

HISTORY OF AESTHETICS: THE SUBLIME



Giorgio de Chirico, "The Enigma of a Day" (1914)

The sublime is an aesthetic category commonly associated with objects that are awe-inspiring. It is characterized as a complex aesthetic experience that includes both discomfiting and satisfying elements—fear, pain, and pleasure. Examples of the sublime vary in the history of aesthetics: from the sublimity of the suffering tragic hero in Antiquity to vast and powerful objects in nature in the 18th century. The aesthetic experience of sublimity is not only associated with the object but also with inner states (fear, terror) and dispositions of the subject (one's inner freedom as moral beings capable of rising above our self-interested nature). In this course, we will study the inception of this aesthetic category in Antiquity, its later developments in the 18th century, and finally its reception in post-modern and contemporary aesthetic discussions.

Instructor: Prof. Lara Ostaric (lostaric@temple.edu)

Required Texts (available through bookstore):

Clewis, Robert R. (ed.), *The Sublime Reader*, London/NY: Bloomsbury, 2019.
Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Recommended Reading:

Susan M. Shell and Richard Velkley (eds.), *Kant's Observations and Remarks: A Critical Guide*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
Timothy M. Costelloe (ed.), *Sublime: From Antiquity to the Present*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

(1) Paper(s) (60%):

2 papers each approx. 3000 words long, using only the readings for the course

(2) 10 1-page response papers (25)%:

Your 1-page papers should consist of a short exposition and an evaluation of the author's main ideas. The papers are always on the readings for the upcoming class.

(3) Attendance and Participation (15%):

You are expected to come to class regularly, on time, prepared and ready for discussion. Attendance is mandatory. If you cannot attend for some legitimate reason (e.g. illness, family emergency) you must notify me in advance. Excuses after the fact will not be accepted. You can have up to two unexcused absences. Each additional unexcused absence will negatively affect your participation grade and your final grade.

Attendance Policy:

I will be taking attendance at each class. Students who must be absent from a class should inform me by email prior to the class that they will miss. More than 2 unexcused absences will negatively affect your participation grade. I reserve the right to fail any student with excessive absences (more than 4 absences). Late arrival or early departure will count as half an absence unless excused before the beginning of class.

Academic Honesty:

All students are expected to be familiar with Temple University's policies on academic honesty. For reference, see the "Temple University Student Code of Conduct" at <http://policies.temple.edu> (policy number 03.70.02)

Academic Rights and Responsibilities Policy:

Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom. The University has adopted the policy on Student and Faculty Academic Rights and Responsibilities posted at <http://policies.temple.edu> (policy number 03.70.02)

Incomplete Policy:

I follow the incomplete policy of the College of Liberal Arts. It is stated at <http://www.temple.edu/cla/Advising/Faculty/incomplete.asp>
Incompletes are granted only in documented cases of interfering circumstances beyond the student's control (such as illness, disability or family emergency). Incomplete contracts should be completed and signed preferably by the last day of classes.

Disability Statement:

This course is open to all students who meet the academic requirement for participation. Any student who has a need for special accommodation because of a disability should contact me to discuss the specific situation as soon as possible. I will work with Disability Resources and Services (215-204-1280; 100 Ritter Annex) to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Please register with Disability Resources and Services *in advance*, if you have a relapsing/remitting disability and there is a possibility it may interfere with your work this semester.

Schedule of Readings

I ANCIENT

Week 1 08/28 Longinus, *On Sublimity*
 08/30 Longinus, *On Sublimity*

II MODERN

Week 2 09/04 Giambattista Vico, "On the Heroic Mind"

- 09/06 Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry*
- Week 3 09/11 Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry*
09/13 Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry*
- Week 4 09/18 Kant, *Observations*: 46-75
09/20 Kant, *Observations*: 76-116
- Week 5 09/25 Shaftesbury: *Characteristics*, vol. 1, “A Letter Concerning Enthusiasm”
09/27 Shaftesbury: *Characteristics*, vol. 1, Part II, sec. 2 (from “Soliloquy”) and vol. 2, Part III, sec. 2 (from “The Moralist”)
- Week 6 10/02 Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*
10/04 Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*
- Week 7 10/09 Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*
10/12 Kant, *Anthropology*
- Week 8 10/16 Schiller, “On the Sublime (Toward the Further Development of Some Kantian Ideas)”

III LATE MODERN

- 10/18 Wordsworth, “The Sublime and the Beautiful”
- Week 9 10/23 Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*
10/25 Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*
- Week 10 10/30 Hegel, “Symbolism of the Sublime”
11/01 Hegel, “Symbolism of the Sublime”
- Week 11 11/06 Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*
11/08 Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*
- Week 12 11/13 Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*
11/15 Nietzsche, “The Birth of Tragic Thought”
- Week 13 11/20 FALL BREAK
11/22 THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

IV CONTEMPORARY

- Week 14 11/27 Lyotard, *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime*
11/29 Lyotard, *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime*

Week 15

12/04 Lyotard, *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime*

12/06 Danto, "Beauty and Sublimity"