the professor at the end and announce his/her presence. However, this does not mean that coming late is accepted. Two late arrivals may be excused, three turn automatically into an absence and will affect the attendance and participation part of the final grade.

Students can miss one week’s work, irrespective of the course formula (three sessions, two sessions, one session). It is their responsibility to make up for the missed work. If they miss a quiz or a report they are not allowed to have it at another time, unless the absence is for certified medical reasons and the professor and Dean agree.

More than one week’s work missed will be penalized as follows:
1. One extra absence lowers the attendance and participation grade by half a letter grade
2. Two extra absences lower the final grade by a whole letter grade
3. Three extra absences lower the final grade to an F.

Department
Learning and reflection are collaborative efforts. So student participation, particularly in the form of constructive or critical analysis, is warmly invited. It is not required, however, as you are now deemed to have matured enough as scholars to judge for yourselves the merits contributing your opinions, questions, or arguments. Because mutual respect is essential to good collaboration, Traxler reserves the right to make grade subtractions for disruptive behaviour as well as for behaviour disrespectful to other students. For, while disrespecting faculty may be unwise grade-wise, disrespecting fellow students is disgraceful and may be sanctioned with grade subtractions. In the same spirit, what you do with your computer or smart-phone during this class is your business alone for as long as it does not distract others or disrupt class, whereupon you become liable to grade subtractions.

Attendance, participation
Assuming we are all adults now, no grades are awarded for attendance or participation.

Research—first presentation
When, if ever, is sailboat construction, needlepoint, painting velvet, rap, cooking, shoemaking, or bowling art? Choose your poiesis manner of creation consider arguments for both or against both sides of the question, illustrate them as well you can in
your presentation. You may then present all this, even more cogently, in your argumentative paper.

Group work permitted up to three persons; papers may contain separate, dissenting opinions.

Aim for a ten minute presentation to the class, followed by a 20 minute discussion (20%).

Research—second presentation
Students elaborate on their evaluation of the particular local objects, buildings, etc., they have chosen to present to the class.

Research—the write-up
Written work must be submitted in hard copy, perhaps supplemented with images or soundtracks in a suitable medium. You are encouraged to print over & back.

Essays submitted late will receive a grade penalty as follows: 1 day = 1 letter grade (e.g., A- to B-), 2 days = 2 letter grades (e.g., A- to C-), more than 2 days = grade of 0 / F on the assignment.

Written work evaluation will follow the standards set out in Traxler’s writing advice, requirements, and grading criteria, shared with all of you, which include the following criteria:

- argumentative completeness and lucidity
- good organization
- good use of sources, properly cited.
- good or notable expression

Traxler’s formatting requirements are also set out in his writing advice.

Final exam—20 % of course grade
On June 23, the last day of class.

Students each bring an image of the object or objects whose return is under consideration along with a description of what makes this objects interesting, they then defend their position concerning the return of this object in writing as their final exam.

Academic honesty
Academic honesty is essential to education. As students expect professional deontology from their professor, so does the professor expect honesty and genuine intellectual engagement from the student. Academic dishonesty is any action by which a student seeks to claim credit for the intellectual of another person or uses unauthorized materials or fabricated information in any academic exercise. It includes unauthorized assistance in tests and examinations; internationally impeding or damaging the academic work of others; submitting another person’s work as your own, or providing work for this purpose; submitting work of your own that has been substantially edited and revised by another person, or providing an editing service for others; submitting material from a source (books, articles, internet sites) without proper citation and bibliographic reference; paraphrasing material from a source without appropriate reference and citation; submitting substantially the same piece of work in more than one course without the explicit consent of all the instructors concerned; assisting other students in any of the above acts.

Students who are academically dishonest will receive 0, zero on the work in question or a failing grade for the course as a whole, depending on the importance of the work to the
overall course grade and the judgment of the instructor. The instructor reserves the right to submit copies of student written work to a plagiarism detection site such as TurnItIn.com.

**Special Accommodation**
Requests for special accommodations due to specific, preferably documented institutionally recognized reasons, are to be made on the first day of class.

**Bibliography:**

**Required books:**


All further required reading, as well as some recommended reading, will be shared with you from a drive associated with this e-mail address: zagethics@gmail.com.

**Internet resources recommended:**

- [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](http://plato.stanford.edu/) (probably your best starting point for research in ethics)
- Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy
- and, of course, JSTOR

**COURSE OUTLINE & SCHEDULE**

Note: the dates at which particular readings will be discussed are merely indicative.

- **Class 1** Mon. 16 May
  - Introduction to the course & session planning

- **Class 2** Tue. 17 May
  - *Art Theory* ch.s 1 & 2

- **Class 3** Wed. 18 May
  - *Art Theory* ch. 3

- **Class 4** Thu. 19 May
  - *Art Theory* ch.s 4 & 5
  - Class on site TBA

**Week 2: Is it art?**

- **Class 5** Mon. 23 May
  - *Art Theory* ch.s 6, 7, & Conclusion

- **Class 6** Tue. 24 May
  - Class on site: graffiti in tunnel to le cure

- **Class 7** Wed. 25 May
  - *What Art Is*

- **Class 8** Thu. 26 May
  - *What Art Is*
  - Class on site: Clet around town

**Week 3: Is it really art?**

- **Class 9** Mon. 30 May
  - Presentations
Class 10 — Tue. 31 May
● Presentations

Class 11 — Wed. 1 June
● Presentations

No class Thu. 2 June (Italian national holiday—Day of the Republic)
●

Week 4: Evaluating art—1

Class 12 — Mon. 6 June
● Standards employed by contemporary public entities (from websites)

Class 13 — Tue. 7 June
● Standards, mainly for painting before photography

Class 14 — Wed. 8 June
● Standards, mainly for painting after photography

Class 15 — Thu. 9 June
● Class on site TBA

Week 5: Evaluating art—2

Class 16 — Mon. 13 June
● Categories and standards

Class 17 — Tue. 14 June
● Presentations

Class 18 — Wed. 15 June
● Presentations

Class 19 — Thu. 16 June
● Presentations, if necessary, or
Class on site TBA

Week 6: Is heritage always best situated where it was made or found?

Class 20 — Mon. 20 June.
● K.A. Appiah, “Whose Culture Is It Anyway?” Cosmopolitanism, ch. 8

Class 21 — Tue. 21 June
● A case study: the Parthenon marbles at the British Museum

Class 22 — Wed. 22 June.
● Students provide & discuss interesting cases

Class 23 — Thu. 23 June

Final Exam