SQA Advanced Unit specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Philosophical Aesthetics: An Introduction

Unit code: HT4J 48

Unit purpose: This Unit aims to develop knowledge and understanding of key philosophical issues and debates relating to the arts. It introduces candidates to classical and contemporary theories of aesthetics and develops the candidate's skills in analysing an artwork or style of artistic production.

On completion of the Unit the candidate will be able to:

1 Explain philosophical issues relating to the arts.
2 Outline contrasting positions in philosophical debates about the arts.
3 Evaluate contrasting aesthetic theories.

Credit points and level: 1 SQA credit at SCQF level 8 (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8*).

SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from National 1 to Doctorates.

Recommended prior knowledge and skills: Access to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre. Candidates should possess good communication skills. The previous study of philosophy through Units and National Qualifications at SCQF level 5 or 6, or similar qualifications, is desirable but not essential.

Core Skills: The achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6. There are also further opportunities to develop the Core Skill of Communication at SCQF level 6 in this Unit.

Context for delivery: If this Unit is delivered as part of a Group Award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the Group Award to which it contributes.

Assessment: This Unit may be holistically assessed by a single instrument of assessment covering all Unit Outcomes. This may take the form of one open-book essay/report or a presentation. A feedback session with the candidate should ensure the authenticity of the candidate's work.

SQA Advanced Unit specification: statement of standards

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The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, Knowledge and/or Skills, and Evidence Requirements are mandatory.

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the Knowledge and/or Skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Candidates should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

Outcome 1

Explain philosophical issues relating to the arts

Knowledge and/or Skills

♦ The nature of a work of art
♦ The meaning of a work of art
♦ The value of a work of art

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can explain philosophical issues relating to:

♦ the nature of a work of art
♦ the meaning of a work of art
♦ the value of a work of art

Evidence should be presented in the form of a report or oral presentation or recorded discussion.

Assessment Guidelines

Outcome 1 could be assessed holistically with Outcomes 2 and 3. The details of the holistic assessment can be found under Outcome 3. Alternatively the outcome could be assessed individually.

Outcome 2

Outline contrasting positions in philosophical debate about the arts

Knowledge and/or Skills

♦ Philosophical terminology
♦ Imitation
♦ Expression
♦ Significant form

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can, with reference to the debate relating to the nature, meaning and value of a work of art, explain, using appropriate philosophical terminology:

♦   two contrasting positions
♦   key concepts and arguments pertaining to two positions within the debate

Evidence should be presented in the form of a report or oral presentation or recorded discussion/debate.

Assessment Guidelines

Outcome 2 could be assessed holistically with Outcomes 1. Alternatively all three Outcomes could be assessed holistically. Details of holistic assessment can be found under Outcome 3.

Outcome 3

Evaluate contrasting aesthetic theories

Knowledge and/or Skills

♦   Application of contrasting aesthetic theories
♦   Strengths and weaknesses of each theory
♦   Personal conclusions
♦   Analysis of personal conclusions

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can, with reference to a work of art or style of artistic production:

♦   apply two contrasting aesthetic theories to an appropriate work of art or style of artistic production
♦   explain the strengths and weaknesses of each theory in relation to the work of art or style of artistic production selected
♦   analyse their personal conclusions regarding the effectiveness of each theory in relation to the work of art or style of artistic production selected

Candidates must apply at least two aesthetic theories to a work of art or style of artistic production that they have chosen in negotiation with their lecturer.

Evidence should be presented in the form of a report or oral presentation.

Assessment Guidelines

Outcome 3 will be assessed holistically with Outcomes 1 and 2. Candidates should submit an open-book report or make a presentation, which illustrates their knowledge and understanding as well as their skills of analysis and evaluation.

The work of art or style of artistic production should serve as a vehicle for exploring the theories selected.

A feedback session with the candidate could ensure the authenticity of the candidate's work.

SQA Advanced Unit Specification

Administrative Information

Unit code: HT4J 48

Unit title: Philosophical Aesthetics: An Introduction

Superclass category: DE

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History of changes:

Version	Description of change	Date

Source: SQA

SQA Advanced Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Philosophical Aesthetics: An Introduction

This part of the Unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

The purpose of this unit is to give candidates an awareness of philosophical issues underlying their artistic practice, whether in the visual, literary, musical or dramatic arts, and the opportunity to test the usefulness in practice of relevant theories.

Discussion of **the nature of a work of art** should aim to examine questions and topics such as: ontological status — is the work of art primarily mental (in the mind of the artist), material, or experiential (identical with the aesthetic experience of the receiver — spectator, reader or listener)? What, if anything, distinguishes the work of art from a non-artistic artefact? Does it assume too much to refer to a work of art or artefact — must it have been worked on or produced (consider objets trouve and aleatory pieces)? Is the status 'art' primarily a matter of individual or cultural designation? What is the connection between art and beauty?

Discussion of **the meaning of a work of art** should aim to examine questions and topics such as: what is to be understood by the term 'meaning' with reference to a work of art — can it be expressed in a proposition or set of propositions (and if so, is their truth a subjective matter, or can it be tested or disputed objectively?) or is it an essentially ineffable experience of some sort? How is the meaning of a work of art to be established — by reference to authorial intention, or the inherent character of the work, or its public reception?

Discussion of **the evaluation of a work of art** should aim to examine the traditional bases for judgement in art (representational accuracy, the expression and eliciting of emotion, the creation or embodiment of significant form) and the criticism to which these have been subjected by socio-historical approaches, such as Marxism and postmodernism. Candidates should also consider socio-economic factors that influence or impact upon the development of, or responses to, a work of art.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

This Unit has been developed as part of the SQA Advanced Diploma Computer Art and Design Award. It is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the Group Award to which it contributes.

Whilst this Unit does not assume any knowledge from previous philosophy Units it will require critical thinking and evaluation skills. It is not expected that candidates will engage in detailed reading from the original texts of individual philosophers; however, small extracts may be selected for stimulus and a variety of examples referred to wherever possible. Candidates will be required to develop a basic understanding of philosophical terminology and debate.

A holistic approach to the delivery of Outcomes 1 and 2 is recommended with a sequential approach with regard to the issues. The order of this sequence, however, is at the discretion of the tutor.

Regardless of the area of artistic activity of primary interest to the candidate, the opportunity should be taken to point out and explore parallels and contrasts with other arts, for example, with respect to the assumptions behind art movements such as romanticism, impressionism, modernism, postmodernism and new and emerging artforms that could embrace new technologies. Reference to multidisciplinary works may also prove illuminating.

There should not be exclusive reliance on canonical examples; reference to current artworks and related issues is to be encouraged; issues such as state, business and public attitudes to funding and censorship could be explored, as could the distinction between elite and popular values.

Outcomes 1 and 2 offer the potential for individual and group research as well as requiring a significant amount of tutor input. Online resources could well be used for exemplification of points.

Outcome 3 would ideally be delivered by directed independent study with candidates negotiating works or styles of interest with their tutor. As this is an SCQF level 8 Unit it is not unreasonable to expect candidates to have well developed research and investigation skills. Candidates should be encouraged to read reviews and contextual material wherever possible. Tutors may wish to use individual tutorials in the assessment phase, as a means of monitoring progress, reading drafts or suggesting further avenues of investigation.

This outcome is intended to develop the transferable skills of philosophy by inviting candidates to adopt and debate a position on each theory chosen. It is not envisaged or required that candidates develop original stances or arguments. It is enough that they adopt stances they find convincing and give some appropriate reasons why they support these positions. Moreover, any position they support need not be one explored in class but could be a compromise between two sides of a debate, one they have thought of themselves, or one they have encountered in their personal reading. This ability should be developed from the outset of delivery of the Unit.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

Skills in accessing a range of sources on professional theories, issues and ideas will be developed as candidates research, reading in depth and in detail complex materials from a range of paper-based and electronic sites. Analytical evaluation of information accessed would be essential and should include an examination of the currency, authority, and accuracy of sources. The need to develop efficient systems of recording, coding and storing information should be emphasised.

Research findings may be presented in a written or oral report. Candidates should express complex ideas and information accurately and concisely, using an appropriate style and structure to present conclusions coherently. Use of software packages would support written work, and facilitate a check on spelling and punctuation.

If reporting orally, candidates should use the most appropriate style and language for their listeners, and ensure that what they say has been considered, is accurate, coherent and relevant. They should be able to:

♦ collate, organise and structure information effectively
♦ signpost key points
♦ select and produce support materials if appropriate
♦ use non-verbal communication techniques, such as eye contact and interested expression
♦ use pace and voice projection for impact
♦ respond to questions confidently and in a way that progresses communication

Open learning

This Unit could be delivered by open learning. However it would require planning by the centre to ensure sufficiency and authenticity of candidate evidence.

For further information and advice please refer to the SQA document *Assessment and Quality Assurance for Open and Distance Learning* which is available on SQA's website: **www.sqa.org.uk**.

Equality and inclusion

This unit specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements.

General information for candidates

Unit title: Philosophical Aesthetics: An Introduction

In this Unit you will develop knowledge and understanding of classical and contemporary issues and debates relating to the arts. It will introduce you to classical and contemporary theories of aesthetics and develops your skills analysing an artwork or style of artistic production.

In Outcomes 1 and 2 you will consider the issues of the nature, meaning and value of works of art and be introduced to philosophical theories relating to these issues, centring on representation, expression, and significant form.

In Outcome 3 you will evaluate two such theories, using the vehicle of a work of art or style of artistic production to examine the theories selected. This will take the form of a written report or an oral presentation.