

Course Title	: Beauty
Course Code	: CLB9026
Recommended Study Year	: Any
No. of Credits/Term	: 3
Mode of Tuition	: Sectional approach
Class Contact Hours	: 3 hours per week
Category in Major Programme	: CLB - Humanities and the Arts
Discipline	: -
Prerequisite(s)	: -
Co-requisite(s)	: -
Exclusion(s)	: -
Exemption Requirement(s)	: -

Brief Course Description

This course discusses the nature of beauty and how beauty is connected to a variety of other aspects of our life and culture. For instance, some have argued that beauty is evil, an instrument of the devil, while others have claimed that beauty is a manifestation of the divine. Beauty is sometimes said to be in the eyes of the beholder, and other times it is said to be a property that certain objects or organisms may have in virtue of the arrangement of their parts (e.g., in virtue of the *harmonious* combination of some of their parts). Sometimes also abstract thoughts or mathematical theorems are described as beautiful. In addition to the previous ideas, we will discuss: (i) the relationship between love and beauty, (ii) the concept of beauty in various Asian traditions (e.g., the Japanese concept of *wabi-sabi*), (iii) human beauty, (iv) environmental beauty, (v) functional beauty, (vi) artistic beauty, and (vii) various literary and philosophical descriptions of beautiful entities.

Aims

The course aims to:

- Introduce the students to classical and contemporary theories on the nature of beauty;
- Enable students to draw connections among various conceptions of beauty in different traditions and times;
- Present various descriptions of the nature of beauty in different media and artistic forms (e.g., literature and poetry);
- Provide students with theoretical tools to develop their own views on the nature of beauty and on the other issues debated (see the indicative content below).

Learning Outcomes

On completion of the course, students will be able to:

- (LO1) Describe the main classical and contemporary theories on the nature of beauty.
- (LO2) Specify the connections among various conceptions of beauty in different traditions and times.
- (LO3) Illustrate how beauty has been seen and described in various artistic representations.
- (LO4) Propose and discuss their personal views on the nature of beauty and on the other issues debated (e.g., whether beauty has an objective reality, or the influence of moral judgments in our ascriptions of beauty).

Indicative Content

1. The nature of beauty
2. Judging beauty
3. Description(s) of beauty
4. Beauty, pleasure, and value

5. Beauty as harmony
6. Love and beauty
7. The idea of beauty in different traditions
8. Functional beauty
9. Human beauty
10. Environmental beauty
11. Beauty and Ugliness
12. Beauty in Literature and Poetry

Teaching Method

Lectures, presentations, and discussions

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

Students will take/write:

- Short in-class quizzes, in which they will have to answer short questions on the various concepts and theories discussed in class (to assess LO1, LO2, and LO3);
- A final exam, in which they will have to write long essay questions on the content of the course. Students will have to elaborate their views on the theories discussed in class (to assess LO1, LO2, LO3, and LO4);
- A term paper (1500-2000 words) on a topic of the course (to assess mainly LO4). The students will be provided with a list of readings related to the specific topic they choose to write about.

In addition, students are expected to participate in classroom discussions and demonstrate good preparation—for instance, they will have to demonstrate adequate knowledge of the required weekly readings when called by the lecturer (to assess LO1, LO2, LO3, and LO4).

Assessment

Participation and in-class discussion (10%)

In-class quizzes (20%)

Paper (30%)

Final exam (40%)

Required Readings

Selections from:

Eco, Umberto: *History of Beauty*, Rizzoli, 2010.

Ferguson, Margaret et alia (eds.): *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*, Norton & Co Inc, 2005.

Sartwell, Crispin: *Six Names of Beauty*, Routledge, 2004.

Sasaki, Ken-ichi (ed.): *Asian Aesthetics*, National University of Singapore Press, 2011.

Scruton, Roger: *Beauty*, Oxford University Press, 2011.

Other material (papers, lecture notes, etc.) will be available on moodle.

Supplementary Readings

Selections from:

Baudelaire, Charles: *The Flowers of Evil*, Oxford University Press, 1861/2008.

De Clercq, Rafael: 'Beauty', in B. Gaut & D. Lopes (eds.) *Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*

3th edition, Routledge, 2013.

Kieran, Matthew (ed.): *Contemporary Debates in Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2005.

Livingston, Paisley: 'Bolzano on Beauty', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 54 (3), 2014.

Mothersill, Mary: *Beauty Restored*, Clarendon Press, 1984.

Nehamas, Alexander: *Only a Promise of Happiness*, Princeton University Press, 2007.

Parsons, Glenn & Allen Carlson: *Functional Beauty*: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Plato: *Hippias Major*, any edition.

Sauchelli, Andrea: Functional Beauty, Perception, and Aesthetic Judgements, *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 53 (1), 2013.

Sibley, Frank: 'Some Notes on Ugliness', in his *Approach to Aesthetics*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001.

Sircello, Guy: *A New Theory of Beauty*, Princeton University Press, 1975.

Stecker, Robert: *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art*, 2nd Edition, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010.

Tanizaki, Junichiro: *In Praise of Shadows*, Vintage Classics, 1933/2001.

Zangwill, Nick: *The Metaphysics of Beauty*, Cornell University Press, 2001.

Zemach, Eddy: *Real Beauty*, Penn State University Press, 1997.

Zeglin Brand, Peg (ed.): *Beauty Unlimited*, Indiana University Press, 2013.