Course Description:
Aesthetics is the philosophical study of beauty. What constitutes beauty and, “Art” more broadly, and how do we understand its makers and subjects? This course studies the history of aesthetics, with a particular focus on the visual arts, from the Classical period to the Enlightenment to the Modern period. We shall focus on key philosophical texts and situate the ideas they present within their intellectual, historical, and social contexts.

Course Objectives:
This course takes a new approach to learning known as “problem-based learning.” Structured around student reading and research of specific topics in the history of aesthetics, the objectives of this course are to develop students’ skills in:

1. the critical analysis of scholarly writing
2. research in the fields of art history and philosophy
3. oral and written group presentations
4. a working understanding and an ability to discuss key ideas and developments in the history of Western aesthetic theory

Rather than emphasizing memorization from lectures, individual testing, and single research projects, this course is organized such that students will work throughout the semester in small groups focused on assigned research topics that culminate in group-authored papers and leadership of discussions of their topics to the entire class. For detailed information on the organization of the course, please refer to the “Course Requirements” section in this syllabus.

Course Materials:
The following books contain the required reading for all members of the course. These books are available at the student bookstores on campus and around town, and are held on reserve at Morris library:


In addition to assigned reading from the above texts, students will use resources on the WebCT page designed for this course. Each student must have regular computer access to WebCT and print out required discussion questions posted by students throughout the semester. Students who do not have reliable computer and printer access at home may use computers and printers at Morris Library and the computer labs located on campus.

**Grade Distribution:**

Group Research Papers and Presentations: 4 @ 20% each = 80% of final grade  
Individual attendance and participation: 20% of final grade

**Course Requirements:**

**Group Research Papers**

This course is structured around readings, research, and discussion of key moments in the history of Western aesthetic theory. Organized chronologically, the class is divided into four units that focus on aesthetic ideas and practices from the Classical, Enlightenment, and Modern periods. We will study each of these periods through lecture, individual research, group writing and presentations, as well as class discussion.

Each student will be assigned to work in a group with 4-5 fellow students. Your group will be assigned a topic for each unit, which you will research together and individually to produce a 6 to 8-page group-authored research paper. Each member of the group will research specific aspects of your topic and write paragraphs to contribute to the final paper. All members of the group will receive the same grade for the paper. Group study days are scheduled during regular class periods to facilitate group planning, research, discussion, and consultation with me. These study days are designed to allow students to learn material at their own pace. Attendance at regularly scheduled Group Study sessions is mandatory.

The following is a list of the components that each paper must include. For further guidelines on the specific contributions of each group member, refer to the separate handout, “Guidelines for Group Work,” which you will receive during the second week of class. Each paper will include:

- A written component of 1500-2000 words (approximately 6-8 double-spaced, typed pages), based on your group’s research and writing.

- Illustrations of any works of art discussed in the paper (this may not be relevant to all papers), clearly labeled with figures numbers in the text and captioning the illustration. *Legible* photocopies or digital images (of at least 500 pixels and 4 inches in every dimension) are acceptable.
• A separate sheet of paper (not counted towards the 6-8 page requirement) with five questions for class discussion (see below).

• A bibliography of at least 10 entries. This should include only scholarly sources. Always consider the reputation and reliability of electronic sources. Encarta, Wikipedia, and general dictionaries and encyclopedias, as well as general websites are not acceptable academic sources for citation.

• Proper citation of all research in the Chicago Manual of Style format. A short guide to the Chicago Style is available at: http://www.siu.edu/departments/cac/students.htm
I recommend that the group member in charge of citations, as well as all art history majors and other students who regularly write research papers invest in a copy of the full student guide to the Chicago style: Kate Turabian, A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, 6th edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). This guide is also available at the Reference Desk at Morris Library.

• A turnitin.com receipt number, written at the end of your paper or a printed receipt stapled to the back of your paper (see below).

• A confidential e-mail, sent by each student to me, assessing their own contribution and the contribution of each group member. This e-mail should be sent to me no later than the end of each unit’s Discussion Week. Students who neglect to send this e-mail will lose individual participation points (see below).

**Turnitin.com:** Group Research Papers must be turned in both in paper form on the Discussion Day in which it is discussed and in electronic form to www.turnitin.com by 5:00 p.m. on the day that it is due. If your group fails to turn in either the paper or electronic version, your assignment will be considered late until you turn in both copies.

To use turnitin.com, the group member responsible for uploading the paper must register as a user and add his or herself to this class. If you have not used turnitin.com in the past, you can get information and a tutorial at www.turnitin.com, click on “new users.”

The class ID is: 1784691
The class enrollment password is: beauty

**Academic Integrity:** Turnitin.com is an electronic database that compares the content of your paper to the text of other papers submitted for similar classes, to published information on the internet and in print, and its own database of papers. It is used in this course to encourage students’ responsibility for their own work.

You are expected to act in accordance with SIUC’s Student Conduct Code (SCC), and should familiarize yourself with its standards for academic honesty and ethical conduct (the SCC is available online at www.siu.edu/~docedit/policies/conduct.html). Plagiarism—the unacknowledged and/or unauthorized use of another person’s
intellectual property—is a form of theft. Any time you quote, paraphrase, or even summarize the ideas of another person (as opposed to stating common knowledge) you must acknowledge your debt. This acknowledgement should take the form of a footnote or endnote conforming to the Chicago Manual of Style. If you have any questions on how to cite a source properly, please ask me and/or consult the Chicago Manual of Style. Please be aware that if you turn in any work that is not entirely the work of your own group, or cheat in any other way, you will fail the course and may be referred to the university for disciplinary action. Each member of a group is responsible for ensuring that they are not handing in plagiarized work. Evidence of plagiarism in a group paper will result in disciplinary action for the entire group.

**Late Papers:** Late papers will be graded down by one full letter grade each day (M-F) that they are late. Papers are accepted in paper form and to turnitin.com only, no e-mailed papers will be accepted. Papers must be posted to turnitin.com by 5:00 p.m. on the day that it is due. No paper will be accepted more than 7 days after the due date.

**Group Presentations:** 20% of Group Grade
Each group will present the findings of their research and lead a discussion on the assigned class readings related to their topic during the days devoted to discussion at the end of each unit. Groups will post five questions on their topic for class discussion on the course WebCT site by the Sunday evening before each unit’s Discussion Week. All members of the class will read these questions and come to class prepared to discuss them based on their knowledge from the assigned readings and their own group research. Members of each group will introduce their topic with a 5-minute presentation on their assigned Discussion Day. Preparation of the questions and leadership of discussion will constitute 20% of your Group Research Paper grade.

**Individual Attendance and Participation:** 20% of Final Grade
Much of the success of the group work described above will be dependant on the individual contribution of each member to the group and to the course as a whole. Attendance will be taken at each class, including Group Study Days. You are responsible for checking in with me on Group Study Days to ensure that your attendance is recorded. Absences for medical or personal emergency will only be excused only with documentation. More than two absences, excused or not, will adversely affect your participation grade.

Your performance and participation within your group will be assessed by me, the other members of your group, and yourself. By the end of each unit’s discussion week, you will send me a confidential e-mail detailing your own contribution to the group paper (including which aspects of the topic you researched and wrote as well as your other contributions: scheduling, editing, citations, question-writing, etc.). You will also briefly assess the contributions of the other members of your group. Any student who is identified as a problem by their fellow group members will be asked to meet with me. Unsatisfactory contributions to the group may result in loss of participation points and/or individual failure of the group assignment.
Active participation on Discussion Days is a crucial component of your individual participation grade. Students will receive half-credit for attending discussion, and full-credit for participation.

**Office Hours:**
I warmly encourage you to take advantage of my office hours to carry on further discussions of material covered in lecture or the readings, or to address any problems or questions relating to this course. Please use this venue, rather than e-mail for substantive answers to questions related to lectures and assignments. Office hours will be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:30 to 2:00 and 3:30-5:00 p.m. in Allyn 006d. If this time does not fit your schedule, please contact me for a separate appointment.

**Course Schedule:**

**Introduction**
Tuesday, January 16: Introduction to Aesthetics and Problem-Based Learning
Reading: RCA, Gaut and Lopes, “Preface,” xvii-xx,
PAB, “Introduction,” xiii-xix
Thursday, January 18: Problem-Based Learning and Course Organization

**Unit One: Classical Aesthetics: The Role of Art in Society**
Tuesday, January 23: Introductory Lecture Day (Sloboda)
Thursday, January 25 through Thursday, February 1: Group Research Days

Tuesday, February 6: Discussion Day: Plato (Groups 1 and 2)
Reading: RCA, Christopher Janaway, “Plato,” 3-14
PAB, Selections from Plato, 3-77.
Thursday, February 8: Discussion Day: Aristotle (Groups 3, 4, and 5)
PAB, Selections from Aristotle, 80-131.

**Unit Two: Enlightenment Aesthetics: Defining What “Art” Is.**
Tuesday, February 13: Introductory Lecture Day (Sloboda)
Thursday, February 15 – Thursday, March 1: Group Research Days

Tuesday, March 6: Discussion Day: Empiricism and Taste (Groups 3 and 4)
Reading: RCA, James Shelley, “Empiricism: Hutcheson and Hume,” 41-53
Course Handout, David Hume, “Of the Standard of Taste,”
Thursday, March 8: Discussion Day: Kant and Judgment (Groups 1, 2, and 5)
Reading: RCA, Donald Crawford, “Kant,” 55-69

**March 13-15: Spring Break**
Unit Three: Modern Aesthetics I: Creativity and Human Experience
Tuesday, March 20: Introductory Lecture Day (Sloboda)
Thursday, March 22 – April 5: Group Research Days

Tuesday, April 10: Discussion Day: Hegel and German Idealism (Groups 1, 2, and 5)
Reading: RCA, Michael Inwood, “Hegel,” 71-81

Thursday, April 12: Discussion Days: Groups 3 and 4
PAB, Selections from Friedrich Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy, 498-554.

Unit Four: Modern Aesthetics II: Form and Perception in Art and Society
Tuesday, April 17: Introductory Lecture Day (Sloboda)
Thursday, April 19 – Thursday, April 26: Group Research Days

Tuesday, May 1: Discussion Day: Dewey’s Pragmatism (Groups 3, 4, and 5)
PAB, Selections from John Dewey, Art as Experience, 577-646.

Thursday, May 3: Discussion Day: Heidegger’s Truth (Groups 1 and 2)
Reading: RCA, Thomas A. Wartenberg, “Heidegger,” 147-158
PAB, Selections from Martin Heidegger, The Origin of the Work of Art, 647-700.