



Ball State Philosophy Outreach Project Lesson Plan

Topic: Philosophy of Art

Time: 45-75 minutes

Materials: Projector (something to show PowerPoint on) and Internet access

Opening:

- Pull up PowerPoint for class to see
- If possible, have students move into a circle to prepare for discussion.

Recommended Discussion Outline for Slide 1 (2-5 minutes):

- Introduce Philosophy of Art explaining that it is a subfield of aesthetics, which is one of the five major branches of philosophy.

Recommended Discussion Outline for Slide 2 (10-15 minutes): While on slide two, ask these questions and facilitate an open conversation about philosophy of art!

- What is art? Why?
- What are examples of art?
- Is a sculpture art? Why? If yes, can a building be art then?
- If something fulfills multiple functions can it still be art?
 - Example: architecture can be beautiful; therefore some people consider it art. However, a building was built for a specific purpose. Is that building still art, even if its original purpose was not to be art?
- If no, does this mean a pot from ancient Greece in an art museum is not art?
- Is a photograph art? Is any photograph art? Are your snapchat streaks technically art then?
- Why is art important to humans?
- Why do we create art?

Recommended Discussion Outline for Slides 3-7 (10-25 minutes):

- Is this art? Why or why not?

Recommended Discussion Outline for Slide 8 (10-15 minutes) :

- Philosophy of art is about more than criticism.
 - Why? Ans: Everything discussed. Art is a flexible term defined by the beholder and a discussion on any one piece of art can incorporate many philosophical arguments.

- Does art have to contain unique and important features? What are these?
- Does art have to be human-made?
- How does useful art compare to fine art? Why?
- Does the process of making art matter or does the result of art matter? Which matters more: the process or the result?
- How much does outside interpretation of the artwork matter?
- What does art do? Why does art matter?
 - Discuss both creating art and beholding art

Recommended Discussion Outline for Slide 8 (10-15 minutes): This slide contains key thinkers, key texts, and key ideas. If students stumbled across any of these ideas during discussion beforehand, then they stumbled onto key thinkers, key texts or key ideas accidentally. This is excellent and should be encouraged!

- Plato, *The Republic* (380 BCE)
 - Mimetic art – art imitates life which imitates forms
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “A Discourse on the Moral Effects of the Arts and Sciences” (1750)
 - Art and science corrupt and degrade society
- Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment* (1790)
 - The art of genius, “a kind of representation that is purposive in itself and, though without an end, nevertheless promotes the cultivation of the mental powers for sociable communication.”
- G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on Fine Art* (1835)
 - Art, religion, and philosophy -- ”reveals to consciousness the deepest interests of humanity.”
- Morris Weitz (1956)
 - Open concepts – undefinable in any productive way

Closing (2-5 minutes):

- If anyone would like to learn more about philosophy of art feel free to check out Philosophy Outreach Project’s starter pack on philosophy of art! It can be found at <https://philosophyoutreachproject.azurewebsites.net/philosophy-of-art/>.

