

Gov. 90qj: Spring 2008
Art, Truth and Society
Tues. 1-3 pm

Instructor: Michael Rosen
Office: CGIS North, Room 419
Office Hours: Wed. 2-3 pm

I Course Description

This course will read two major works in the history of aesthetics: Hegel's *Lectures on Aesthetics* and Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory*.

Both authors set out to understand art as embedded in society. For Hegel, each cultural epoch must be understood from the standpoint of an overall structure of self-developing spirit (what he calls "*Geist*"). Adorno, while he rejects Hegel's idealism, struggles to give an account that will do justice to art's social character without falling back into the kind of reductionism that he sees as characteristic of orthodox Marxist theories of art.

Each work is exceptionally significant but they also complement one another since Adorno's dense but fascinating text is constantly informed by his dialogue with Hegelian thinking.

The class is a Junior Seminar (that is, a small seminar directed at Juniors in the Government Department). However, if there are spaces available, students from other departments are very welcome to join.

II Course Requirements

Students will be expected to attend class and participate actively in discussion. Students will be asked to prepare introductions to the reading for individual weeks.

There will be two papers: one of 5-7 pages due around the middle of the term (date to be fixed later) and one of 10-15 pages, due shortly after the last meeting.

Grades will be assigned as follows: class participation 25%, first paper 25%, final paper 50%.

III Timetable and Readings

Hegel's Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art (two volumes), translated by T.M. Knox (O.U.P.) and Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, translated by R. Hullot-Kentor (U. of Minnesota Press) have been ordered and should be available at the Coop.

Meeting 1 (Feb 5) Organizational and Introductory: general discussion of German Idealism and Marxism

Meeting 2 (Feb 12) *Hegel's Aesthetics*, Volume 1, Introduction

Meeting 3 (Feb 19) *Hegel's Aesthetics*, Volume 1, Part I: "The Idea of Artistic Beauty"

Meeting 4 (Feb 26) *Hegel's Aesthetics*, Volume 1, Part II: "Development of the Ideal into Particular Forms of Art"

Meeting 5 (March 4) *Hegel's Aesthetics*, Volume 2, Part III: "The System of the Individual Arts", Sections I & II

Meeting 6 (March 11) *Hegel's Aesthetics*, Volume 2, Part III: "The System of the Individual Arts", Section III

Meeting 7 (March 18) *Aesthetic Theory*, pp. 1-99, 332-60

Meeting 8 (April 1) *Aesthetic Theory*, pp. 100-74

Meeting 9 (April 8) *Aesthetic Theory*, pp. 175-261

Meeting 10 (April 15) *Aesthetic Theory*, pp. 262-331

Meetings 11, 12, 13 (April 22, April 29, May 6) Review, general Discussion and pre-presentation of term papers.