



PHL 250

Philosophy of Art and Literature

S2 Day 2014

Philosophy

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor

Dr Berndt Sellheim

berndtsellheim@bigpond.com

Contact via berndtsellheim@bigpond.com

W6A 724

Tuesday and Thursday, 11-12.

Berndt Sellheim

berndt.sellheim@mq.edu.au

Robert Sinnerbrink

robert.sinnerbrink@mq.edu.au

Credit points

3

Prerequisites

12cp or admission to GDipArts

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

What is the relationship between philosophy, art, and literature? What can paintings, music, novels, and poems tell us about perception, emotion, language, and meaning? Can art and literature do philosophy?

The unit examines some of the classic problems in the philosophy of art (aesthetics), as well as contemporary theories of art, culture, cognition, and emotion. We investigate the nature of art and explore how our experience of art and literature offer a way of understanding the self and broadening our cognitive engagement with the world. We begin with the core problems of beauty and pleasure, examining whether aesthetic judgments about art are merely subjective or in some sense objective. We consider the nature of aesthetic experience, exploring how art engages our perception, emotion, imagination, and cognition. We explore how literary texts can stage complex philosophical thought experiments or explore ethical problems or moral questions in depth and detail.

Finally, we consider the idea that art and literature can explore philosophical issues in their own right and exercise our moral imagination in complex ways. These philosophical theories will be examined in conjunction with a discussion of contemporary works in a variety of media from painting and music to novels and poetry.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

Find, analyse and evaluate primary and secondary sources and present a well-argued philosophical discussion in an essay format.

Interpret and examine developments in contemporary aesthetics that deal with questions of subjectivity, value, meaning, freedom, and modern culture.

Analyse and explore the relationship between theory and practice in contemporary art and culture.

Apply philosophical aesthetic theories to specific art examples.

Locate and evaluate contemporary media discussions of art and culture from a philosophical or aesthetic point of view.

Create or design a means of communicating your own reflections on philosophy of art.

Actively participate in group discussion in tutorials (including online discussion).

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
Online Quizzes	5%	Week 6
First Essay	35%	Mid-Semester Break
Aesthetics Journal	15%	Week 12
Tutorial Participation	10%	Ongoing
Second Essay	35%	Week 13

Online Quizzes

Due: **Week 6**

Weighting: **5%**

Students will complete two short online quizzes during the semester.

- The first quiz will be held during WEEK 6;
- The second quiz will be held during WEEK 10.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Interpret and examine developments in contemporary aesthetics that deal with questions of subjectivity, value, meaning, freedom, and modern culture.

First Essay

Due: **Mid-Semester Break**

Weighting: **35%**

The first essay deals with topics covered in the first half of the course (Week 1-Week 7). The essay questions for the first essay will be made available by Week 3. All essay questions can be downloaded via the PHL250 iLearn website.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Find, analyse and evaluate primary and secondary sources and present a well-argued philosophical discussion in an essay format.
- Interpret and examine developments in contemporary aesthetics that deal with questions of subjectivity, value, meaning, freedom, and modern culture.
- Analyse and explore the relationship between theory and practice in contemporary art and culture.
- Apply philosophical aesthetic theories to specific art examples.

Aesthetics Journal

Due: **Week 12**

Weighting: **15%**

Students are required to submit an Aesthetics Journal covering weeks 2-12 of the course, with a brief entry for at least six weeks of the course (approximately 1000-1500 words overall). The journal can be a workbook, scrapbook, diary, or other format of your own choosing (e.g. blog, webpage, photographs, artwork, etc)

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Interpret and examine developments in contemporary aesthetics that deal with questions of subjectivity, value, meaning, freedom, and modern culture.
- Analyse and explore the relationship between theory and practice in contemporary art and culture.
- Apply philosophical aesthetic theories to specific art examples.
- Locate and evaluate contemporary media discussions of art and culture from a philosophical or aesthetic point of view.
- Create or design a means of communicating your own reflections on philosophy of art.

Tutorial Participation

Due: **Ongoing**

Weighting: **10%**

Tutorials are an important site of individual and group learning. Philosophy tutorials involve students in active discussion with their tutor and fellow students, raising and responding to questions, analysing problems, and engaging in individual and group learning activities with their tutor. Students will also prepare a brief essay plan/opening paragraph for their final essay as part of their tutorial participation. Students are expected to attend at least 75% of classes (9/12).

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Find, analyse and evaluate primary and secondary sources and present a well-argued philosophical discussion in an essay format.
- Actively participate in group discussion in tutorials (including online discussion).

Second Essay

Due: **Week 13**

Weighting: **35%**

The second essay deals with topics covered in the second half of the course (Week 8-Week 13). The essay questions for the second essay will be made available by Week 9 (all essay questions can be downloaded via the PHL250 iLearn website).

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Find, analyse and evaluate primary and secondary sources and present a well-argued philosophical discussion in an essay format.
- Interpret and examine developments in contemporary aesthetics that deal with questions of subjectivity, value, meaning, freedom, and modern culture.
- Analyse and explore the relationship between theory and practice in contemporary art and culture.
- Apply philosophical aesthetic theories to specific art examples.

Delivery and Resources

CLASSES

For lecture times and classrooms please consult the MQ Timetable website:

<http://www.timetables.mq.edu.au>. This website will display up-to-date information on your classes and classroom locations.

Times and Locations for Lectures and Tutorials

- Lectures: 2 x 1 hour lectures
- Lecture 1: Monday 2pm-3pm (C5A 232)
- Lecture 2: Thursday 9am-10am (W5A 103)
- Tutorials: 1 x 1 hour tutorial [N.B. Tutorials begin in Week 2!]
- EITHER Tutorial 1: Monday 3pm-4pm (W5C 334)
- OR Tutorial 2: Thursday 10am-11am (C4A 320)

REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED TEXTS AND/OR MATERIALS

Weekly readings will be available via iLearn.

A useful book introducing themes covered in the unit is Andrew Bowie, *Aesthetics and Subjectivity from Kant to Nietzsche* (Manchester Uni. Press, 1990) [Call Number: BH221. 633. B68/1990]. It is available in the library in the Reserve collection.

Electronic Resources

There are some excellent online resources that will be useful for your study of Aesthetics, and for research relevant to writing your essays. Here are some recommended websites that provide helpful introductions and general overviews of issues in aesthetics:

- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Aesthetic Judgment: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aesthetic-judgment/>
- Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Aesthetics: <http://www.rep.routledge.com/article/M046>
- Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Aesthetics: <http://www.iep.utm.edu/a/aestheti.htm>

Further electronic resources, including articles, websites, and images, will be made available via the PHL250 Aesthetics Blackboard website.

UNIT WEBPAGE AND TECHNOLOGY USED AND REQUIRED

Online units can be accessed at: <http://learn.mq.edu.au>

The unit uses the following technology: iLearn website; iletecture recordings; online discussion boards; weblinks, etc.

Unit Schedule

Week 1	<p>Introduction to Aesthetics: Philosophy, Art, Subjectivity</p> <p>What is Aesthetics? Why does Aesthetics emerge as a distinct discipline? The Enlightenment crisis of reason and our relationship with nature in the modern world. The importance of 'aesthetic experience' as an antidote to modern rationalism. The relationship between art and philosophy today.</p> <p>Background Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Andrew Bowie, "Introduction" from his <i>Aesthetics and Subjectivity from Kant to Nietzsche</i>, Second edition (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003).
Week 2	<p>Plato's Philosophy of Beauty and Critique of Poetry</p> <p>Plato's philosophy of art as imitation and critique of poetry. Art as epistemically inferior and morally corrupting illusion. The ethico-educative role of art. Plato's theory of beauty and its role in philosophical knowledge.</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Plato, <i>Republic</i>, Book X, 595-608b, trans. Desmond Lee (2nd rev. ed.) (London: Penguin, 1987). 2. Plato, <i>Phaedrus</i>, 249d-250d, trans. R. Hackforth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972). 3. Plato, "Speech of Diotima", <i>Symposium</i>, trans. A. Nehamas and P. Woodruff, 203c-212c (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1989).
Week 3	<p>Aesthetic Judgments of Taste</p> <p>Aesthetic judgments as judgments of taste: subjective, based on feeling of pleasure, yet also "universal" in scope. The differences between the "agreeable" and the "beautiful", and between "interested" and "disinterested" pleasure.</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Christian Helmut Wenzel, "Introduction" in his <i>An Introduction to Kant's Aesthetics: Core Concepts and Problems</i> (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005). 2. Douglas Burnheim, "The Peculiarities of the Aesthetic Judgment" in his <i>An Introduction to Kant's Critique of Judgment</i> (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000). 3. Immanuel Kant, <i>Critique of Judgment</i>, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987), §§1-9.
Week 4	<p>The Analytic of the Beautiful</p> <p>How can judgments of beauty be subjective yet universal? The universal communicability of beauty and Kant's idea of a <i>sensus communis</i> (common aesthetic sense). Art, imagination, and freedom.</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Douglas Burnheim, "Purposiveness and Harmony in Judgments" in his <i>An Introduction to Kant's Critique of Judgment</i> 2. Immanuel Kant, <i>Critique of Judgment</i>, §§10-22.
Week 5	<p>The Analytic of the Sublime</p> <p>The difference between the beautiful and the sublime. The mathematical and the dynamical sublime. The clash between imagination and reason. The moral / ethical significance of the experience of the sublime.</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Christian Helmut Wenzel, 'Beyond Beauty, The Sublime,' in his <i>An Introduction to Kant's Aesthetics. Core Concepts and Problems</i> (Blackwell, 2005). 2. Immanuel Kant, <i>Critique of Judgment</i>, §§23-29.

<p>Week 6</p>	<p>Hegel's Aesthetics: Art, Religion, Philosophy</p> <p>Hegel on the ontological significance of art. Art as a historical-cultural practice bringing truth to appearance by sensuous means. The relationship between art, religion, and philosophy. Have we reached the “end of art” in modernity?</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Robert Wicks: “Hegel's Aesthetics: An Overview” in <i>The Cambridge Companion to Hegel</i>, ed. Frederick C. Beiser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). 2. Extracts from G.W.F. Hegel, <i>Aesthetics. Lectures on Fine Art</i>, “Introduction,” trans. T.M. Knox (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975). <p>FIRST ONLINE QUIZ (Week 6)</p>
<p>Week 7</p>	<p>READING WEEK</p> <p>FIRST ESSAY DUE</p>
<p>SEMESTER BREAK</p>	
	<p>Schopenhauer's Aesthetics: Metaphysics and Music</p> <p>Artistic genius, madness, and the ability to know Ideas. Aesthetic knowledge and metaphysics; aesthetic pleasure and the overcoming of the will. Will-lessness and the feeling of the sublime. Music as a copy of the ‘primal will’. Is music a metaphysical artform?</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Arthur Schopenhauer: <i>The World as Will and Representation</i>, Vol. II, 1819, §34-41 2. Julian Young, ‘Chapter VII Art’ from his <i>Willing and Unwilling: A Study in the Philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer</i> (Dordrecht: Marinus Nijhoff, 1987). 3. Martha C. Nussbaum, “Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, and Dionysus” in <i>The Cambridge Companion to Schopenhauer</i>, ed. Christopher Janaway
<p>Week 9</p>	<p>Nietzsche's Aesthetics: Tragedy and Modernity</p> <p>Nietzsche on art, music, and the will. Nietzsche's diagnosis of modern culture (“nihilism”). The duality of Apollonian and Dionysian art-impulses. Tragedy as the union of Apollonian and Dionysian. Art as a counter-movement to nihilism. Do we need tragic art in modernity?</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Martha C. Nussbaum, “Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, and Dionysus” in <i>The Cambridge Companion to Schopenhauer</i>, ed. Christopher Janaway. 2. Aaron Ridley, “Redemption through Art: The Birth of Tragedy” in his <i>Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Nietzsche on Art</i> (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007). Walter Kaufmann (New York: VintageBooks, 1967).

Week 10	Heidegger on the Work of Art <p>Heidegger's challenge to modern aesthetics. What is the being of the work of art? Art as a way in which truth is disclosed, revealed, i.e. "set to work". The dynamic conflict between "world" and "earth" in the work of art. Is art a "saving power" in an age of modern technology?</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Martin Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art' in <i>Heidegger: Basic Writings</i>, ed. D. F. Krell (San Francisco: Harper, 1977).2. Julian Young, extracts from his <i>Heidegger's Philosophy of Art</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). <p>SECOND ONLINE QUIZ</p>
Week 11	Merleau-Ponty on the Phenomenology of Art <p>Art and perception: the aesthetic experience of the body-subject as a way of understanding the world. Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological approach to art: the critique of rationalism and of mind/body dualism. Merleau-Ponty on Cezanne's painting as phenomenology.</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Cezanne's Doubt" in <i>The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader</i>, ed. Galen A. Johnson (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1993).2. Galen A. Johnson, 'Phenomenology and Painting: 'Cezanne's Doubt'' in <i>The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader</i>, ed. Galen A. Johnson.
Week 12	Deleuze on Art, Sensation, and Thought <p>Gilles Deleuze's aesthetics of sensation: overcoming Kantian dualism. Art and the presentation of "pre-representational" experience. The distinction between figuration and the Figure. Sensation, the body, and violence in the paintings of Francis Bacon.</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Daniel W. Smith, "Deleuze's Theory of Sensation: Overcoming the Kantian Duality" in <i>Deleuze: A Critical Reader</i>, ed. Paul Patton (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996).2. Gilles Deleuze, extracts from Francis Bacon: <i>The Logic of Sensation</i>, trans. Daniel W. Smith (London: Continuum, 2003)
Week 13	Adorno on Art, Autonomy, and Literature <p>Autonomous art and freedom in modernity. Can art be autonomous as well as "political"? What is the relationship between philosophy and literature? Can literature be philosophical? Beckett's "Endgame" and the Philosophers. What can Beckett's writing show us that philosophy cannot?</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Theodor W. Adorno, "The Autonomy of Art", extracts from his <i>Negative Dialectics</i> in <i>The Adorno Reader</i>, ed. Brian O'Connor (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).2. Theodor Adorno, Trying to Understand Endgame in <i>The Adorno Reader</i>, ed. Brian O'Connor.3. Simon Critchley, "Know Happiness-on Beckett" in his <i>Very Little, Almost Nothing: Death, Philosophy, Literature</i> (2nd rev. ed.) (London: Routledge, 2004). <p>AESTHETICS JOURNAL DUE</p> <p>SECOND ESSAY DUE</p>

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#).

Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

Assessment Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html>

Grading Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

Grade Appeal Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Grievance Management Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grievance_management/policy.html

Disruption to Studies Policy http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html *The Disruption to Studies Policy is effective from March 3 2014 and replaces the Special Consideration Policy.*

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](#) of Policy Central.

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit <http://informatics.mq.edu.au/help/>.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Find, analyse and evaluate primary and secondary sources and present a well-argued philosophical discussion in an essay format.
- Actively participate in group discussion in tutorials (including online discussion).

Assessment task

- Tutorial Participation

Commitment to Continuous Learning

Our graduates will have enquiring minds and a literate curiosity which will lead them to pursue knowledge for its own sake. They will continue to pursue learning in their careers and as they participate in the world. They will be capable of reflecting on their experiences and relationships with others and the environment, learning from them, and growing - personally, professionally and socially.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Actively participate in group discussion in tutorials (including online discussion).

Assessment tasks

- Aesthetics Journal
- Tutorial Participation

Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Find, analyse and evaluate primary and secondary sources and present a well-argued philosophical discussion in an essay format.
- Interpret and examine developments in contemporary aesthetics that deal with questions of subjectivity, value, meaning, freedom, and modern culture.
- Analyse and explore the relationship between theory and practice in contemporary art and culture.
- Apply philosophical aesthetic theories to specific art examples.

Assessment tasks

- Online Quizzes
- First Essay
- Second Essay

Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Find, analyse and evaluate primary and secondary sources and present a well-argued philosophical discussion in an essay format.
- Interpret and examine developments in contemporary aesthetics that deal with questions of subjectivity, value, meaning, freedom, and modern culture.
- Analyse and explore the relationship between theory and practice in contemporary art and culture.

- Apply philosophical aesthetic theories to specific art examples.
- Create or design a means of communicating your own reflections on philosophy of art.

Assessment tasks

- Online Quizzes
- First Essay
- Tutorial Participation
- Second Essay

Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Find, analyse and evaluate primary and secondary sources and present a well-argued philosophical discussion in an essay format.
- Interpret and examine developments in contemporary aesthetics that deal with questions of subjectivity, value, meaning, freedom, and modern culture.
- Apply philosophical aesthetic theories to specific art examples.
- Locate and evaluate contemporary media discussions of art and culture from a philosophical or aesthetic point of view.
- Create or design a means of communicating your own reflections on philosophy of art.

Assessment tasks

- Online Quizzes
- First Essay
- Aesthetics Journal
- Second Essay

Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Analyse and explore the relationship between theory and practice in contemporary art and culture.
- Apply philosophical aesthetic theories to specific art examples.
- Create or design a means of communicating your own reflections on philosophy of art.

Assessment task

- Aesthetics Journal

Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Find, analyse and evaluate primary and secondary sources and present a well-argued philosophical discussion in an essay format.
- Analyse and explore the relationship between theory and practice in contemporary art and culture.
- Apply philosophical aesthetic theories to specific art examples.
- Locate and evaluate contemporary media discussions of art and culture from a philosophical or aesthetic point of view.
- Create or design a means of communicating your own reflections on philosophy of art.
- Actively participate in group discussion in tutorials (including online discussion).

Assessment tasks

- First Essay
- Tutorial Participation
- Second Essay

Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social

justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Locate and evaluate contemporary media discussions of art and culture from a philosophical or aesthetic point of view.
- Actively participate in group discussion in tutorials (including online discussion).

Assessment tasks

- Aesthetics Journal
- Tutorial Participation

Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible

We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active participants in moving society towards sustainability.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Locate and evaluate contemporary media discussions of art and culture from a philosophical or aesthetic point of view.
- Actively participate in group discussion in tutorials (including online discussion).

Assessment tasks

- Aesthetics Journal
- Tutorial Participation

Changes since First Published

Date	Description
28/02/2014	The Description was updated.