

This course provides a survey of classic writings in ancient and modern philosophy of art, with an eye toward how these writings emerge in contemporary theoretical frameworks and in artists' manifestos. We will examine different ways to define art and its function, and to evaluate whether something is art at all, or whether it is good or bad art. We will also explore the role of the artist's intention and the viewer's interpretation in understanding and appreciating the artistic product. This will be done with reference to the works of artists themselves, and how these theoretical approaches illuminate their work. As we study these thinkers, we will also struggle with the purpose and value of a philosophy of art.