What is art, and what does it do to or for us? A philosophical approach to these questions offers a useful battery of tools for thinking through art in relation to sensation, thought, judgment, and criticism, as well as image, sound, and concept. We’ll consider traditional aesthetic questions such as the nature of beauty, the meaning of aesthetic judgment, and the definition of art, but we’ll also engage more recent critiques or complications of aesthetic theory: the fraught relationship between art and money; the explosion of possibilities for aesthetic communication offered by new media technologies and platforms; the intensification of issues connected to imitation, appropriation, and originality. Since the Carnegie International art exhibition will be in full swing for most of the spring semester, we’ll make several visits to the Carnegie Museum of Art and directly connect the work there to the issues we discuss in class. We will engage work by: Plato, Immanuel Kant, Friedrich Nietzsche, Walter Benjamin, Arthur Danto, Nelson Goodman, Michel Foucault, Lucy Lippard, Noël Carroll, Susan Sontag, Rosalind Krauss, Stuart Hall, Werner Herzog, Alfred Lessing, Hilda Heine, Laura Mulvey, Paul Gilroy, James Elkins, Okwui Enwezor, Yuriko Saito, Errol Morris, and Slavoj Zizek. The course will require active participation in discussion, reflection journals, an analytical paper, and a scaffolded final project (which may be a research paper or a work of art accompanied by a philosophically-grounded artist’s statement; it may be undertaken singly or collaboratively).