



PHIL*4120 Current Debates in Language and Mind

Winter 2019

Section(s): C01

Department of Philosophy

Credit Weight: 0.50

Version 1.00 - January 04, 2019

1 Course Details

1.1 Calendar Description

Each offering of this course will focus on a specific issue or set of related issues that are now being debated in Philosophy of mind and Philosophy of language. Readings will be contemporary works.

Pre-Requisite(s): 1.00 credits in Philosophy at the 3000 level or 12.50 credits

1.2 Course Description

This course is about evolutionary ideas and their application to our understanding of Art. We will read one recent philosophical book, *The Artful Species* by Steven Davies. Davies takes a fairly broad approach to the impact of evolution (and evolutionary thinking) on art-related practice. We shall also read excerpts from a second philosophical book, *The Art Instinct* by Denis Dutton. Evolutionary accounts of art and the aesthetic are about the ways our minds have been shaped by evolution (perhaps that includes cultural evolution) so as to develop certain preferences, interests, and ideas about art. Does this confuse what we *like*, aesthetically, with what art *is* (and with value claims associated with art as good or bad art)? These are questions we shall debate.

1.3 Timetable

LEC Mon, Wed 01:00PM - 02:20PM CRSC, Room 101 (I have secured the Dept. Seminar room for this course. We will meet in the assigned classroom only for the first session).

1.4 Final Exam

There is no Final Exam for this course.

2 Instructional Support

Instructor: Don Dedrick

ddedrick@uoguelph.ca

Office: Rm 329 MacKinnon Bldg.

Office Hours: Monday 10-12 and by appointment--please use email to make an appointment.

3 Learning Resources

3.1 Required Resource(s)

The Text for this course is: (Textbook)

The Artful Species by Stephen Davies. Oxford 2012. Available from bookstore.

readings extra to the text... (Article)

A few readings, mainly from Dennis Dutton's *The Art Instinct*, will be available from courselink.

Occasional notes written by the instructor... (Notes)

Some notes, mainly on topics having to do with evolution, will be provided on courselink.

3.2 Recommended Resource(s)

Online material of interest ... (Website)

Websites that are relevant to material discussed will occasionally be linked on courselink. Students are encouraged to send the instructor material they would like to have posted.

4 Learning Outcomes

4.1 Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Understand, explain and assess the significance of key concepts used by Davies and by Dutton as they apply to art and to art viewed in an evolutionary context.
 2. Be skilled in the use of key tools for sound justification and rational persuasion appropriate to the course material.
 3. Develop an appreciation of the ways that evolutionary theory does (and does not) impact our understanding, philosophical and otherwise, of art and aesthetic judgement.
 4. Deliver an oral presentation on a philosophical topic related to the course material that is accurate and well-reasoned.
 5. Prepare a sustained piece of philosophical writing in which a topic is articulated clearly and a stance on that topic is supported by appropriate and well thought-through reasons.
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5 Teaching and Learning Activities

How each class will proceed:

This is a seminar course, and all students are expected to attend and to contribute. Each class (with exceptions noted below) will begin with a brief **presentation**, 5 - 6 minutes by a student. The date and topic of the presentation will be assigned by the instructor, in consultation with students, and it will track the readings. This presentation will be followed by a **comment** on the presentation, 3 - 4 minutes, by a student. The date and topic of the comment will also be assigned by the instructor, in advance and in consultation. In terms of preparation for the presentation and the comment: the *presenter* will read a short paper. The *commentator* will respond to the presentation. He/she might say something like "I want to talk about another point of interest.." or "I saw the issue X discussed in a different/similar way..." or... its up to you. You are not required to respond on the fly to a presentation you have just heard for the first time (unfair!), though if you are comfortable doing so, that's fine. The reason for this structure is to have two students talking, to start (almost) every class. The rest of us will pick up where the presentation & comment leave off. *Each student will do one presentation and one comment.*

At the end of the class in which you have either commented or presented, you will hand in, to the instructor, a typed copy of your presentation/comment. This will be graded and returned to you the following class. The length should be approximately 500 words.

Important Note: Please see courselink for more details on Presentation & Comment topics.

5.1 Seminar

Week 1

Topic(s): Introduction to the course and discussion of Davies AS , pp. 1-9. Discussion will be lead by the instructor.

Week 2

Topic(s): Monday and Wednesday: Chapter 1 AS.

No Presentation or Comments this week.

Week 3

Topic(s): Monday and Wednesday: Chapter 2 AS.

Presentation and Comments for both classes.

Week 4

Topic(s): Monday Chapter 3 AS.
No presentation or comment for this class. Instructor will lead the discussion.

Wednesday Ch 4 AS.

Presentation and Comment for this class.

Week 5

Topic(s): Monday and Wednesday: Chapter 4 AS. [continuation of last Wed. topic and discussion of Ch 4 AS]

Presentation and Comments for both classes.

Week 6

Topic(s): Monday and Wednesday: Chapter 5 AS.

Presentation and Comments for both classes.

Week 7

Topic(s): READING WEEK. Begins Feb. 18. No classes.

Week 8

Topic(s): Monday and Wednesday: Chapter 6 AS.

Presentation and Comments for both classes.

Week 9

Topic(s): Monday and Wednesday: Chapter 7 AS.

Presentation and Comments for both classes.

Week 10

Topic(s): Monday and Wednesday: Chapter 8 *AS + Dutton* reading from *courselink*.

Presentation and Comments for both classes.

Week 11

Topic(s): Monday and Wednesday: Chapter 9 *AS + Pinker* reading from *courselink*.

Presentation and Comment only for Wednesday's class.

Week 12

Topic(s): Monday and Wednesday: Chapter 11 *AS + Dutton* reading from *courselink*.

Presentation and Comments for both classes.

Week 13

Topic(s): Monday and Wednesday: Chapter 11 *AS. + Dutton* reading from *courselink*.

Presentation and Comments for both classes.

6 Assessments

6.1 Marking Schemes & Distributions

-1 presentation and 1 comment, in class date TBA. (Presentation = 10 % & Comment = 5 %) = 15% of the grade

-1 short paper due every class** , approx. 300 words, topics aligned with readings. = 25 % of the grade

-Participation = 10 % of the grade. This is my subjective assesment.

-Major paper = 50% of the grade. The paper should be on a topic relevant to the course, the topic determined in consultation with the instructor. The length is approx. 3500 words, which is the length of the average conference paper. Students will be encouraged to think about submitting their paper to an appropriate conference (not required, but the instructor will provide assistance with this, if you decide to do this).

**while its true that a short paper is due every class, beginning in week 3, and ending in week 12 (10 weeks = 20 short papers) I will count only the best 10 short paper grades. Don't skip the class because you have not written a short paper. Do write as many short papers as you can.

Guidance as to short paper topics and presentation & comment topics is available on courselink.

7 University Statements

7.1 Email Communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

7.2 When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. The grounds for Academic Consideration are detailed in the Undergraduate and Graduate Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Consideration and Appeals

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-ac.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Grounds for Academic Consideration

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

7.3 Drop Date

Courses that are one semester long must be dropped by the end of the fortieth class day; two-semester courses must be dropped by the last day of the add period in the second semester. The regulations and procedures for course registration are available in the Undergraduate and Graduate Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Dropping Courses

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Registration Changes

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/genreg-reg-regchg.shtml>

7.4 Copies of Out-of-class Assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

7.5 Accessibility

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required; however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability.

Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to book their exams at least 7 days in advance and not later than the 40th Class Day.

More information can be found on the SAS website

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/sas>

7.6 Academic Integrity

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity, and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community—faculty, staff, and students—to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff, and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that encourages academic integrity. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

7.7 Recording of Materials

Presentations that are made in relation to course work - including lectures - cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a student, or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

7.8 Resources

The Academic Calendars are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies, and regulations that apply to undergraduate, graduate, and diploma programs.

Academic Calendars

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/academics/calendars>
