

PS 284: Judgment, Pluralism, and Democracy

Fall 2022, Bard College

Professor: Dr. Nicholas Dunn (ndunn@bard.edu)

Day/Time: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 3:30 – 4:50 PM

Location: Olin 102

Course description: The central topic of this course is judgment—both its nature as a faculty of the human mind and its political potential. The idea that judgment is an inherently political capacity is most prominently articulated by Hannah Arendt, who draws her inspiration from Kant's third *Critique*. Thus we will begin by looking at Kant's theory of aesthetic judgment, focusing on its notion of intersubjective validity. We will also read some of his more explicitly political writings, as well as portions of his ethics, anthropology, and philosophy of history. This will set the stage for the reception of Kantian and post-Kantian (Fichte; Schiller) political theory in the 20th century. We will then turn to the most well-known Kantian approaches (Habermas; Rawls), focusing on debates about deliberation, public reason, value pluralism, consensus, and reasonability. After this, we will look at Arendt's political use of Kant's theory of aesthetic judgment as an alternative to those which are explicitly grounded in his moral philosophy, along with other of her writings dealing with questions of truth, culture, freedom, and action. In what remains, we will discuss contemporary defenders and critics of the judgment paradigm (Ferrara; Azmanova). In particular, we will focus on a cluster of issues and problems that arise in this context, such as: the relationship between morality and politics, the problem of adjudication and normative validity, and the role of the imagination, feelings/emotions, and examples.

Guiding questions

What is the relevance of aesthetics for politics? Can aesthetic judgments serve as a model for political judgment? Do political claims admit of a unique kind of rationality or normativity validity? What place, if any, does ethics have here? What about truth? How do the affective and imaginative dimensions of human experience shape one's political perspectives? What are the implications of all this for how we conceive of political discourse and debate? What does the judgment paradigm have to offer contemporary pluralist and democratic societies, especially ones characterized by increasingly deep disagreement?

Learning Outcomes (Course Objectives)

This course aims has two main pedagogical aims: (i) to introduce students to some important historical and contemporary texts in political thought, and to familiarize them with some key concepts, problems, and debates in political theory, and for them to learn (ii) to explain, analyze, and evaluate how different theoretical frameworks bear on current political problems.

Required Texts

You will be required to purchase two texts for this course, both of which can be acquired as e-books (click on the hyperlink).¹

- Arendt, [Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy](#) (University of Chicago Press, 1992)
- Schiller, [On the Aesthetic Education of Man](#) (Penguin, 2016)

All other readings will be made available electronically.

Assessment

Your evaluation in this course will be based on the following:

Engagement and Participation (50%)

You will be required to submit a 'Question for Consideration' for each class. These are due by 11:59 PM the night before the relevant class. See specific instructions on the format, including a rubric, for more details. You are also expected to regularly attend and participate in live classroom discussions.

Paper (50%)

This will be an argumentative, thesis-driven essay on an issue from the course material. It will be completed in parts, with due dates staggered over the final half of the course. You will first write a short exposition of a relevant text from one of the major theoretical frameworks we consider. Then, you will produce an introductory paragraph and an outline of the rest of the paper. Prior to submitting the final version, you will submit a first version and give feedback on others' first versions.

Exposition (minimum 1,200 words, due 11/18 at 11:59 PM): 10%

Introductory paragraph and detailed outline (minimum 1 page, due 12/02 at 11:59 PM): 7.5%

Peer Review (1st version due 12/16 at 11:59 PM; reviews due 12/18 at 5 PM): 7.5%

Final version (5,000 words, due 12/23 at 11:59 PM): 25%

¹ Some texts that would be worth purchasing, but which you are not required to purchase:

- Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge University Press, 2000)
- Immanuel Kant, *Political Writings*, ed. H.S. Reiss (Cambridge University Press, 1991)
- Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought* (Viking Press, 1968)
- Ronald Beiner and Jennifer Nedelsky, eds., *Judgment, Imagination, and Politics* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2001)

Schedule

30 August – Introduction: Alternative Facts & Post-Truth Politics

- Zerilli, "Fact-Checking and Truth-Telling in an Age of Alternative Facts," *Le foucauldien* 6:1 (2020): 2-22.

1 September – Kant: Judgment in general

- *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781/1787)
 - o Transcendental Doctrine of the Power of Judgment (A131/B169-A136/B175) (p. 267-270)
- *Critique of the Power of Judgment* [CPJ] (1790)
 - o 'First Introduction,' §2-5, 8, 11b-12 (p. 8-20, 24-28, 42-51); 'Preface' (p. 55-58); 'Introduction,' §4 & 7 (p. 66-68, 75-78)

6 September – Kant: Aesthetic Judgment

- *CPJ*: §1-22 (p. 89-124)

8 September – Kant: Aesthetic Judgment (continued)

- *CPJ*: §30-40 (p. 160-176)

13 September – Kant: thinking for oneself, thinking as a citizen of the world

- 'What is Enlightenment?' (1784) (p. 54-60)
- *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (1798)
 - o §1-2, 40-44, 59b, 67 (p. 15-18, 90-95, 123-124, 136-139)
- 'Theory and Practice' (1793)
 - o Introduction; §2 (p. 61-63, 73-86)

15 September – Kant: ethics & politics

- *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785)
 - o Part II - 4:411-441 (p. 23-48)
- *Metaphysics of Morals* (1797)
 - o Preface & Introduction; Introduction to the Doctrine of Right - 6:205-242 (p. 365-397)

20 September – Fichte, Recognition of the other

- o Introduction, *Foundations of National Right* [FNR], p. 3-17

22 September – Fichte, Separation of Virtue and Right

- Deduction of the Concept of Right [FNR], p. 18-52

27 September – Fichte, Doctrine of Right

- Deduction of the Applicability of the Concept of Right [FNR], p. 79-84
- Doctrine of Right [FNR], p. 85-108

29 September – Fichte, Conscience

- *System of Ethics*, IV:147-177 (p. 139-168)

4 October – Schiller

- Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*
 - Letters 1-4, 8-9, 11-15, 19-23, 26-27

6 October – Schiller

- Samantha Matherne & Nick Riggle, "Schiller on Freedom and Aesthetic Value" (parts I & II), *The British Journal of Aesthetics* (2020): 1-28 & 1-24

11 October – Fall Break [No Class]

13 October – HAC Conference [No Class]

18 October – Habermas

- Jürgen Habermas, "Three Normative Models of Democracy," in *The Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory* (p. 239-252)
- --, "Popular Sovereignty as Procedure," in *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy* (p. 463-490)

20 October – Rawls

- John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (1993)
 - 'The Burdens of Judgment' & 'Reasonable Comprehensive Doctrines' (p. 54-65)
 - 'Overlapping Consensus' (p. 133-154)
 - 'The Idea of Public Reason Revisited' (p. 440-466)

25 October – the Habermas/Rawls debate

- Habermas, “Reconciliation through the Public Use of Reason: Remarks on John Rawls’s *Political Liberalism*,” in *Inclusion* (p. 49-74)
 - o optional: Habermas, “‘Reasonable’ versus ‘True,’ or the Morality of Worldviews,” in *Inclusion* (p. 75-101)
- Rawls, “Reply to Habermas,” in *PL* (p. 372-395; 421-434)

27 October – N.D. away [No Class]

1 November – Arendt, Kant Lectures

- *Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy* (p. 3-51)

3 November – Arendt, Kant Lectures

- *Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy* (p. 51-77)

8 November – Arendt, other

- “The Crisis in Culture: Its Social and Its Political Significance” (part II) in *Between Past and Future* (p. 211-226)
- *The Human Condition*: Prologue (p. 1-6), ch. I.1 (p. 7-11), ch. II.7 (p. 50-58), ch. V.24 (p. 175-181)

10 November – Arendt, other

- “Truth and Politics,” in *BPF* (p. 227-264)
- “Some Questions of Moral Philosophy,” in *Responsibility & Judgment* (p. 137-146)
- “Introduction into Politics,” in *The Promise of Politics* (p. 93-108)

15 November – Communicative action

- Habermas, “Hannah Arendt’s Communications Concept of Power,” *Social Research* 44:1 (1977): 211-229.
- Margaret Canovan, “A Case of Distorted Communication: A Note on Habermas and Arendt,” *Political Theory* 11:1 (1983): 105-116.
 - o optional: Peter Verovšek, “A Case of Communicative Learning?: Rereading Habermas’s Philosophical Project through an Arendtian Lens,” *Polity* 51:3 (2019): 597-627.

17 November – Adjudication/Consensus

- Linda Zerilli, “We Feel Our Freedom: Imagination and Judgment in the Thought of Hannah Arendt,” *Political Theory* 33:2 (2005): 158-188.
- Nicholas Dunn, “Plurality and the Potential for Agreement: Arendt, Kant, and the ‘Way of Thinking’ of the World Citizen,” *Constellations* (2019): 1-14.

22 November – Agonism

- Chantal Mouffe, “What is Agonistic Politics?” in *Agonistics: Thinking the World Politically* (p. 1-18)
- --, “Deliberative Democracy or Agonistic Pluralism?”
 - o optional: Dana Villa, “Beyond Good and Evil: Arendt, Nietzsche, and the Aestheticization of Political Action” & “Postmodernism and the Public Sphere”

24 November – Amoralism

- Seyla Benhabib, “Judgment and the Moral Foundations of Politics in Hannah Arendt’s Thought,” in Beiner & Nedelsky (p. 183-204)
- George Kateb, “The Judgment of Arendt,” in Beiner & Nedelsky (p. 121-138)

29 November – Feeling & Affective Normativity

- Arata Hamawaki, “Kant on Beauty and the Normative Force of Feeling,” *Philosophical Topics* 34:1/2 (2006): 107-144.
- Keren Gorodeisky & Eric Marcus, “Aesthetic Rationality,” *Journal of Philosophy* 115:3 (2018): 113-140.

1 December – Imagination & the Enlarged Mentality

- Iris Marion Young, “Asymmetrical Reciprocity: On Moral Respect, Wonder, and Enlarged Thought,” in Beiner & Nedelsky (p. 205-228)
- Arendt, “Imagination,” in *LKPP* (p. 79-85)

6 December – Examples & Exemplarity

- Alessandro Ferraro, *The Force of the Example*, Introduction, chs. 1-2 (p. 1-61)

8 December – the Other & others

- no reading

13 December – Re-cap: the judgment paradigm

- no reading

15 December – Essay workshop

- no reading