

PHIL 346: PHILOSOPHY of COLOR

SYLLABUS

Fall 2016
T Th 10:00 - 11:15 a.m.

Prof. Daniel R. DeNicola
Gettysburg College

The law of proportion according to which the several colors are formed, even if a man knew, he would be foolish in telling, for he could not give any necessary reason, nor indeed any tolerable explanation of them.

Plato, *Timaeus*, 67d

I think the names of colors are at the edge, between where language fails and where it's at its most powerful.
A. S. Byatt

1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

A philosophical exploration of the phenomenon of color. Our experience of color—an important aspect of our experience of the world—poses puzzling problems of metaphysics, epistemology, and aesthetics. To address these and related philosophical issues, this course draws upon multidisciplinary sources, examining: the science, natural history, and aesthetics of color; the symbolism of colors and color patterns in culture and in literature; the relation of color and emotion; and the claim of Western “chromophobia.” *This course is approved to meet the Integrative Thinking: Interdisciplinary requirement.*

2. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Although much that is learned in any course is unplanned and highly individual, this course does have specific learning goals that should be made transparent. Each student who engages faithfully in the course should expect over the semester to:

- develop an understanding of the experience of color, informed with the context of recent philosophical debates;
- formulate and defend a position on key epistemological and ontological issues raised by color;
- develop a basic understanding of the science and significance of color, including the natural history and symbolism of a specific hue;
- improve the skills of philosophical reading, writing, and oral communication.

3. REQUIRED TEXTS

- A. *Color for Philosophers: Unweaving the Rainbow*, C. L. Hardin (Hackett Publishing Co. expanded edition, 1988) ISBN: 978-0-87220-039-5
- B. *Outside Color: Perceptual Science and the Puzzle of Color in Philosophy*, M. Chirimuuta (MIT Press, 2015) ISBN: 978-0-262-02908-7

- C. *Chromophobia*, David Batchelor (Reaktion Books, 2000) ISBN: 978-1-86189-074-0
- D. *The Secret Language of Color*, Joann Eckstut and Arielle Eckstut (Black Dog & Leventhal, 2013) ISBN: 978-1-57912-949-1
- E. *Living Color: The Biological and Social Meaning of Skin Color*, Nina G. Jablonski (University of California Press, 2014) ISBN-13: 978-0520283862 [Library eBook]

Recommended:

- F. *Bright Earth: Art and the Invention of Color*, Philip Ball (University of Chicago Press, 2001) ISBN: 978-0-226-03628-6.
- G. *Color: The Natural History of the Palette*, Victoria Finlay (Random House, 2002) ISBN: 978-0-8129-7142-2
- H. *Readings on Color, Vol. 1, The Philosophy of Color*, Alex Byrne and David R. Hilbert, eds. (MIT Press, 1997). ISBN: 978-0-262-52230-4
- I. *Remarks on Colour*, Ludwig Wittgenstein; G.E.M. Anscombe, ed. (University of California Press, 1977) ISBN: 978-0-5202-5179-3
- J. *Color and Culture: Practice and Meaning from Antiquity to Abstraction*, John Gage (University of California Press, 1993) ISBN: 978-0-520-22225-0

4. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Academic credit and grade are based on the quality of performance in these assignments:

A.	Quizzes	10% of course grade
B.	(2) Mid-Term Essay/Objective Tests	2 x 20% each = 40%
C.	Term Paper/Final Paper	30%
D.	In-Class Final Exam	10%
E.	Participation	10%

- A. Quizzes:** Brief quizzes will be given in class roughly each week—the quiz days are marked with an asterisk [*] in the Conspectus below. They will have varying formats, but are always intended to address main points in the reading. These “low stakes” quizzes are intended merely as a prompt to be sure everyone is prepared to discuss the reading. No make-up quizzes will be offered; your best ten quiz grades will be averaged.
- B. Mid-Term Essay/Objective Tests:** There are two such tests during the term, each comprised of two parts: (1) an essay written outside of class and (2) an “objective” test taken in class. The out-of-class, open-book, essay portion requires you to critique and develop your own position on an important philosophical issue of the course. The in-class, closed-book, portion is tests your knowledge of basic concepts and arguments in the readings. Detailed instructions and a short list of essay questions will be provided in advance. Dates are listed in the Conspectus below.
- C. Term Paper/Final Paper:** This is a paper involving scholarly research and philosophical argument submitted with the final examination. The paper, which is about 10-12 pages,

exclusive of bibliography, will be submitted through MOODLE by the end of the scheduled final exam period (see below). Complete details will be provided early in the term.

D. In-class Final Exam: This exam, taken in class without access to external resources, will include a relatively short essay and an objective portion. Instructions and essay topics will be provided well in advance. The exam will be given on Tuesday, December 13, at 1:30 PM, our scheduled exam period.

E. Participation: “Participation” is a category, not a single assignment; it reflects the quality of your engagement in all in-class and online activities. Punctual, consistent class attendance is fundamental. The quality of your contribution to class discussion is also important, as is the response to any special assignments announced in class. (See section 7 below.)

5. COURSE STRUCTURE (BRIEF FORM)

Week 1:	What Produces Color? <i>The Basic Science of Chromatic Vision</i>
Weeks 2-4:	What Is Color? <i>The Ontology of Color</i>
Weeks 5-6:	How Are Colors Organized? <i>The Relationships of Hues</i>
Weeks 7-10:	Why Are Colors Problematic? <i>Epistemological and Metaphysical Issues</i>
Weeks 11-14:	How Does Color Affect Us? <i>Psychological & Cultural Responses</i>

6. CONSPECTUS OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

This conspectus provides a course calendar, listing the general topic for each class, required reading assignments, and some important assignment dates. **The reading should be completed prior to the class session corresponding.**

KEY: * = quiz day; ER = electronic reserve readings posted on Moodle; Gettysburg College databases for some readings are abbreviated, as, for example, *JSTOR*; ♦ = videos or websites that constitute a “fourth hour” assignment.

#1 T Aug. 30 *Introduction: Philosophical Questions about Color*

I. The Basic Science: What Produces Color?

#2 Th Sept. 1 *Light, Color, and the Human Eye*

- Hardin, pp. 1-7.
- “Light and the Eye”: <http://www.handprint.com/HP/WCL/color1.html>
OR: Hardin, pp. 7-58.
- ♦ Parts 1-4 of “Light and Color.”
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nynoX0rA10E>

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PkVtkEI3-k&feature=related>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jXIUUm7LEDM8&feature=related>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RUbRKUwV6Gc&feature=related>

II. The Ontology of Color: What (and where) *is* Color?

#3* T Sept. 6

Common Sense Realism vs. Eliminativism

- Chiramuuta, Chapters 1 & 2, pp. 1-42.

#4 Th Sept. 8

Physicalism (Objectivism)

- Hardin, Chapter II, pp. 59-91 only.
- ❖ “Why Are Things Colored?” Parts 1-3: “Made,” “Lost,” “Moved.”
<http://www.webexhibits.org/causesofcolor/index.html>

#5* T Sept. 13

Mentalism (Subjectivism) and Color Qualia

- Jackson, “Epiphenomenal qualia” [JSTOR]
- Martine Nida-Rümelin, “Qualia: The Knowledge Argument,” SEP:
<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2010/entries/qualia-knowledge/> .
- Mary’s Room: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gZy3Ky9y_fg

#6 Th Sept. 15

Relationalism & Dispositionalism

- Chiramuuta, Chapter 3, pp. 43-68.
- Jonathan Cohen, “Color Properties and Color Ascriptions: A Relationalist Manifesto,” pp. 451-461 only [JSTOR]
- ❖ The Rainbow (podcast): <http://www.radiolab.org/story/211178-rip-rainbow/>

#7* T Sept. 20

“Naturalized” Relationalism

- Chiramuuta, Chapters 4 & 5, pp. 69-130

#8 Th Sept. 22

Primitivism

- David Hilbert, “Spraying Color”:
<http://hilbert.people.uic.edu/papers/sprayingcolor.pdf>
- John Campbell, “A Simple View of Colour” in Byrne & Hilbert, *Readings on Color*, pp. 177-190.9 [ER]

III. Color, Colors, Hues, and Shades: Issues in the Organization of Colors

#9 T Sept. 27

Color Terms, Non-Spectral Colors, and Color Models

- Hardin, pp. 113-121.
- “Color Theory” Tutorial (through “Complementary Colors”):
<http://www.worqx.com/color/>

- “The Color-Making Attributes”:
<http://www.handprint.com/HP/WCL/color3.html#colormaking>
- **Test #1 Due**

#10* Th Sept. 29 ***Magenta—and Doubts about Color Models***

- “Do Primary Colors Exist?”: <http://www.handprint.com/HP/WCL/color6.html>
- Eckstut & Eckstut, pp. 10-33.
- Mageneta is not a Color?: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iPPYGJjKVco>

#11* T Oct. 4 ***Are Colors Simple Properties?***

- Jonathan Westphal, “The Complexity of Quality,” *Philosophy* (Oct., 1984), pp. 457-471. [JSTOR]
- Alex Byrne & David R. Hilbert, “Color Primitivism,” *Erkenntnis* (Mar., 2007), pp. 73-105. [JSTOR]

#12* Th Oct. 6 ***The (Alleged) Incompatibility of Colors***

- Hardin, pp. 121-127.
- Peter Remnant, “Red and Green All Over Again,” *Analysis* (Mar., 1961), pp. 93-95. [JSTOR]
- R. G. A. Dolby, “Philosophy and the Incompatibility of Colours,” *Analysis* (Oct., 1973), pp. 8-16. [JSTOR]
- ❖ “Color Wheel Chart Mixing Theory”:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WYZWDEmLR90>

T Oct. 11 ***Reading Day***

IV. Selected Issues of Epistemology & Metaphysics

#13 Th Oct. 13 ***Color Interactions, Afterimages and Illusions***

- Hardin, pp. 113-134.
- Chirimutu, Chapter 7, pp. 159-186.
- Mark D. Fairchild, *Color Appearance Models*, pp. 15-17. [ER]
- ❖ “Albers’ Color Interaction”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8YpZX0Xj9-Y>

#14* T Oct. 18 ***Hume’s Missing Shade of Blue***

- David Hume, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, II.16. [ER]
- Robert Cummins, “The Missing Shade of Blue,” *The Philosophical Review* (Oct., 1978), pp. 548-565. [JSTOR]
- Robert J. Fogelin, “Hume and the Missing Shade of Blue,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* (Dec., 1984), pp. 263-271. [JSTOR]
- ❖ New Blue: <http://mentalfloss.com/article/82177/scientists-accidentally-discover-new-shade-blue>

#15 Th Oct. 20 ***Other Animals, Other Minds, and the Inverted Spectrum***

- Hardin, pp. 145-154.
- Justin Broackes, "Black and White and the Inverted Spectrum," *Philosophical Quarterly* (April, 2007), pp. 161-175. [JSTOR]...
- Eckstut & Eckstut, "Animals," pp. 158-181.
- ❖ "Is Your Red the Same as My Red?":
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=evQsOFQju08>
- ❖ "Perfect Yellow":<http://www.radiolab.org/story/211193-perfect-yellow/> [podcast]

#16* T Oct. 25 ***Forms of Colorblindness***

- Oliver Sacks, "The Case of the Colorblind Painter" [ER]
- "As Seen by the Colorblind":
<http://www.colourlovers.com/web/blog/2008/07/24/as-seen-by-the-color-blind>
- ❖ H. G. Wells, "The Country of the Blind":
<http://www.online-literature.com/wellshg/3/>

#17* Th Oct. 27 ***The Language of Color: What is Lost in Translation?***

- Hardin, pp. 155-186
- "Linguistic Relativity and the Color Naming Debate":
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Linguistic_relativity_and_the_color_naming_debate
- T. Regier, P. Kay, and R.S. Cook, "Focal Colors Are Universal After All,":
<http://www.pnas.org/content/102/23/8386.long>
- "Distinction of Blue and Green in Various Languages,"
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Distinguishing_blue_from_green_in_language
- ❖ Color in Language: <http://www.radiolab.org/story/211213-sky-isnt-blue/>

#18 T Nov. 1 ***Black, White, and 50 Shades of Gray***

- Are Black & White Colors?: <http://www.colormatters.com/color-and-design/are-black-and-white-colors>
- "White": <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White>
- "Black": <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black>
- "Gray": <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gray>
- **Test #2 due**

#19* Th Nov. 3 ***Shadows and Dark Things***

- Roy Sorensen, *Seeing Dark Things: the Philosophy of Shadows*, excerpts from Chapters 10 and 11 [ER]

V. Our Response to Colors: Psychological & Cultural

#20* T Nov. 8 ***How Do Colors Affect Us?***

- Eckstut & Eckstut, "Red," "Orange," "Yellow," pp. 36-47, 70-83, 106-119.
- "Color & the Body" on *Color Matters*: <http://www.colormatters.com/>
- ❖ Pantone and PMS: <http://www.pantone.com/pages/pantone/index.aspx>

#21 Th Nov. 10 ***Colors as Symbols***

- Eckstut & Eckstut, “Green,” “Humans,” “Violet,” pp. 144-157, 196-231.
- “Colour Assignment,” Parts 3-8:
<http://www.jochallock.com/edu/COM498/index.html>

#22 T Nov. 15 ***Cultural Issues: Skin Color***

- Jablonski, *Living Color*, Chapters 1, 9 (excerpt), and 10, pp. 9-23 and 125-141.
- “Skintones”: <http://www.pantone.com/pages/pantone.aspx?pg=21046>
- ❖ Crayola, “Explore Colors”: <http://www.crayola.com/explore-colors/>

#23* Th Nov. 17 ***Cultural Issues: Skin Color***

- Jablonski, *Living Color*, Chapters 12 and 13, pp. 169-193.
- Skin Color is an Illusion:
https://www.ted.com/talks/nina_jablonski_breaks_the_illusion_of_skin_color?language=en

#24 T Nov. 22 ***Gender and Color: Pink***

- Eckstut & Eckstut: Blue, pp. 182-195.
- Orenstein, “Pinked!” Ch. 3, *Cinderella Ate My Daughter*, pp. 33-54.
- Popova, “The Pink and Blue Projects”:
<http://www.brainpickings.org/index.php/2009/12/11/pink-and-blue-project/>

Thanksgiving Break

#25* T Nov. 29 ***Chromophobia***

- Batchelor, Chapters 1 and 2, pp. 1-49.
- ❖ Film: *Pleasantville* – **evening showing** (TBA, pizza provided)

#26 Th Dec. 1 ***Western Culture and Chromophobia***

- Batchelor, Chapters 3-5, pp. 51-112.

#27 T Dec. 6 ***The Commercialization of Color***

- Color and Marketing: <http://www.colormatters.com/color-and-marketing>
- Klein Blue: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Klein_Blue

#28 Th Dec. 8 ***The End of the Rainbow***

- Protecting Colors:
http://www.fastcodesign.com/3058058/the-harvard-vault-that-protects-the-worlds-rarest-colors?cid=ps002ros&utm_source=ps+facebook&utm_medium=paidcm&utm_campaign=ps002ros
- <http://www.thisiscolossal.com/2016/01/harvard-pigment-library/>

T Dec. 13 ***Final Examination 1:30-4:30 pm***

7. COURSE POLICIES and EXPECTATIONS

Instructional Methods: This is an upper division course on a specialized philosophical topic, so we will strive for a seminar environment. The course is organized around a series of questions that lead to philosophical problems. While I will offer occasional mini-lectures, the main method will be structured discussions and collaborative thinking on the philosophical issues of the course.

Workload Expectations and “Fourth Hour” Assignments: PHIL 346 has been designed with the standard expectations for workload: typically, you will need two hours of focused preparation for each class hour. Understanding the readings is, of course, only the first step in preparation; philosophy requires critical reflections on the material. You should have access to the day’s readings and your notes to each class. In addition, the “fourth hour” of credit is met by various out-of-class assignments: out-of-class essay tests, research and preparation of the term paper, and various special (designated with a ♦ in the conspectus). These are videos or films to view and websites to explore. Their content is relevant to the course and subject to inclusion in the various essays of the course. Please note that these assignments are over and above reading assignments, so plan your work time accordingly.

Readings: You should each own a copy of the required texts. We make extensive use of materials on the web, in part because it gives us more opportunities for direct experiences of color phenomena. Many required readings will be posted on Moodle or are accessible through the Library’s databases.

Class Preparation: The working assumption of the class is that each participant will have *read and studied* the assignment prior to that class. If you are not prepared for class, you should attend anyway—learning happens!—though you may need to acknowledge your unpreparedness. You should be prepared to follow up on your critical responses in class.

Attendance: Showing up for class on time is basic. Philosophy is not simply something you study; it is something you do. Philosophizing is a form of active learning and requires consistent attendance and participation. Moreover, this course uses a format that places a special emphasis on contributions by each student to the in-class experience of all. Therefore, ***all students are expected to attend all classes.*** Some absences may be unavoidable and these may be excused at my discretion. If it is necessary to miss class, you should notify me *beforehand* if at all possible. You are, of course, still responsible for the work of that missed session. Multiple absences will lower your participation grade, and ultimately your grade for the course.

Late Work: *Work submitted late is not accepted for credit.* Your written work submitted through *Moodle* will receive an official time stamp. Drop Boxes vanish after the deadline. There are no possibilities for “make-up” quizzes or assignments, since we will have more quizzes offered than will be included in the final grade, and essay assignments are completed over several days.

Academic Integrity: Adherence to the principle of academic integrity as expressed in the

Gettysburg College Honor Code in this class is expected for all. This includes giving proper citation of sources for all intellectual work, compliance with the announced conditions of assignments, and offering an honest and direct expression of your views. We will discuss at the outset of the course the importance of academic integrity and specific expectations. Please consult with me if you are uncertain how to maintain academic integrity in a specific assignment.

Grading: In this course, grading is not “on the curve,” i.e., it is not comparative within the class. In theory, everyone could receive a very high grade (or no one)! A rubric—a chart listing test criteria and standards—will be used and shared beforehand for the essays. I expect that grading of essays will be prompt, normally within one week. It is *not* a mistake to consult with me about any puzzling grade you receive—it is a very good idea!

Course MOODLE site: This course will make extensive use of its *MOODLE* website. You are automatically enrolled on *MOODLE* as members of the class. Communications on our site are official for all purposes, so *you should consult the site frequently*. Important announcements, course documents, reserve readings, assignments, quotations, and a variety of learning resources will be posted there, and you will submit assignments, including tests, via *MOODLE*. *Please be sure you are proficient in the use of MOODLE.*

Classroom Etiquette: Electronic devices and departures from class can be disruptive, and our assigned seminar room presents unusually constraining spatial conditions. Leaving the room during class should be a rare event. Avoid embarrassment: please turn off all smart phones, cameras, iPods, and other personal electronics not designed for note-taking. You will be called out for behavior that distracts others during class, such as responding to text messages, internet surfing, or frequent needs to leave the classroom. The personal use of screens of any size in class can be distracting, so if you propose to use a laptop or tablet for note-taking have special need to keep a pager turned on in class, please consult with me.

Special events: These include at least one film (listed in the Conspectus) and may include other special, relevant philosophical events. We will make this determination as we compare schedules in class. While attendance at special events is expected, conflicts invariably arise. If you must miss such an event, we’ll agree upon an alternative contribution.

Learning Disabilities: Please let me know if you have a diagnosed learning disability. Be prepared to present your College IEAP form for consultation, so that we may determine appropriate accommodations, if any, within the context of this course.

Consultation: I have listed my regular hours for academic advising and consultation below. Barring an emergency, I will be available in my office at these times. You may simply drop in; you do not need to make an appointment—though please do understand that I may need to consult with others during the period as well. If these times do not work for you, you may of course arrange an appointment.

8. INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Prof. DeNicola's Office	Weidensall Hall 306
Office Phone	(337-) 6784
Campus Mail Box	404
Office Hours	M W: 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.; T Th: 1:30 – 3:00 p.m.; or by appointment
E-mail	ddenicol@gettysburg.edu
Admin. Assistant, Dept. of Philosophy	Tara Bowman
Department Office Phone	(337-) 6780

Note: The instructor reserves the right to change the information presented in this syllabus, within the basic parameters of the course description. Unforeseen events and responsive teaching may require adjustments or changes in assignments or deadlines. The instructor will confirm any changes in writing as far in advance as possible.

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“[C]olor does matter...[I]t has mattered to many...for whom the fate of Western culture has mattered. It mattered because it got in the way. And it still matters because it still does.”

—David Batchelor

“Mere color, unspoiled by meaning, and unallied with definite form, can speak to the soul in a thousand different ways.”

— Oscar Wilde

“Color is like sex. It's mysterious. It's unknowable. It never looks the same twice. No two people see the same thing. No two people feel the same thing. I once went to china on a cruise ship. Eight hundred of us got off the ship wearing white, because it feels festive and shippy and says "I'm on a cruise." In China white is the color of mourning. We looked insane.”

— Stephen Drucker