

**Professor Elisabeth Camp**

*Office:* 106 Somerset, Room 514

*Office Hours:* Mondays 3-4, and by appointment

*Email:* elisabeth.camp@rutgers.edu

**Required Text:** All readings and handouts will be posted online at Sakai.

**Course Description**

What is art? Why do we care about it? As far as we know, every human culture makes art, though in very different ways; and most people engage passionately with art in some way, whether Beyoncé or Beethoven. Is there some distinctive quality that all works of art have, which makes them art? Do they have a special kind of meaning? What makes art good or bad: should it be beautiful? original? morally uplifting?

To ask these questions well, we need to test our answers on actual artworks. I'll therefore be asking you to spend as much time with art as possible this semester, and to apply the questions and theories we discuss to actual art in your papers and online discussion.

**Course Goals**

Students in this course will learn to:

- understand the benefits of, and challenges to, the traditional philosophical method of conceptual analysis through necessary and sufficient conditions.
- appreciate the diversity of art: 'high' and 'low', within and across cultures, and across media.
- apply specific questions about art and theories of art and in engaging with actual artworks. (This will enable you to satisfy Core Curriculum goal **AHp**: to analyze arts and/or literatures in themselves and in relation to specific histories, values, languages, cultures, and technologies.)

In pursuing these course-specific aims, students will also acquire the following general skills:

- the ability to engage in close reading of sophisticated theoretical and empirical arguments.
- the ability to articulate clear, structured, well-supported arguments for your own conclusions. (These will enable you to satisfy Core Curriculum goal **AHo**: to examine critically philosophical and other theoretical issues concerning the nature of reality, human experience, knowledge, value, and/or cultural production.
- the ability to engage in respectful, reasoned, and passionate debate with your peers about complex topics that lack clear answers.

**Course Requirements**

- Daily readings, to be completed *before* class, and brought to class.
- Attendance and participation in class (10% of course grade).
- Weekly blog posts (20% of course grade).
- Three short papers, 2-3 pages (15% each of course grade).
- A final paper, 4-5 pages (25% of course grade).