

PHILOSOPHY 330

Fall 2025

Mid-Term Essay Assignment

Due Monday, October 27

All papers must be properly word processed or typed with 1" margins on the top, sides and bottom. Use double-spacing and no larger than 12pt font. Turn in by uploading to Lamakū as a pdf file. Use the following format to title your file: lastname Phil 330 Mid-Term.

Write a 4-5 page essay on one of the following topics:

Art and Truth in Plato and Aristotle

What does Plato find so dangerous about art in books II and III of the *Republic*, thus requiring censorship of the poets, painters, and writers of fiction? Explain Plato's theory of art as *mīmēsis* as presented in Book X of the *Republic*? Why is art thus "thrice removed from the truth" according to Plato? How does Aristotle respond to Plato's indictment of art in the *Poetics*? What do you think about this difference between Plato and Aristotle on the relationship between art and truth?

Tragedy, Poetry, and Music in Plato and Aristotle

Why does Plato find music and poetry so dangerous in the *Republic*? What does Plato find wrong with the art of the poet and rhapsode in the *Ion*? Explain what Plato means in the *Ion* when he suggests that the problem with poetry is like what happens with the "stone of Heraclea"? Explain how Aristotle expresses a more positive view of Tragedy in the *Poetics*? Why does Aristotle find Tragedy more philosophical than history? What does Aristotle mean when he says that the aim of Tragedy lies in a catharsis of pity and fear? What do you think about this difference between Plato and Aristotle on the value of music and poetry, and the art form of Tragedy?

Hume and Kant on the Judgment of the Beautiful

What is the main difference between Hume and Kant on aesthetic judgment? What, for Hume, is the 'Standard of Taste'? What are the five defects of judgment that, according to Hume, render someone incapable of being a 'qualified observer' and thus a 'true judge' of beauty? What two additional sources of diversity in taste does Hume recognize and how does this present a problem for his theory? How did Kant try to respond to Hume and argue for the universality of judgments of taste? What, for Kant, are the four moments that are required for aesthetic judgment? Is Kant successful in arguing against Hume for a more universal aesthetic judgment?

Kant and Hegel on the Philosophy of Art

It has been said that it is perhaps only a slight exaggeration to say that every philosophical aesthete in the 19th and 20th centuries has been either a Kantian or a Hegelian. Explain this fundamental difference between the Kantian and Hegelian approaches to the philosophy of art. How does Kant's emphasis on the four moments of the beautiful lead to a formalist approach in thinking about art while Hegel's approach lead to a focus on the meaning and content of works of art? Which view would you agree with more in thinking about art?

Romanticism and Hegel on the Importance of Art

What is Romanticism and how did it develop out of Kant's notions of 'fine art' and 'genius'? How did Romanticism emphasize an unprecedented importance of the arts in society? What are some of the features of Romanticism that had a significant influence on the subsequent development of the philosophy of art? How did Hegel depart from this Romanticism? How did Hegel's account of the development of art from the *symbolic* to the *classical* and to the *romantic* lead to his controversial thesis about the "end of art"? Which view would you agree with more on the importance of art in the world today?

Nietzsche on Greek Tragedy

Why did Nietzsche think the high point of Greek culture was not Socrates and Plato, but rather Aeschylus and Sophocles, the great authors of Greek tragedy? Nietzsche thought that Greek tragedy died by suicide at the hand of Euripides through the influence of Socrates. How might this be understood by comparing the ending of Euripides's drama *Iphigenia at Aulis* with the 1977 Greek film *Iphigenia*, directed by Michael Cacoyannis? From a Nietzschean point of view, how does Cacoyannis's film perhaps correct the mistake in Euripides's drama? What did Nietzsche mean, in *The Birth of Tragedy*, when he explained that tragedy arose from the combination of Apollonian and Dionysian art? How does Nietzsche's conclusion about art at the end of *The Birth of Tragedy* open up the possibility of modern art? What is the highest aim of art suggested at the end of *The Birth of Tragedy* and how might this have been expressed in the film *Iphigenia*?

Grading

Maximum Points

1) Writing

Grammar and spelling, composition and style. Your essay should be well organized. There should be an introduction, development of a theme, and a conclusion.

20 _____

2) Philosophical Content

The essay should reflect an adequate understanding of the texts. Your exposition of the text should include *at least two quotations* from the primary text material. All quotes should be properly marked within the text and must include a reference to the text cited.

50 _____

3) Commentary

Your own thoughtful reflections on the topic.

30 _____