

An Aesthetics for the End

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Course Description

Whether we're talking about climate change, genocide, nuclear war, or millenarianism, there tends to be an assumption that the end of the world is something extraordinary - a leap out of the everyday we currently inhabit. This is followed by the claim that we have no language or genre by which to express this end and must invent. Yet these assumptions are contestable. When we look more closely at our current forms of life, we find an aesthetics of the end embedded within them. It is through our discourses, gestures, affects, even silences, by which we enact various ends and cuts in ordinary life. But the central knot of envisioning the end as such is that of course it cannot be experienced, making these ordinary endings suffused with denial and elaborate claims of infinity, melancholia over the limits of knowledge, extensions of perception and exertions of prophesying. This seminar will explore the tension between the assumption that the end must be extraordinary and that the end cannot be fully experienced. In our exploration we will look at signs, traces, and aesthetic forms of the end present in the ordinary and our ecologies.

Week One: The Extraordinary and The Ordinary

Day 1: Immanuel Kant, Book II, "Analytic of the Sublime" *Critique of Judgment*
(Hackett 1987, 97-140, 43pp)

Ludwig Wittgenstein "Lectures on Aesthetics" *Lectures & Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief* (University of California Press 1967, 1-41, 40pp)

Ludwig Wittgenstein "Lecture on Ethics" *Lecture on Ethics* (Wiley Blackwell 2014, 42-51, 9pp)

Day 2: Stanley Cavell, "Declining Decline: Wittgenstein as a Philosopher of Culture" *This New Yet Unapproachable America* (University of Chicago Press 1989, 29-77, 48pp)

Andrew Brandel and Sandra Laugier "For an Ordinary Aesthetics" *Open Philosophy* 6(1), 2023:1-11 (11pp)

Eli Friedlander "Meaning Schematics in Cavell's Kantian Reading of Wittgenstein" in *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 65(256-2), 2011: 183-199 (17pp)

Week Two: World contra Earth

Day 1: Martin Heidegger “The Worldhood of the World” *Being and Time* (Harper Perennial 2008, 91-149, 58pp)

Nigel Clark “The Earth in Physical and Social Thought,” “Ways to Make a World” *Inhuman Nature* (Sage 2011, 1-54, 53pp)

Day 2: Bhrigupati Singh “How Concepts Make the World Look Different” *The Ground Between: Anthropologists Engage Philosophy* (Duke 2014, 159-187, 28pp)

Elizabeth Povinelli “The Whole Earth & The Conquered Earth” *Between Gaia and Ground: Four Axioms of Existence and the Ancestral Catastrophe of Late Liberalism* (Duke 2021, 63-83, 20pp)

Week Three: Sensing Crisis

Day 1: Larisa Jašarević *Beekeeping in the End Times* (Indiana University Press 2021)

Day 2: Adriana Petryna *Horizon Work: At the Edges of Knowledge in an Age of Runaway Climate Change* (Princeton 2022)

Week Four: Previous Ends and Aftermaths

Day 1: Alexei Yurchak “Late Socialism,” “Hegemony of Forms,” “Ideology Inside Out,” “Conclusion” *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More* (Princeton 2005, 1-125, 282-298, 140pp)

Day 2: Stefania Pandolfo “Loss: The Sphere of the Moon” *Impasse of the Angels: Scenes from a Moroccan Space of Memory* (University of Chicago 1997: 165-310, 145pp)

Week Five: Previous Ends and Aftermaths II

Day 1: Christina Sharpe *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Duke 2016)

Day 2: Jonathan Lear *Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation* (Harvard 2006)

Week Six: The Impossible Experience of the End

Day 1: Cora Diamond “The Difficulty of Reality and the Difficulty of Philosophy” *Partial Answers* 1(2), 2003: 1-26 (25pp)

Day 2: Jonathan Lear *Imagining the End: Mourning and Ethical Life* (Harvard 2022)

William Connolly “The Theorist and the Seer” *A World of Becoming* (Duke 2011, 148-175, 27pp)