This class meets with another GER-E 371.
We live our lives making judgments about what is beautiful and what is ugly, not to mention what is disgusting, cute, interesting, ... Yet we don't often stop to think where such judgments come from, what they may be founded on, or what their force is. What do we really mean when we call a painting, a face, a move in basketball, a mathematical proof "beautiful"? Are we reporting some inner feeling? Do we expect something of others? Is it perhaps a disguised moral judgment? And are those instances beautiful in the same way? The goal of this class is to help us think more deeply about the aesthetic dimension of human existence. Since beauty is difficult to get a handle on, many thinkers and artists have explored the beautiful by approaching it from the opposite end, from what is not beautiful. We will do both in this class. We will try to make sense of what pleases us, but we will also try to understand why what horrifies or disgusts us holds such a powerful grip on us. Theoretical texts from Plato to the present, literary works, visual art, theater, and film will help orient us.

All readings and discussion in English. No knowledge of German expected.
Class may be taken for Intensive Writing credit with the permission of the instructor.

Books:
Classical Literary Criticism (Penguin; 978-0140446517).
Franz Kafka, The Metamorphosis, In The Penal Colony, and Other Stories (Touchstone, 978-0684800707).
Friedrich Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings (Cambridge UP, 978-0521639873).
Plato, Two Comic Dialogues: Ion/Hippias Major (Hackett; 978-0915145775).