



**Philosophy 347,**  
**Adorno: Aesthetic Theory**  
**Fall Semester 2010, Michigan State University**  
**Dr. Christian Lotz**

**Tentative Schedule (last UPDATE: November 23, 2010)**

NUMBER	DATE	TOPIC	READING	INFO	SUMMARY	ASSIGNMENTS
1	Sep 2	Introduction				
<b>Introduction</b>						
2	Sep 7	Concept of Philosophy and Philosophical Writing	Adorno, Meditations on Metaphysics: After Auschwitz; Adorno, The Essay as Form			
3	Sep 9	Culture Industry	Adorno, Dialectic of Enlightenment, Culture Industry	Listen to an IAH panel <a href="#">here</a> ; listen to my introductory statement on Adorno's "Culture Industry" chapter <a href="#">here</a>		
4	Sep 14	Culture Industry	Adorno, Dialectic of Enlightenment, Culture Industry			
5	Sep 16	Art and Modernity	Benjamin, The Artwork in the Age of its Reproduction			
6	Sep 21	Art and Modernity	Benjamin, The Artwork in the Age of its Reproduction			
<b>Aesthetic Theory I</b>						
7	Sep 23	Art, Society, Aesthetics	Adorno, Aesthetic Theory, pp. 1-15			
8	Sep 28	Art, Society, Aesthetics	Adorno, Aesthetic Theory, pp. 1-15			
9	Sep 30	The Modern Situation	Adorno, Aesthetic Theory, pp. 16-44			
10	Oct 5	The Modern Situation	Adorno, Aesthetic Theory, pp. 16-44			Take-Home Exam 1 passed out in class
11	Oct 7	no class	no class	no class		

**Language**

12	Oct 12	Poetry and Society	Adorno, Lyric Poetry and Society				Take-Home Exam 1 due
13	Oct 14	Poetry and Society	Adorno, Lyric Poetry and Society				
14	Oct 19	Poetry and Society	Adorno, Lyric Poetry and Society				
<b>Beckett</b>							
15	Oct 21	Adorno and Beckett	Adorno, Attempt to Understand the Endgame				
16	Oct 26	Adorno and Beckett	Beckett, Endgame				
17	Oct 28	Adorno and Beckett	Adorno, Attempt to Understand the Endgame				
18	Nov 2	Adorno and Beckett	Beckett, Endgame				
<b>Aesthetic Theory II</b>							
19	Nov 4	no class	no class	no class			
20	Nov 9	Beauty	Adorno, Aesthetic Theory, pp. 45-60				
21	Nov 11	Natural Beauty	Adorno, Aesthetic Theory, pp. 61-78				
22	Nov 16	Art and Apparition	Adorno, Aesthetic Theory, pp. 78-100				
23	Nov 18	Art and Apparition	Adorno, Aesthetic Theory, pp. 78-100				
24	Nov 23	Art and Apparition	Adorno, Aesthetic Theory, pp. 78-100				Take-Home Exam 2 passed out in class
25	Nov 25	no class	no class	no class			
26	Nov 30	Enigma and Truth	Adorno, Aesthetic Theory, pp. 118-136				
27	Dec 2	Coherence and Meaning	Adorno, Aesthetic Theory, pp. 136-163				
28	Dec 7	Coherence and Meaning	Adorno, Aesthetic Theory, pp. 136-163				
29	Dec 9	Wrap Up	Wrap Up	Wrap Up	Wrap Up	Wrap Up	Take-Home Exam 2 due

**Class Meetings:**

Days: TTH

Time: 2:40 PM - 4:00 PM

Place: 301 Snyder Hall

**Office:**

Phone: 517.355.4490 [dept.]

Place: 501 S. Kedzie Hall (part of room 503, front office)

Hours: see homepage

**Other Contact:**E-mail: [lotz@msu.edu](mailto:lotz@msu.edu)

Home Phone: please ask

Webpage: <http://christianlotz.wordpress.com>**Box**

You will find my box in the front office of the philosophy department (and in front of my office)

**Teaching Assistant:** no teaching assistants

## Course Description

Rather than focusing on "problems" and "puzzles" in aesthetics we will intensively deal with and discuss one of the major aesthetic thinkers of the 20th Century, namely, Theodor W. Adorno. Adorno, as one of the major representative thinkers of the Frankfurt School and Critical Theory developed his aesthetic theory in close contact with the developments in art and society of the 20th Century. We will first read selected briefer essays by Adorno and then try to make our way through selected chapters of his *Aesthetic Theory* (1969), which remained unfinished when Adorno died. This class does not deal with meta-questions in aesthetics, such as "what is art?," "what is representation," or "what is expression?," as it is usually done in analytic aesthetics (though all of the aforementioned questions will come up during our discussion of Adorno's texts). This class is not a general introductory course in aesthetics.

## Course Goals

This class should introduce students to selected aspects of aesthetics and philosophy of art through the study of Adorno's aesthetical theory. As such, it is hoped that students learn how to read these texts, as most US students nowadays grow up in illiteracy. At the end of this class students should be able to make substantial connections between aesthetics and modernity.

## Note

Students who did not take philosophy classes before (but signed up for this class) should be aware of the fact that this course is based on extremely difficult texts. Adorno's style of philosophy and reflection differs significantly from contemporary styles of philosophy and philosophical writing, though his "high tone" is one of the very best ever produced in German philosophy. Accordingly, Adorno's idea of philosophical writing substantially differs from most Anglo-American writing. Consequently, this class requires self-responsible learners and your willingness to confront yourself with the primary text. My task in this class is solely based on making these texts transparent to you and to prepare your further studying of the material. In addition, this class assumes that you are interested in art, especially classical music and theatre, and that you are not ignorant of the historical dimension of art. Accordingly, if you are not prepared or mature enough to study this material, then you should not take this class.

## Required Texts (Bookstore)

- Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*
- Adorno, *The Adorno Reader*
- Beckett, *Endgame*
- recommended: Claussen, *Theodor W. Adorno: One Last Genius*

## Reading assignments and preparation

The reading assignment per session is limited; however, this means that I expect you to come to class having prepared the texts carefully and thoroughly and that you are able to talk meaningfully about the text, raise questions of your own and provide answers when called upon. I will take the liberty to call on students randomly. An approximate preparation time for each class is a minimum of three hours. The reading for the next session, if not clear from the course schedule (below), will be announced at the end of the previous class. "Preparing for class" implies underlining and making excerpts from the text assigned; looking up unfamiliar vocabulary and writing them into a note book (I encourage you to keep a vocabulary booklet for all of your classes). Just reading the text won't be sufficient. You have to study the material. Some vocabulary might not be sufficiently explained in a regular dictionary (this goes especially for philosophical terms), so it is necessary to consult additional sources (e.g., the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy — online (see remark below) — is an excellent source of information, and the MSU Library Website is a great resource for nearly all questions in this regard).

## Organization

The course will be organized such that, ideally, each class period will include [i] "interactive" lecture, [ii] discussion time or [iii] response time. Students will be asked to intensively prepare a certain text or part of a text for the next class period.

## Course Requirements

- Daily reading and studying
- take-home exams
- response sheets
- task card

## Note

The class and my lectures are solely based on the texts selected for class and require a thorough study and preparation of the material. I will primarily lecture on the readings, which will help you to more fully understand the texts. Therefore it is not sufficient for students to come to class without having prepared the texts. And indeed, in the exams you have to demonstrate whether you

have appropriately prepared the readings selected for each lecture.

### **Make-Up Assignments**

Students who need to miss the exam(s) for excusable reasons must inform me ahead of time, and will be permitted to make up the exam. I will only accept official doctor notes (no faxes, no emails), letters from other professors, or evidence of emergency cases.

### **Attendance**

To get a good grade in this class, regular attendance is required. I will not call roll. Hence, it is up to you to come to class or not. However, if you do not come to class on a regular basis and participate in the class discussion, it is impossible for you to achieve a good grade in this class; so coming to class is your responsibility and your call. If you choose to attend class, please come on time, turn off cell phones and other electronic devices that interfere with your (and others') concentration, have the reading prepared and be ready to participate. If you are not prepared, do not bother showing up. It is a sign of disrespect to your peers and the instructor to attend class unprepared. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to obtain class notes from a fellow student and to catch up on reading. Nevertheless, please be aware that you should not make me responsible for a failure that results out of your decision. You should be aware that chances to master this class are minimal, if you do not show up for class or if you do not prepare the readings (=studying).

### **Task Cards**

I will from time to time assign so called "task cards." Students who receive task cards, must write a brief paper (no more than 900 words) about a concept or about background information. Task cards will be assigned without prior notice in class and have to be prepared for the next class section. Students have to make copies for every participants and pass their assignment out at the beginning of the next class section. For example, in one of our discussions it turns out that no one has ever heard about the philosopher Augustine or about the problem of movement in Zeno. I will ask a student to do research and to prepare brief biographical information of Augustine or an overview of the concept of movement in Zeno. Selected students will read their brief elaborations at the beginning of the next class section. This task is challenging because in your writing you should be as precise as possible. Note: you are not allowed to cite common internet resources, such as Wikipedia. Instead, work with the following online resources (or other resources in the library): [Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy](#) - [Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#) - [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#) - [Encyclopedia of Continental Philosophy](#) (e-book) - [The Oxford Companion to Philosophy](#)

### **Take-Home Exams**

In order to intensify and improve your understanding of the material, you will turn in on selected days (check schedule for due dates) brief papers/exams, in which you analyze the readings (3-4 pages, double spaced, no more than 900-1200 words):

[take-home exam 1]

[take-home exam 2]

### **Reading Quizzes**

There will be unannounced reading quizzes. Students who do not attend class (and have no medical documentation) will lose all points. Reading quizzes cannot be made up. I will waive this requirement if I have the impression that you come prepared to class.

### **Class Response Sheets**

Every student is asked to submit up to 5 class response sheets during the semester.

[Click here to download the class response sheet](#)

(Word document, I will only accept answers that are given on this form) The response sheets have to be submitted at the end of a class session. I do not accept late turn ins.

### **Course Evaluation**

You will be evaluated on the basis of:

2 take-home exams	900-1200 words	40 points
1 task card	900 words	20 points
unannounced reading quizzes and group assignments		15 points
participation		10 points
5 response sheets		15 points

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100 points

### Grading:

4.0 (=A)	100 - 93
3.5	92 - 87
3 (=B)	86 - 82
2.5	81 - 77
2 (=C)	76 - 72
1.5	71 - 65
1.0 (=D)	64 - 60
0.0	< 60

### GENERIC SYLLABUS (might not be applicable to each class)

#### Class Attendance

As mentioned above, I do not employ in my classes a class attendance policy. Having said this, you should be aware that class attendance is very important. When engaging in a philosophical and humanistic dialogue it is necessary to be an active and present participant in the ongoing discussion. If you miss class please do not email me asking if you missed anything important. Every class is important. You should get a study buddy for the class; a student in class who will inform you of what you missed. If you miss a class you can come to my office hours or make an appointment to discuss the material, providing you have read the material and you simply want to see if your understanding of the material is on target. Time in office hours will not be used to repeat the class lectures.

#### Grading Criteria

Check out [this page for grading criteria, example of assignments, etc.](#)

#### Helpful information about oral presentations, paper writing and plagiarism

[Click here to find help on your presentations and your writing](#)

#### Online Research Sources

Unfortunately, some people think that the internet as such is a reliable source of information. If you decide to use online sources for additional information or your paper then do not just use one of the common internet search engines, such as Google; rather, use reliable academic sources, such as Britannica Online, or the [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#). The [Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#) isn't very good, but still acceptable. Check out MSU's [library resources!](#) And, as with other sources, you must cite any online sources to which you refer in your essay.

#### Writing Center Information

MSU's writing center offers excellent help on all matters regarding writing and learning. Check the website at <http://writing.msu.edu> for an overview and hours. For more information, please call 517.432.3610 or send an e-mail to [writing@msu.edu](mailto:writing@msu.edu).

#### Integrity of Scholarship and Grades (Plagiarism)

The following statement of University policy addresses principles and procedures to be used in instances of academic dishonesty, violations of professional standards, and falsification of academic or admission records, herein after referred to as academic misconduct. [See General Student Regulation 1.00, Protection of Scholarship and Grades.]: [download document](#) (pdf)

#### Academic Honesty

Article 2.3.3 of the Academic Freedom Report states that "The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards." In addition, the (insert name of unit offering course) adheres to the

policies on academic honesty as specified in General Student Regulations 1.0, Protection of Scholarship and Grades; the all-University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades; and Ordinance 17.00, Examinations. (See Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide and/or the MSU Web site: [www.msu.edu](http://www.msu.edu)) Therefore, unless authorized by your instructor, you are expected to complete all course assignments, including homework, lab work, quizzes, tests and exams, without assistance from any source. You are expected to develop original work for this course; therefore, you may not submit course work completed for another course to satisfy the requirements for this course. Students who violate MSU rules may receive a penalty grade, including but not limited to a failing grade on the assignment or in the course. Contact your instructor if you are unsure about the appropriateness of your course work. (See also <http://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/honestylinks.html>)

### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities should contact the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities to establish reasonable accommodations. For an appointment with a counselor, call 353-9642 (voice) or 355-1293 (TTY)

### **Drops and Adds**

The last day to add this course is the end of the first week of classes. The last day to drop this course with a 100 percent refund and no grade reported is (see Academic Calendar). The last day to drop this course with no refund and no grade reported is (see Academic Calendar). You should immediately make a copy of your amended schedule to verify you have added or dropped this course.

### **Note on Attendance**

Students who fail to attend the first four class sessions or class by the fifth day of the semester, whichever occurs first, may be dropped from the course.

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