

Aesthetics Mid-Term Exam Review Guide:

Be sure to know Postman's *Amusing Ourselves to Death*:

Here is an outline of the things I encourage you to focus on to prepare for mid-term exam. I've divided it all up according to lectures that correspond with powerpoint presentations and charts.

From lecture 1:

1. Define Aesthetics: Theory of beauty, or more broadly as that together with the philosophy of art.
 - a. Philosophy of art;
 - b. Philosophy of the experience and character of objects or phenomena that are not art.
2. When was aesthetics first coined? Alexander Baumgarten.
3. Aesthetics is ultimately derived from the Greek word "aesthesis" which means "perception.
4. Before use of term "aesthetics," philosophy of beauty was referred to as "theory of taste or "criticism of taste."
5. Oldest surviving discussion of beauty is found in *Hippias Major* (Early dialogue by Plato) in which the sophists Hippias vainly attempts to provide Socrates a satisfactory definition of beauty.
6. The great philosophy of art have been interpreted in metaphysical terms as a natural expression of the belief that philosophy is born in the aspiration and understanding of the beautiful.
7. Why does art matter? See slide 15 of Introduction to Aesthetics.
8. What does aesthetics attempt to answer? See slide 16 of Introduction to Aesthetics.
9. Early philosophies of art and beauty are intermixed with cosmological inquiries and it is only relatively late in the development of philosophy that the philosophy of art can be thought of as distinct from ontology and theology. The great philosophies of art, then, are part of broader inquiries into man and nature.
10. What is a worldview? (see slide 19 of Introduction to Aesthetics)
11. How are worldview assumptions formed? At least six avenues are used in its formulation:
 - a.
 - b.

- c.
- d.
- e.
- f.

12. What is your worldview impacted by?

- a. Presuppositions which are?
- b. Preunderstandings which are?
- c. Contextual setting which means

13. How do we evaluate one's worldview? We ask four general questions:

- a. What are we?
- b. Where did we come from?
- c. What's gone wrong with the world?
- d. What can we do to fix the problems of the world?

Lecture 2:

- 1. Overview of major positions on what is aesthetically valuable? (slide 26).
- 2. What is the starting point for doing aesthetics? (slides 24-25)

Lecture 2a: Three Levels of Inquiry into aesthetics. What are they?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Lectures 3-5b: Platos' Metaphysics:

- 1. Be able to explain Plato's Allegory of the Cave?
- 2. Be able to explain Plato's metaphysics and Epistemology
- 3. How did Plato account for change?
- 4. What are forms?

5. Why are the forms systemically connected? Also, see Lecture 8a on Influence on Medieval aesthetics.
6. Explain both the sensible world and the intelligible realm of ideas.
7. Why was Plato considered both the father and fiercest critic of aesthetics? See also lecture 6 slide 19. Also see lecture 7 on Aristotle's aesthetics for a comparison between Plato and Aristotle.

Lectures 6:

1. Pythagoreans view of beauty?
2. What are the sophists view of beauty?
3. What is Socrates definition of beauty?
4. What is Plato's view of beauty?
5. What is Aristotle's view of beauty?
6. What do Stoics believe about beauty?
7. What do Skeptics stress about beauty?
8. What is symmetry?
9. What is eurthmy?

Lecture 7:

1. What is Aristotle's view of beauty?
2. What is Catharsis? There is more than one interpretation about what it means.

Aristotle takes mimesis as imitating nature because of its orderly and purposeful forms fine arts take on; these are productive purposes which are rational, consciously perceive by the mind of its maker (*Metaphysics 7.7*) as opposed to Plato who thought it displaced or even corrupted reason by arousing the non-rational part of the soul.

Only the mimetic arts have as their specific purpose to produce representations or fictional depictions of the world or reality. This is contrary to Plato because he saw mimesis as being an imitation of appearance, not reality.

3. For Aristotle, beauty is a real property of things.

Lecture 8a: Medieval Aesthetics:

1. Plotinus believed that everything that is flows from a dynamic spiritual Godhead which he called "The One" or the 'Good is the Supreme Source.' God is ineffable and transcendent. Emanations are the stages of the Descent of the One. He was convinced that musicians, lovers, and philosophers are in a better position to reach the level of reunification with the One.

2. Three central themes in medieval aesthetics: Proportion, light and color, and symbolism.
3. Why are these three themes important?
4. Aristotle's aesthetics:
 - a. 2 intrinsic causes:
 - b. 2 external causes:

Lectures 9-11b:

1. Understand Aquinas' view of reality
2. Understand Aquinas' concept of moderate realism
3. Aquinas defined beauty as that which gives pleasure when seen [ST 1-11, 27.1].
4. Beauty is an activity of the mind!
4. "Beauty is essentially the object of *intelligence*, for what knows in the full meaning of the word is the mind, which alone is open to the infinity of being. The natural sight of beauty is the intelligible world; then it descends. But if falls in a way within the grasp of the senses, since the senses in the case of man serve the mind and can themselves rejoice in knowing: 'the beautiful relates only to sight and hearing of all senses, because these two are maxime cognoscitivi [Maritain, 23].
5. How does the form of the matter exist in the knower?
6. Why are sight and hearing the most important senses for Aquinas?
7. What is Aquinas' fourfold criteria for standards of beauty?
8. In sum, things are beautiful when they give pleasure, and things are beautiful when the very act of seeing gives pleasure. On one hand, the cause of pleasure lies in things seen, and on the other hand, in the act of seeing them. Therefore, for Aquinas, beauty is both objective and subjective.

Lecture 12b:

1. Geometric Greeks focus on the universals from the particulars.
2. Geometry is the key to eternal truths.
3. Pythagoras discovered that musical harmonies depend on geometric patterns: "God always geometrizes."
4. Renaissance: Neo-platonism is discarded and replaced with the notion that the physical world is no longer a prison from which to escape. Rather, the physical world is the nexus whereby the human, the divine, the physical, the spiritual, the temporal and eternal converge.
5. It was an incarnational theme that Renaissance artists began to elaborate upon and give realistic details in the background. The use of perspective begins to underscore the message that these events have happened in our world whereby the spiritual realm entered into physical, ordinary living.

6. The Neo-platonic worldview believed that the human flesh was corrupted, subject to death, and is evil whereas the spirit or soul is trapped in the body. To overcome this dualism, the notion was promoted in the Renaissance that we are “created in the image of God.”
7. Vitruvian Man by Leonardo Da Vinci. It exemplifies what it means to be the ideal man.
 - a. Leonardo: The painter was “ a god” who created images at will. This artwork captures the neo-platonic notion that a human is a microcosm uniting the two realms of spirit and matter.
 - b. The square is a symbol of the earth whereas the circle represents the eternity of heaven. Thus, the ideal human is “both of this universe and heaven... the unifier of the universe.