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To Whom It May Concern,

In October of 2011, Dr. Martin Kutnowski gave a guest lecture in my class, GRID 3406: Philosophy & Art. The course approached the subject of art from an interdisciplinary perspective, bringing works by Plato, Friedrich Nietzsche, Elaine Scarry, William Shakespeare, and Oscar Wilde into conversation with each other. I invited several accomplished local artists, including novelist David Adams Richards and painter Stephen May, into the class to discuss their craft and their perspectives on art. I asked Dr. Kutnowski to speak as a composer and musician.

Upon arrival Dr. Kutnowski immediately displayed an ability to captivate an audience by asking the class to consider a particularly compelling question. How do musicians (and artists in general) create something out of nothing? Dr. Kutnowski later transitioned to questions of musical adaptation. How does a musician translate a work of poetry into an instrumental piece of music, or how do words become notes? My students were not specialists in Fine Arts. Many of them had no formal music training whatsoever. Thus such questions were very useful for providing them with a way into the subject matter. Indeed, one of the most impressive things about Dr. Kutnowski's teaching was the way he was able to communicate his highly specialized knowledge without using jargon or confusing terminology.

The thing I admired most about Dr. Kutnowski, however, was his masterful management of time and space in the classroom. Our class met for two hours. Dr. Kutnowski kept students engaged throughout with a variety of activities. Periods of lecture and class discussion were punctuated with video clips, individual exercises, and musical recordings. At one point Dr. Kutnowski had us find partners and discuss how we might set a particular poem to music. Would the music be loud or soft? When would the piano start? What would the flute sound like? This kind of exercise was marvelous as it allowed students with no formal training in music to find some purchase on questions of musical composition. I also noted how expertly Dr. Kutnowski used the classroom space, moving himself around the perimeter of the room while he was speaking; in this way each student periodically felt as if he or she were in "the front row." It is this kind of (deceptively simple) technique that, I think, demonstrates real pedagogical prowess.

Many students left the class hoping to study with Dr. Kutnowski in another course, and I certainly look forward to inviting him back to my class at the earliest opportunity. I believe Dr. Kutnowski is a wonderful teacher. He has a clear sense of his audience's abilities, phenomenal communication skills, and an exceptional understanding of classroom dynamics.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Andrew Moore
Great Books & Aquinas