

Questioning Aesthetics

THEOCRIT 9637

[A Course]

Centre for the Study of Theory and Criticism

Fall 2021

COURSE OUTLINE

Professor: Julian Jason Haladyn
Email: julianhaladyn@faculty.ocadu.ca
Course Time: Tuesdays 1-4pm
Location: Stevenson Hall Rm. 3165

Course Description

For the last half of the Twentieth-century the term ‘aesthetics’ became a type of *swearword* within cultural theory. This stance is characterized in Hal Foster’s edited collection *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Post Modern Culture*, in which the various authors argue for counter aesthetics through a variety of models. More recent scholarship, however, has shown an increasing interest in aesthetics both as an historical category and as a means of articulating new developments in contemporary culture through a re-articulation of this mode of visual inquiry. The most prominent example of this shift can be seen in the writings of Jacques Rancière, whose most recent book *Aisthesis: Scenes from the Aesthetic Regime of Art* continues to challenge the “bad reputation” of aesthetics – a description that opens his analysis in *Aesthetics and Its Discontents* – throughout late modernity. Such recent approaches, of which the texts included in the course are drawn from, attempt to locate the problems of the aesthetic within issues and discussions of contemporary artistic practices and discourses, particularly following feminist and postcolonial or decolonial challenges to the predominant European model of aesthetics. This seminar considers the history of aesthetics from Kant and Hegel up to Rancière and Gayatri Spivak, focusing on the question: what is the current understanding and relevance of aesthetics?

Assignments

1. Seminar Presentation (35%)

- you will give one in-class presentation of no more than 20 minutes that responds to the reading for the week
- hand in a maximum one page summary of your topic before you present

2. Research Paper (45%)

- you will write a final research paper of approximately 20 to 30 pages
- *requirement*: discuss your topic with me well in advance of handing in your paper

3. Seminar Participation (20%)

- *note*: for students worried about participation you can hand in up to two maximum one page reading responses that will count towards your mark

Course Texts (available at the bookstore)

Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*

Alain Badiou, *Inaesthetics*

Jacques Rancière, *Aesthetics and Its Discontents*

François Laruelle, *Photo-Fiction, a Non-Standard Aesthetics*

Byung-Chul Han, *Saving Beauty*

Schedule

- Week 1 [Sept. 14] *Course Introduction*
Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, Part I: Critique of Aesthetic Judgment
Marcel Duchamp, "The Creative Act"
http://www.ubu.com/papers/duchamp_creative.html
- Week 2 [Sept. 21] Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, Part I: Critique of Aesthetic Judgment
- Week 3 [Sept. 28] Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*
- Week 4 [Oct. 5] Hegel, *Introductory Lectures On Aesthetics*
www.marxists.org/reference/archive/hegel/works/ae/contents.htm
[or Penguin Classics book]
- Week 5 [Oct. 12] Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*
- Week 6 [Oct. 19] Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*
- Week 7 [Oct. 26] Hal Foster, Introduction, *The Anti-Aesthetic*
Njabulo S. Ndebele, "The Rediscovery of the Ordinary: Some New Writings in South Africa"
- Week 8 [Nov. 9] Alain Badiou, *Inaesthetics*
- Week 9 [Nov. 16] Jacques Rancière, *Aesthetics and Its Discontents*
- Week 10 [Nov. 23] Gayatri Spivak, Introduction, *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization*
Walter Mignolo et al., "Decolonial Aesthetics"
<https://transnationaldecolonialinstitute.wordpress.com/decolonial-aesthetics/>
- Week 11 [Nov. 30] François Laruelle, *Photo-Fiction, a Non-Standard Aesthetics*
- Week 12 [Dec. 7] Byung-Chul Han, *Saving Beauty*
-

Possible Supplementary Readings

Mieke Bal, "Telling Objects: A Narrative Perspective on Collecting"

Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*

Rodolphe Gasché, *The Idea of Form: Rethinking Kant's Aesthetics*

Marsh Meskimmon, *Women Making Art: History, Subjectivity, Aesthetics*

Jacques Rancière, *Aisthesis: Scenes from the Aesthetic Regime of Art*

Steven Shaviro, "Accelerationist Aesthetics"

<http://www.e-flux.com/journal/46/60070/accelerationist-aesthetics-necessary-inefficiency-in-times-of-real-subsumption/>

SCHOLASTIC OFFENCES DEFINITION

Members of the University Community accept a commitment to maintain and uphold the purposes of the University and, in particular, its standards of scholarship. It follows, therefore, that acts of a nature that prejudice the academic standards of the University are offences subject to discipline. Any form of academic dishonesty that undermines the evaluation process, also undermines the integrity of the University's degrees. The University will take all appropriate measures to promote academic integrity and deal appropriately with scholastic offences.

Scholastic Offences include, but are not limited to, the following examples:

- Plagiarism - the "act or an instance of copying or stealing another's words or ideas and attributing them as one's own." (Excerpted from Black's Law Dictionary, West Group, 1999, 7th ed., p. 1170). This concept applies with equal force to all academic work, including theses, assignments or projects of any kind, comprehensive examinations, laboratory reports, diagrams, and computer projects. Detailed information is available from instructors, Graduate Chairs, or the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. Students also may consult style manuals held in the University's libraries. See
- <http://www.lib.uwo.ca/services/styleguides.html>
- Cheating on an examination or falsifying material subject to academic evaluation.
- Submitting false or fraudulent research, assignments or credentials; or falsifying records, transcripts or other academic documents.
- Submitting a false medical or other such certificate under false pretences.
- Improperly obtaining, through theft, bribery, collusion or otherwise, an examination paper prior to the date and time for writing such an examination.
- Unauthorized possession of an examination paper, however obtained, prior to the date and time for writing such an examination, unless the student reports the matter to the instructor, the relevant program, or the Registrar as soon as possible after receiving the paper in question.
- Impersonating a candidate at an examination or availing oneself of the results of such an impersonation.
- Intentionally interfering in any way with any person's scholastic work.
- Submitting for credit in any course or program of study, without the knowledge and *written* approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit previously has been obtained or is being sought in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere.
- Aiding or abetting any such offence.

Evidence of wrongdoing may result in criminal prosecution in addition to any proceedings within the University.

For more information please consult the Academic Handbook, Appeals, Scholastic Discipline for Graduate Students: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf