COURSE DETAIL

ENVIRONMENTAL AESTHETICS
Country Denmark
Host Institution University of Copenhagen
Program(s) University of Copenhagen
UCEAP Course Level Upper Division
UCEAP Subject Area(s) Environmental Studies Art History
UCEAP Course Number 127
UCEAP Course Suffix
UCEAP Official Title ENVIRONMENTAL AESTHETICS
UCEAP Transcript Title ENVRNMNT AESTHETICS
UCEAP Quarter Units 12.00
UCEAP Semester Units 8.00

Course Description

This course examines the primacy of aesthetics in comprehending and responding to environmental crises by considering the role of the arts in addressing environmental disasters; whether the aesthetic appreciation of nature should be grounded in scientific understanding; and the aesthetic dimensions of climate change, wastelands, wetlands, and wilderness. Attending the connection between historical conditions and philosophical notions, the course explores the emergence of environmental aesthetics within the European philosophical tradition of the mid-eighteenth century, concurrent with the first industrial revolution and rise of capitalism. It reviews classical and contemporary texts (from Immanuel Kant and Alexander Baumgarten to Peter Sloterdijk, Sianne Ngai, and Yuriko Saito), and introduces key categories: the beautiful, sublime and picturesque; landscape, scenery, environment; atmosphere, climate; Nature, the Anthropocene–and its critical alternatives. Deploying these concepts, the course analyzes contemporary works of art and literature grounded in awareness of ecological conditions quite different from older traditions (e.g. of landscape painting and nature poetry), examining the work of artists such as Olafur Eliasson and his former students, and science fiction writers from Mary Shelley to Kim Stanley Robinson. Finally, this course derives an important lesson from the history of aesthetics and its engagement with the environs: the aesthetic pertains as much to the background as to foreground of attention; to ambient conditions of everyday life as to works of art and unique sites. Thus, the course moves in the direction of a revaluation of our modes of life, with particular attention to our homely environmental aesthetics: the banal, quotidian, routine, and habitual aspects of our lives, homes, and streets. This is the arena in which the impact of environmental crises–and efforts to remediate them–is felt most acutely: in our patterns of consumption of energy and materials, how we dress, do chores, feed ourselves, transport, and communicate. Through these intimate investigations, the course considers how contemporary ideas of the environment call for a rethinking of aesthetics, as well as aesthetic approaches to environmental remediation.

Language(s) of Instruction

English

Host Institution Course Number
HLVK13002U

Host Institution Course Title
ENVIRONMENTAL AESTHETICS

Host Institution Course Details
https://kurser.ku.dk/course/HLVK13002U

Host Institution Campus

Host Institution Faculty
Humanities

Host Institution Degree
Bachelor

Host Institution Department
Arts and Cultural Studies

Course Last Reviewed
2023-2024

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