# Aesthetics

## Prof. Guido Boffi

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The course aims to introduce students to the fundamental elements of aesthetics and its relationship to the theory of the arts. The single-subject part of the course will focus on the aesthetics of photography.

The learning objectives are:

1. to provide the essential conceptual and methodological tools for exploring the issues at the heart of contemporary thought on aesthetics;

2. encourage a critical approach to the study of the discipline and an independent approach to interpreting its perspectives.

3. to provide the conceptual tools for reading photographic images and texts.

By the end of the course, students will:

* know and be able to discuss the epistemological foundation of aesthetics;
* be able to express themselves using the specific technical language of the discipline;
* be able to develop the ability to critically analyse;
* be able to apply specific interpretative, argumentational and communicative skills

***COURSE CONTENT***

Aesthetics of photography.

Lectures will address the following main topics:

* a brief introduction to the fundamental features of aesthetics, identifying its object, method and experience; the fundamental structures: the main keywords;

– a brief introduction to the history of photography, with particular emphasis on contemporary photography, and the philosophy of photographers.

***READING LIST***

A. Pinotti (edited by), *Il primo libro di estetica*, Einaudi, Torino, 2022.

As well as a minimum of two texts chosen from two of the following groups:

A)

W. Guadagnini, *Una storia della fotografia del XX e del XXI secolo. Edizione illustrata*, Zanichelli, Bologna 2010

B. Newhall, *Storia della fotografia*, Einaudi, Turin 1997

I. Zannier, *Storia e tecnica della fotografia*, Hoepli, Milan 2009

I. Zannier, *Storia della fotografia italiana dalle origini agli anni ‘50*, Quinlan Editore, Castel Maggiore 2012

B)

R. Barthes, *La camera chiara*, Einaudi, Turin 2003

G. Batchen, *Un desiderio ardente*, Johan & Levi, Milan 2014

W. Benjamin, *Piccola storia della fotografia*, Abscondita, Milan 2018; o: *Breve storia della fotografia*, Passigli, Bagno a Ripoli 2021

D. Campany, *Sulle fotografie*, Einaudi, 2020

C. Cotton, *La fotografia come arte contemporanea*, Einaudi, 2021

J. Fontcuberta, *La furia delle immagini. Note sulla postfotografia*, Einaudi, Turin 2018

G. Freund, *Fotografia e società*, Einaudi, Turin 2007

R. Krauss, *Teoria e storia della fotografia*, Bruno Mondadori, Milan 2006

F. Muzzarelli, *L’invenzione del fotografico*, Einaudi, Turin 2014

M. Poivert, *La fotografia contemporanea*, Einaudi, Turin 2021

S. Sontag, *Sulla fotografia*, Einaudi, Turin 2004

R. Valtorta, *Il pensiero dei fotografi*, Bruno Mondadori, Milan 2008

C)

R. Adams, *La bellezza in fotografia*, Bollati Boringhieri, Turin 2012

L. Baltz, *Scritti*, Johan & Levi, Milan 2014

J. Berger, *Sul guardare*, Il Saggiatore, Milan 2017

L. Ghirri, *Lezioni di fotografia*, Quodlibet, Macerata 2009

L. Ghirri, *Niente di antico sotto il sole*, Quodlibet, Macerata 2021

S. Shore, *Modern Istances. The craft of photography. A memoir*, Mack, London 2022

F. Vaccari, *Fotografia e inconscio tecnologico*, Einaudi, Turin 2011

***TEACHING METHOD***

This semester-long course (6 ECTS credits corresponding to 30 hours) will be delivered by means of frontal lectures in class. Lectures may also take the form of seminars, taking a participatory and interactive approach.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Students will be assessed by means of an oral exam designed to evaluate their learning and familiarity with course contents, along with their methodological-critical skills. Total exam time: approximately 30 minutes.

The oral exam will focus on the whole syllabus and will be divided into two parts to be taken on the same exam date: a) on the texts on the reading list; three to four questions; b) on a text chosen by the student, but agreed with the lecturer, from those presented and recommended in class; three to four questions.

Students who demonstrate consistent understanding of the themes in question, who apply critical thinking and strong discursive and reasoning skills will be awarded the highest marks i.e. 27-30 with *lode* (distinction). Students whose knowledge is primarily learned by rote and demonstrate inconsistent language and reasoning skills will achieve good (24-26) to fair marks (21-23). Students who demonstrate minimal knowledge of content or gaps in their preparation or reasoning and discursive skills will achieve low pass marks (18-20). Students with poor knowledge of content and inadequate discursive and reasoning skills will not pass the exam.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

NOTES

More detailed notes regarding recommended reading for the course and supplementary reading material will be provided during the course and made available on the Blackboard platform.

PREREQUISITES

The course is introductory in nature and has no prerequisites in terms of content.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG, or on the Faculty notice board.