

SM5337: AESTHETICS BEYOND THE ANTHROPOCENE

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Aesthetics Beyond the Anthropocene

Subject Code

SM - School of Creative Media

Course Number

5337

Academic Unit

School of Creative Media (SM)

College/School

School of Creative Media (SM)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

P5, P6 - Postgraduate Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course aims to provide students with foundational knowledge of contemporary theories on art and the Anthropocene. Emphasis will be placed on reading closely and critically a number of key texts, understanding their historical contexts and discursive positions, and connecting theoretical insights to actual experiences, local and planetary. Students will be guided to develop analytical and argumentative skills through reading and writing. We will also study recent exhibitions to understand how theories are integrated in the curatorial process. By the end of the course, students should have a firm grasp of the contemporary theoretical landscape, be able to articulate a set of concepts and ideas, and possess the skills to work actively with theory in their projects.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Describe the most significant issues and concepts in contemporary theories of ecological humanities		x	x	
2	Describe key theoretical and methodological concepts in the field of ecological art practice		x	x	
3	Conduct critical analyses of theoretical issues in writing		x	x	x
4	Integrate theoretical ideas in curatorial projects		x	x	x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs		Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Lectures, discussions	Students will learn key concepts, theories, and approaches	1, 2, 3	
2	Response papers	Students will write short papers summarizing key ideas in readings	1, 2, 3	
3	Research paper and presentation	Students will conduct a substantial research project leading to a paper and presentation	4	

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

ATs		CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("-" for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Response paper 1	1, 2, 3	15	-	Yes
2	Response paper 2	1, 2, 3	15	-	Yes

3	Response paper 3	1, 2, 3	15	-	Yes
4	Research paper and presentation	4	55	-	Yes

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Minimum Continuous Assessment Passing Requirement (%)

0

Minimum Examination Passing Requirement (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

Response Paper (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Students should demonstrate ability to utilize primary and secondary sources, and to construct a well-organized argument and analysis. The threshold of 'discovery' lied in a student's self initiatives to conduct additional research and to personalize theories for her/his personal experience.

Excellent

- (A+, A, A-) - Excellent grasp of research material, able to explain key concepts, assumptions and debates
- Rigorous organization, coherent structure, distinct thesis, properly argued with strong narrative
 - Insightful interpretation of the subject matter with distinct themes and thesis
 - Critical analysis with insightful comments opening up new issues, or suggesting the ability to theorize
 - Ability to approach a text or a theme using a variety of theories and analytical tools
 - Strong bibliography suggesting breadth and depth of coverage and informed insights

Good

- (B+, B, B-) - Firm grasp of materials, able to explain key concepts and assumptions
- Reasonable organization, balanced structure, adequate content, sufficient ability to integrate various resources based on demand
 - Clear ideas which keep to the point, clear-cut subject, ability to interpret opinions independently
 - Organized bibliography which can be utilized in accordance with the topic

Fair

- (C+, C, C-) - Comprehensive grasp of materials, able to explain key concepts
- Fair organization, weak structure, adequate content, fair ability to integrate various resources based on demand
 - Relevant points to the subject matter, fair ability to interpret opinions
 - Unorganized bibliography which can be utilized in accordance with the topic

Marginal

- (D) - Loose grasp of materials, cannot explain key concepts
- Poor organization and structure, weak content, limited use of resources
 - Relevant points to the subject matter, marginal ability to interpret opinions
 - Insufficient and/or unorganized bibliography

Failure

- (F) - Poor grasp of materials
- No organization and structure, inadequate content, no/ irrelevant use of resources

- Irrelevant points to the subject matter, minimal ability to interpret opinions
 - Irrelevant bibliography
-

Assessment Task

Presentation (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

This assessment will grade on content and fluency of presentation. Students should show their co-operation to conduct a well-organized presentation with their own argument and evidence from readings and practice. The threshold of 'discovery' lies in a student's self initiatives to conduct additional research and to personalize theories and practical strategies.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) - Rich, informative content, excellent grasp of the material with in-depth and extensive knowledge of the subject matter

- Rigorous organization, coherent structure, and systematic exposition with a strong sense of narrative
- Superior presentation skills: distinct pronunciation, fluent expression and appropriate diction, exact time-management
- Critical analysis with insightful comments opening up new issues, or suggesting the ability to theorize

Good

(B+, B, B-) - Adequate content with firm grasp of the material that informs the audience on a subject matter

- Reasonable organization, balanced structure and composition
- Good verbal communication: comprehensible pronunciation, fluent expression and diction, fair time-management

Fair

(C+, C, C-) - Adequate content with comprehensive grasp of the material demonstrating basic knowledge of the subject matter

- Fair organization, weak structure and composition
- Fair presentation skills: acceptable pronunciation, expression and diction, fair time-management

Marginal

(D) - Weak content, loose grasp of the general ideas with some knowledge of the subject matter

- Poor organization, structure and composition
- Poor presentation skills: marginal pronunciation, expression and diction, poor time-management

Failure

(F) - Inadequate content, fail to identify the general ideas with knowledge of the subject matter

- No organization, structure or/and composition
 - Poor presentation skills: marginal pronunciation, expression and diction, minimal time-management
-

Assessment Task

Research Paper (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Students should demonstrate ability to apply knowledge and skills to undertake independent research, build up argument and analysis. The threshold of 'discovery' lies in a student's proactively turning theory into praxis, to transform course material into self-owned authorship.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) - Excellent grasp of materials, ability to explain key concepts, assumptions, and debates, demonstrating sound knowledge of the field

- Rich content, exceptional ability to integrate various resources into primary and secondary levels based on demand
- Design and conduct research which is firmly built on thorough knowledge of existing theoretical frameworks

- Evaluative judgments about existing research and demonstrate application of strong critical thinking skills
- Strong ability to approach a text or a theme using a variety of theories and analytical tools
- Strong organization of research findings with effective organization and procedural clarity at the same time demonstrating the importance of the process
- Insightful suggestion of how the research findings may lead to future research
- Creative extrapolation from theory into plausible praxis

Good

- (B+, B, B-) - Firm grasp of materials, ability to explain key concepts and assumptions
- Adequate content, strong ability to integrate various resources into primary and secondary levels based on demand
 - Design and conduct research which is built on thorough knowledge of existing theoretical frameworks
 - Appropriate judgments about existing research and demonstrate application of critical thinking skills
 - Ability to approach a text or a theme using a variety of theories and analytical tools

Fair

- (C+, C, C-) - Comprehensive grasp of materials, able to explain key concepts
- Adequate content, fair ability to integrate various resources into primary and secondary levels based on demand
 - Design and conduct research which is built on knowledge of theoretical frameworks
 - Appropriate judgments about existing research
 - Weak ability to approach a text or a theme using a variety of theories and analytical tools

Marginal

- (D) - Loose grasp of materials, cannot explain key concepts
- Weak content, with primary and secondary levels
 - Design and conduct research which is appropriate for the research objective
 - Marginal judgments about existing research
 - Poor ability to approach a text or a theme using a variety of theories and analytical tools

Failure

- (F) - Poor grasp of materials
- Inadequate content, without primary and secondary levels
 - Fail to design and conduct research which is appropriate for the research objective
 - Fail to make reasonable judgments about existing research
 - Fail to approach a text or a theme using a variety of theories and analytical tools

Assessment Task

Response Paper (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Students should demonstrate ability to utilize primary and secondary sources, and to construct a well-organized argument and analysis. The threshold of 'discovery' lied in a student's self initiatives to conduct additional research and to personalize theories for her/his personal experience.

Excellent

- (A+, A, A-) - Excellent grasp of research material, able to explain key concepts, assumptions and debates
- Rigorous organization, coherent structure, distinct thesis, properly argued with strong narrative
 - Insightful interpretation of the subject matter with distinct themes and thesis
 - Critical analysis with insightful comments opening up new issues, or suggesting the ability to theorize
 - Ability to approach a text or a theme using a variety of theories and analytical tools
 - Strong bibliography suggesting breadth and depth of coverage and informed insights

Good

- (B+, B) - Firm grasp of materials, able to explain key concepts and assumptions

- Reasonable organization, balanced structure, adequate content, sufficient ability to integrate various resources based on demand
- Clear ideas which keep to the point, clear-cut subject, ability to interpret opinions independently
- Organized bibliography which can be utilized in accordance with the topic

Marginal

- (B-, C+, C) - Comprehensive grasp of materials, able to explain key concepts
- Fair organization, weak structure, adequate content, fair ability to integrate various resources based on demand
 - Relevant points to the subject matter, fair ability to interpret opinions
 - Unorganized bibliography which can be utilized in accordance with the topic

Failure

- (F) - Poor grasp of materials
- No organization and structure, inadequate content, no/ irrelevant use of resources
 - Irrelevant points to the subject matter, minimal ability to interpret opinions
 - Irrelevant bibliography
-

Assessment Task

Presentation (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

This assessment will grade on content and fluency of presentation. Students should show their co-operation to conduct a well-organized presentation with their own argument and evidence from readings and practice. The threshold of 'discovery' lied in a student's self initiatives to conduct additional research and to personalize theories and practical strategies.

Excellent

- (A+, A, A-) - Rich, informative content, excellent grasp of the material with in-depth and extensive knowledge of the subject matter
- Rigorous organization, coherent structure, and systematic exposition with a strong sense of narrative
 - Superior presentation skills: distinct pronunciation, fluent expression and appropriate diction, exact time-management
 - Critical analysis with insightful comments opening up new issues, or suggesting the ability to theorize

Good

- (B+, B) - Adequate content with firm grasp of the material that informs the audience on a subject matter
- Reasonable organization, balanced structure and composition
 - Good verbal communication: comprehensible pronunciation, fluent expression and diction, fair time- management

Marginal

- (B-, C+, C) - Adequate content with comprehensive grasp of the material demonstrating basic knowledge of the subject matter
- Fair organization, weak structure and composition
 - Fair presentation skills: acceptable pronunciation, expression and diction, fair time-management

Failure

- (F) - Inadequate content, fail to identify the general ideas with knowledge of the subject matter
- No organization, structure or/and composition
 - Poor presentation skills: marginal pronunciation, expression and diction, minimal time-management
-

Assessment Task

Research Paper (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Students should demonstrate ability to apply knowledge and skills to undertake independent research, build up argument and analysis. The threshold of 'discovery' lies in a student's proactively turning theory into praxis, to transform course material into self-owned authorship.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) - Excellent grasp of materials, ability to explain key concepts, assumptions, and debates, demonstrating sound knowledge of the field

- Rich content, exceptional ability to integrate various resources into primary and secondary levels based on demand
- Design and conduct research which is firmly built on thorough knowledge of existing theoretical frameworks
- Evaluative judgments about existing research and demonstrate application of strong critical thinking skills
- Strong ability to approach a text or a theme using a variety of theories and analytical tools
- Strong organization of research findings with effective organization and procedural clarity at the same time demonstrating the importance of the process
- Insightful suggestion of how the research findings may lead to future research
- Creative extrapolation from theory into plausible praxis

Good

(B+, B) - Firm grasp of materials, ability to explain key concepts and assumptions

- Adequate content, strong ability to integrate various resources into primary and secondary levels based on demand
- Design and conduct research which is built on thorough knowledge of existing theoretical frameworks
- Appropriate judgments about existing research and demonstrate application of critical thinking skills
- Ability to approach a text or a theme using a variety of theories and analytical tools

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) - Comprehensive grasp of materials, able to explain key concepts

- Adequate content, fair ability to integrate various resources into primary and secondary levels based on demand
- Design and conduct research which is built on knowledge of theoretical frameworks
- Appropriate judgments about existing research
- Weak ability to approach a text or a theme using a variety of theories and analytical tools

Failure

(F) - Poor grasp of materials

- Inadequate content, without primary and secondary levels
- Fail to design and conduct research which is appropriate for the research objective
- Fail to make reasonable judgments about existing research
- Fail to approach a text or a theme using a variety of theories and analytical tools

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

Anthropocene, climate emergency, ecological wisdom, posthumanism, new materialism, Daoism, ecoaesthetics

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). AR5 Synthesis Report: Climate Change 2014.
2	Ames, R. and Hall D. Dao De Jing: A Philosophical Translation. New York: Ballantine Books, 2003.
3	Haraway, D. Staying with the Trouble. Durham: Duke University Press, 2016.
4	Morton, T. Humankind: Solidarity with Nonhuman People. London: Verso, 2017.
5	Tsing, A., Swanson, H., Gan, E., and Bubandt, N, eds. Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017.

Additional Readings

Title	
1	Kimmerer R. W. Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Milkweed, 2014.
2	Coccia, E. The Life of Plants: A Metaphysics of Mixture. Cambridge: Polity, 2019.