Ancient Aesthetics
PHIL 10114
Semester 2
2018-19

1. Course Information

SCQF Level: 10 (Year 4 Undergraduate)
SCQF/ECTS Credits: 20/10

Course Organiser: Tom Baker
Email: thomas.baker@ed.ac.uk
Drop in Hours: TBA, 5.11 DSB

Course Secretary: Ann-Marie Cowe
Email: philinfo@ed.ac.uk

2. Course Description

Course Outline

The course will examine theories of the arts (especially, though not limited to, poetry and drama) in ancient thinkers, focusing on Plato and Aristotle; and going on to consider thinkers from later antiquity, in particular Epicurus. Topics discussed will include the nature of artistic representation or imitation, censorship and the place of art in education, the concept of tragedy, and everyday aesthetics. The impact of ancient aesthetic theories on later thought will also be considered.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, students should have acquired a critical understanding of some major issues in ancient aesthetics and an appreciation of how these issues may relate to continuing debates in philosophical aesthetics. During the course, students will develop an ability to read closely, analyse and criticise ancient philosophical texts. They will also further their skills to reason, philosophically, to a well-thought-out position; develop their own views, systematically; express themselves clearly and precisely, both in writing and in seminar discussion.
3. Structure of Teaching

Total Hours: 200

There will be 11 two-hour seminars and 4 programme level learning and teaching hours. This leaves 174 hours of directed and independent learning. If you want to do well at this course, you need to be disciplined with yourself and do the required work outside of class time.

4. Course Content

4.1 Seminar Schedule

Seminars are Tuesday 14:10-16:00 (wks. 1-5 and 6-11) room G.01 - Classroom 1, High School Yards Teaching Centre.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Seminar Topic</th>
<th>Primary Text and Secondary Readings</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 15\textsuperscript{th} January</td>
<td>Plato I: the content of poetry and censorship</td>
<td>Republic 376d-392c. Ancient Aesthetics Ch. 3</td>
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<td>2 22\textsuperscript{nd} January</td>
<td>Plato II: the form of poetry, \textit{mimesis} (imitation) and character</td>
<td>Republic 392c-400d, 602c-608b; Laws 667-71 Ancient Aesthetics Ch. 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 29\textsuperscript{th} January</td>
<td>Plato III: \textit{mimesis} revisited, poetry and knowledge</td>
<td>Republic 595a-602c. The Aesthetics of Mimesis Ch. 4</td>
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<td>4 5\textsuperscript{th} February</td>
<td>Plato IV: poetry and inspiration</td>
<td>\textit{Ion}; Phaedrus 244a-245a, 248d-e. Ancient Aesthetics Ch. 5</td>
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<td>5 12\textsuperscript{th} February</td>
<td>Aristotle I: intro to Aristotle’s Poetics, \textit{mimesis} and poetry</td>
<td>Poetics 4-9. Ancient Aesthetics Ch. 7</td>
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<td>6 Flexible Learning Week</td>
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<td>7 26\textsuperscript{th} February</td>
<td>Aristotle II: the definition of tragedy and concept of \textit{catharsis}</td>
<td>Poetics 6 and Politics VII.5-7. Ancient Aesthetics Ch. 8</td>
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<td>8 5\textsuperscript{th} March</td>
<td>Aristotle III: the form of tragedy and concept of \textit{hamartia}</td>
<td>Poetics 10-18 Ancient Aesthetics Ch. 9</td>
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<td>9 12\textsuperscript{th} March</td>
<td>Aristotle IV: music and \textit{catharsis}</td>
<td>Politics VII The Aesthetics of Mimesis Ch. 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 19\textsuperscript{th} March</td>
<td>Epicurus I: happiness, pleasure and the good life</td>
<td>Principle Doctrines Ancient Aesthetics Ch. 10</td>
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|    | 3rd March | Epicurus II: ancient everyday aesthetics? | Letter to Menoeceus
Celkyte (2017) ‘Epicurus and Aesthetic Disinterestedness’ |
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<td>11</td>
<td>2nd April</td>
<td>Review</td>
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4.2 Reading List (Further reading may be recommended during the course)

**Primary Texts**

Plato: *Ion*, extracts from *Republic* and *Phaedrus*.

Aristotle: *Poetics*, extracts from *Politics*.

Epicurus: *Principle Doctrines* and *Letter to Menoeceus*

**Collections**

A. Sheppard & O. Bychkov, eds, *Greek and Roman Aesthetics*


D. Russell & M. Winterbottom, eds, *Classical Literary Criticism* (a shorter version of the previous volume).

**Recommended Secondary Reading**

A. Mason, *Ancient Aesthetics*.


P. Destree, ed. *A Companion to Ancient Aesthetics*.


N. White, *A Companion to Plato’s Republic* (commentary on relevant sections)

J. Annas, *An Introduction to Plato’s Republic* (extracts from chapters 4 and 14).


S. Halliwell, *Aristotle’s Poetics*


I. Murdoch, *The Fire and the Sun: why Plato Banished the Artists*.


**Encyclopaedia Entries**


**Contemporary Articles**


5. Assessment

1500word midterm essay (40%) and end-of-semester take-home test (60%).

Further information and advice on the assessments will be included in assessment documents, which will be available via Learn.

5.1 Midterm Essays
Due date: Thursday 28th February 2019, by 12pm (mid-day)

5.2 Take-home Test
Released: Monday 15th April 2019
Due: Thursday 18th April 2019, by 12pm (mid-day)