Kant’s *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, published one year after the beginning of the French Revolution, is an axial text for understanding the politics of modern culture -- the primary source of a concept of the *autonomy of art* which results either (as some contemporary critics argue) in a politically disabling *aesthetic ideology*, or (as other critics argue) in a critically enabling *aesthetic negativity*. *The Third Critique* is also a central text in debates from the late 18th century about the methodological basis of science and anthropology. In this course, we will examine this text in its various contexts -- philosophic, aesthetic, scientific, and political -- as well as read work by some of its most important contemporary critics (such as Arendt, Adorno, Derrida, Heller, Eagleton, Jameson, and others).
requirements

Both graduate students and undergraduates are required to prepare and present two* in-class ‘thesis papers,’ or ‘responses,’ to a reading assignment. The thesis paper or response, which should take no more than 20 minutes (and which may take much less time), should examine some particular passage, concept, consequence, or implication of the week’s reading, and has the function of initiating and focussing that week’s class discussion. If you write a thesis paper, you should restrict yourself to 1-2 pages, and pass copies out to seminar participants. If you do a ‘response,’ you may or may not pass out an outline. I am available during my office hours to help you prepare your response.

*note: If you wish, you may replace one of the thesis papers/responses with an informal reflection on the applicability of some aspect of Kant’s Critique of Judgment to your own experience. Since these sorts of insights can’t be planned, simply let me know sometime before class begins that you’re interested in presenting something on whatever it is which interests you.

In addition to the thesis paper/responses, graduate students are required to write a ten-page paper on some aspect of Kant’s aesthetics relevant to their own interests.

course text (at stanford bookstore)


schedule of readings

Oct. 2 Introduction
Oct. 9 Critique of the Power of Judgment, Second Introduction; CPJ, §1-9
Oct. 16 CPJ, §10-22
Oct. 23 CPJ, §23-29
Oct. 30 CPJ, §30-45
Nov. 6 CPJ, §46-54
Nov. 13 CPJ, §55-60
Nov. 20 CPJ, §61-78
Nov. 27 no class -- Thanksgiving (CPJ, §79-86)
Dec. 4 CPJ, §87-end