

AH302

The Idea of the Aesthetic

This syllabus may be updated. During the semester, registered students are expected to consult the latest version of the syllabus, to be found in the course Google drive.

Seminar Leader: Katalin Makkai
Course Times: Monday 13:30 - 15:00, Wednesday 13:30 - 15:00
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Office Hours: Monday 15:00-16:00

Course Description

“Aesthetics” and “aesthetic” are terms that are often taken for granted inside as well as outside academic discourse. We speak of aesthetic experiences and judgments and qualities, and we employ “aesthetics” to designate the study of such matters. Although their root is taken from the Greek, the now-familiar terms (in their now-familiar usages) are, however, comparatively new. They are commonly regarded as having been introduced into the philosophical lexicon in the eighteenth century—a few hundred years ago. This course studies some of the texts that were key to the discovery, or perhaps the invention, of the “aesthetic”. What work was the “aesthetic” meant to do? How did its evolution retain or reconfigure its original senses and purposes? Is the idea of the “aesthetic” problematic, ideological, or chimerical? Do we need an idea of the “aesthetic” to think about contemporary art? Do we need such an idea to think about nature and our relation to it?

Course books

Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, trans. Guyer and Matthews. ISBN-13: 978-0521348928
All other readings will be made available electronically.

Library and book purchase policies

The college book policy for 2016-2017 is that reserve stocks of books will be lent to students on the basis of need, or (thereafter) on a first come first served basis. Books not yet owned by the college will be purchased only to create a small library reserve collection, and for students receiving more than 70% financial aid. Otherwise, students must purchase all course books.

Requirements

ATTENDANCE

Attendance at ALL classes is expected. More than two absences (that is, absences from two sessions of 90 minutes) in a semester will significantly affect the participation grade for the course. Lateness will also affect the participation grade.

Please consult the regulations in the Student Handbook governing periods of illness or leaves of absence. Per the Handbook: “Medical documentation is not accepted to excuse absences and will not be accepted for shorter periods under any circumstance. Students should submit medical documentation only in cases where illness has caused or is likely to result in a prolonged absence

from class, i.e., three or more consecutive sessions. Documentation should be submitted to the College Registrar within one week of the first absence.”

ASSESSMENT

Participation

Students should arrive to each class on time and prepared. Being prepared means (1) having completed the assigned reading (in the specific editions indicated above), (2) bringing to class a printed (non-electronic) copy of the assigned reading, and (3) being ready to initiate and to contribute to discussion.

Coming to class without a printed copy of the reading will affect the participation grade. Participation in class discussion should be regular as well as productive; quantity alone will not favorably affect the participation grade.

Each student will give two seminar presentations, introducing and opening the discussion of the assigned reading.

Writing assignments

Midterm essay (2000-2500 words), due March 17

Final essay (3000-3500 words), due May 19

Presentation

In addition to the two seminar presentations, each student will give a final presentation, the aim of which is to explain and motivate the final essay topic.

POLICY ON LATE SUBMISSION OF PAPERS

From the Student Handbook on the submission of essays:

Essays that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example).

Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Where an instructor agrees to accept a late essay, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline and cannot receive a grade of higher than C. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment.

Grade breakdown

Participation	30%
Midterm essay	25%
Final presentation	15%
Final essay	30%

Schedule

Week 1

M Jan. 30 Introduction

W Feb. 1 Shaftesbury, from *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*

Week 2

M Feb. 6 Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment (CPJ)*, Analytic of the Beautiful, First Moment

W Feb. 8 Kant, *CPJ*, Analytic of the Beautiful, Second Moment, §§1-8

Week 3

M Feb. 13 Kant, *CPJ*, Analytic of the Beautiful, Second Moment, §9

W Feb. 15 Kant, *CPJ*, Analytic of the Beautiful, Third Moment

Week 4

M Feb. 20 Kant, *CPJ*, General Remark on the first section of the Analytic

W Feb. 22 Kant, *CPJ*, §§30-38

Week 5

M Feb. 27 Kant, *CPJ*, §§43-48

W Mar. 1 Clive Bell, "The Aesthetic Hypothesis"
Noel Carroll, "Clive Bell's Aesthetic Hypothesis"

Week 6

M Mar. 6 Edward Bullough, "Psychical Distance as a Factor in Art and as an Aesthetic Principle"

W Mar. 8 Jerome Stolnitz, "The Aesthetic Attitude"

Week 7

M Mar. 13 George Dickie, "The Myth of the Aesthetic Attitude"

W Mar. 15 Monroe Beardsley, "The Aesthetic Point of View"

F Mar. 17 Midterm essay due

Week 8

M Mar. 20 John Dewey, "The Aesthetic in Experience"

W Mar. 22 Richard Shusterman, "The End of Aesthetic Experience"

Week 9

M Mar. 27 Alexander Nehamas, "Richard Shusterman on Pleasure and Aesthetic Experience"

W Mar. 29 Hans-Georg Gadamer, from *Truth and Method*

Week 10

M Apr. 3 Theodor Adorno, "Aesthetic Theory"

W Apr. 5 Terry Eagleton, from *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*

Spring Break: April 10-17

Week 11

W Apr. 19 Martin Jay, “The Aesthetic Ideology’ as Ideology” Or What Does it Mean to Aestheticize Politics?”

Week 12

M Apr. 24 Arnold Berleant: “Experience and Theory in Aesthetics”

W Apr. 26 Allen Carlson, “Aesthetic Appreciation of the Natural Environment”

Week 13

M May 1 federal holiday

W May 3 final presentations

Week 14

M May 8 final presentations

W May 10 final presentations

Week 15

F May 19 Completion week
Final essay due