

# Global Aesthetics

PHIL 284 | SP 2022



Sufi Whirling Dervishes | Image Source: International Mevlana Foundation ([link](#))

## Meeting Time & Location

MWF 12:00–1:10 p.m. | OM ???

## Professor: Dr. Brandon Polite

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## Office Hours: MW 2:30–3:15

office: OM 304

## Course Description

*This course examines aesthetic traditions from around the world.*

These traditions include: West African, Aboriginal Australian, Japanese, Korean, Persian, Indonesian, and Indian. Among the issues we consider are: (1) the extent to which we can understand and appreciate art and artifacts from aesthetic traditions other than our own; (2) differences, continuities, and exchanges between Western and non-Western aesthetic practices; (3) the relationship between aesthetic and religious practices in these traditions; & (4) whether art (particularly music) can ever induce mystical experiences. We address these issues by considering the work of a number of philosophers and other scholars.

By the end of the term, you should be able to . . .

- **Articulate** some important aesthetic theories & practices from around the world.
- **Articulate** some significant similarities & differences between those theories and practices.
- **Develop & defend** your own analyses and arguments on those theories and practices.

## COURSE details

**Website:** Accessible via <https://classroom.google.com>

**Required Readings:** All readings are available as PDF's on Google Classroom.

**Participation:** You should come to class regularly and prepared to participate. If you ever feel unwell, especially if you have any Covid-19 symptoms, don't come to class. Missing class, being disengaged from class discussion, or turning work in late too frequently will negatively impact your grade, at my discretion. So, talk to me (sooner rather than later) if any of these becomes an issue for you.

**Late Assignments:** There is enough flexibility built into both the assignments and the structure of the course that you shouldn't find it too difficult to turn the work in on time. However, if you feel like you need some additional time and would like to negotiate reasonable, alternative deadlines for **any assignment for any reason**, including if you have academic accommodations, get in touch with me as soon as you can—preferably before it's due.

# Assignments

## Online Discussion Forum | 65%

Each week, you will have the opportunity to select **one** significant passage from **one** of that week’s readings, and write a response of **300–400 words** to it. A passage may be chosen because it rings true or seems wrong, it is illuminating or confusing, it resonates or conflicts with another philosopher’s view, etc. Whatever the nature of your response, it should reflect your familiarity with the reading as a whole, not just its first few pages. You will post your response on Google Classroom as a prompt for discussion in that week’s **“Prompt”** assignment.

You will also have the opportunity each week to reply, for credit, to **two** of your classmates’ prompts and **two** of your classmates’ replies. **“Replies”** should be *substantive* and should deal with the *substance* of what your classmates have written. You can offer reasons to further support their views or reasons to revise or reject them. You can relate their ideas to those presented by other classmates or to other philosophers we’ve read. You can also piggyback off other classmates’ ideas. Whatever the nature of your replies, though, they should be *thoughtful* and move the discussion forward *productively*.

**Grading:** Prompts & Replies will all be graded as either **Satisfactory (S)** or **Needs Work (N)**. The following table indicates how many S scores within each type of assignment you must obtain in order to receive a particular base grade:

Assignment type	A	B	C	D	(%)
Discussion Prompts	6	5	4	3	(35)
Replies to Prompts	12	10	8	6	(15)
Replies to Replies	12	10	8	6	(15)

You may post at most **one** Prompt per week for credit, by *no later than* 11:59 p.m. on Friday.

You may post at most **four** Replies per week for credit, by *no later than* 11:59 p.m. the following Tuesday.

**Term Paper | 35%** You will develop ideas from your online discussion prompts and replies into a term paper that’s **2700–3000 words** (or 9–10 pgs) long. It will follow the traditional philosophical format of interpreting one or more philosophical positions and developing your own argument in response to them. | **5%** comes from the thesis proposal.

# Schedule

Week 1 (Mar. 23–27)   Introductions	
3/23	W Introductions
3/25	F Nkiru Nzegwu, “African Art in Deep Time: De-race-ing Aesthetics & De-racializing Visual Art”
Week 2 (Mar. 28–Apr. 3)   West African Aesthetics	
3/28	M Ajume H. Wingo, “African Art & the Aesthetics of Hiding and Revealing”
3/30	W Kofi Agawu, “Aesthetic Inquiry and the Music of Africa”
4/1	F Further discussion
Week 3 (Apr. 4–10)   Aboriginal Aesthetics	
4/4	M Elizabeth Burns Coleman, “Appreciating ‘Traditional’ Aboriginal Painting Aesthetically”
4/6	W Richard Bell, “Aboriginal Art – It’s a White Thing!”   <a href="#">link</a>
4/8	F Further discussion

## The Amount of Work

The amount of reading and assigned each week is meant to be manageable so that you’ll have plenty of time to meet the Friday online discussion prompt deadline. Further, with your prompts, you will collectively produce up to ?? pages of additional reading each week, which you will need to sift through carefully prior to the Tuesday replies deadline.

### Week 4 (Apr. 11–17) | Japanese Aesthetics

4/11	M	Yuriko Saito, "The Japanese Aesthetics of Imperfection & Insufficiency"
4/13	W	Yuriko Saito, "Japanese Aesthetics of Packaging"
4/15	F	Further discussion

### Week 5 (Apr. 18–22) | Japanese & Korean Aesthetics

4/18	M	Dominic McIver Lopes, "Shikinen Sengu & the Ontology of Architecture in Japan"
4/20	W	Hannah H. Kim, "Art Beyond Morality & Metaphysics: Late Joseon Korean Aesthetics"
4/22	F	Further discussion

### Week 6 (Apr. 25–May 1) | Islamic Aesthetics

4/25	M	Jale Nejdet Erzen, "Islamic Aesthetics: An Alternative Way to Knowledge"
4/27	W	Leonard Lewisohn, "The Sacred Music of Islam: Sama' in the Persian Sufi Tradition," selections
4/29	F	Further discussion

### Week 7 (May. 2–8) | Indonesian Aesthetics

5/2	M	Susan Pratt Walton, "Aesthetic & Spiritual Correlations in Javanese Gamelan Music"
5/4	W	Steven Davies, "Balinese Aesthetics"
5/6	F	Further discussion

### Week 8 (May. 9–15) | Indian Aesthetics

5/9	M	Kathleen Marie Higgins, "An Alchemy of Emotion: Rasa & Aesthetic Breakthroughs"
5/11	W	Saam Trivedi, "Evaluating Indian Aesthetics"
5/13	F	Further discussion

### Week 9 (May. 16–22) | Indian Aesthetics

5/16	M	Stephen Slawek, "Engrossed Minds, Embodied Moods & Liberated Spirits in Two Musical Traditions of India"
5/18	W	Further discussion
5/20	F	<b>Thesis Workshop</b>   Thesis proposals due by class time

### Week 10 (May. 23–31) | Term Paper

5/23	M	No class   Optional Paper Discussion
5/25	W	No class   Optional Paper Discussion
5/31	Tu	Term Paper due by 10 p.m.

### Honor Code

This course operates according to the Honor Code. Students are encouraged to talk through all course material with one another and to function as interlocutors for one another, including preparing to write your prompts. However, each student is required to write their own work, cite all sources fully, and give explicit credit where particular formulations of claims, arguments, and examples result from cooperative work.

### Prompts & Replies

**Prompts** due Fridays by 11:59 pm  
**Replies** due Tuesdays by 11:59 pm

**Further information** on all assignments can be found on Google Classroom.

### grading scale

A+	100 – 97.7	B+	89.9 – 87.7	C+	79.9 – 77.7	D+	69.9 – 67.7
A	97.6 – 93	B	87.6 – 83.4	C	77.6 – 73.4	D	67.6 – 63.4
A-	93.3 – 90	B-	83.3 – 80	C-	73.3 – 70	D-	63.3 – 60