

Philosophy of Emotions

Course packet

Instructor: John Davenport
Fall 2005

Phlu 3412

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7. Robert Solomon, "The Myth of the Passions," ch.3 of *The Passions* .
8. Richard Wollheim, *On the Emotions*, ch.2: "As the Emotion Forms"
9. Craig Delancey, *Passionate Engines*, chs. 2-3 (pp.3-47)
10. Thomas Nagel, "Sexual Perversion," from *Mortal Questions*
11. Kierkegaard, selections from "The Seducer's Diary," *Either/Or* vol.I.
12. Neil Delaney, "Romantic Love and Loving Commitment," APQ 33 no.4 (Oct. 1996).
13. Martha Nussbaum, "Constructing Love, Desire, and Care"
14. *Recommended:* Keith Lehrer, "Love and Autonomy" in *Love Analyzed*, ed. Lamb.
15. Jon Elster, *Ulysses Unbound*, ch.1: "How and Why People Bind Themselves"
16. Jon Elster, *Strong Feelings*, chs.2, 4.1, and 4.2
17. Gabrielle Taylor, "Deadly Vices?" in *How Should One Live*, ed. Crisp.
18. **MICHAEL STOCKER, "HOW EMOTIONS REVEAL VALUE AND HELP CURE THE SCHIZOPHRENIA OF ETHICAL THEORIES," IN *HOW SHOULD ONE LIVE*, ED. CRISP.**
19. ***RECOMMENDED:* KAREN JONES, "TRUST AS AN AFFECTIVE ATTITUDE."**
20. Gabrielle Taylor, "Integrity," ch.5 of *Pride, Shame, and Guilt*
21. Sabini and Silver, "Sincerity," in *Emotion, Character, and Responsibility* .
22. Helms on Rational Control.
23. Robert Gordon on "Pivotal Distinctions" among emotions.

Philosophy of Emotions (PHLU 3412)

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Office Hours: Fridays 1-3 and by appointment; most Wednesdays I'm at Rose Hill for meetings, and most Tuesdays I'm home (check email or the signup sheet on my door for switches in office hours).

Course Goals: This course concerns the basic structure of emotions and the range of human motivation, how emotions are related to character and action, and how they are involved in the development of a distinct "self." Starting from Sartre's theory that emotions involve rational judgment, we'll trace developments and critiques of this thesis in contemporary philosophy. Our focus will be on the social nature of various emotions, and connections between emotions and moral assessment. Overall, the course has three main goals: (1) to survey main developments in the philosophy of the emotions since 1950; (2) to link themes in this area with broader discussions about desire, will, character, virtue, and the formation of the self; (3) to explore areas of special interest to the students. Although the course emphasizes recent developments in philosophical analyses of emotion, it will also be valuable for students in psychology, and any student interested in the way that human reason shapes and is shaped by our emotional experience. The course presupposes no background beyond the freshman and sophomore philosophy core courses.

Topics include:

- basic states like fear, irritation, and sexual attraction and their difference from more complex states like empathy, romantic love, hatred, pride, envy, shame, remorse;
- 'reactive attitudes' as complex emotions involving moral judgments;
- whether 'emotions' form a genus of psychic states with a similar cognitive and motivational structure, or whether there are fundamentally different kinds of states among 'emotions;'
- what role emotions play in the cares and commitments that define our identity;
- how emotion and desire are related to concepts like "character" and "virtue";
- how the traditional opposition of reason and emotion has been overturned;
- philosophical critiques of several classical and psychological models of emotion and feeling;
- the peculiar ways in which human agents work to alter their own emotions and also to deceive themselves about their emotions (including paradoxes arising from these complications).

Requirements:

The Oral Report: Constructive critical engagement with others' views and clear presentation of one's own is just as important as sensitive reading of the texts. To this end, every student will present one of the assigned readings to the class in an oral report by analyzing its argument, pointing out problems it may have, and starting class discussion of the issues it raises. Your report should be a typewritten presentation of about 2-3 pages to hand in; it should take about 10-15 minutes to read. The report can be in bullet point form, or a narrative that you simply read. If you would like to make a handout for the class to help in delivering your report, you can email it to me for photocopying two days before presentation, or bring 30 copies to class.

Class Participation: This grade depends on the quality of your questions and contributions in class, and 50% on attendance. More than two unexcused absences will lower your class participation grade significantly. Please be there and be prepared. The quality of our discussion depends on your doing the reading *before* the class in which we are discussing the relevant chapter or article.

Test: Your knowledge of the readings will be evaluated in a take-home test in November, which will cover most of our semester's material. Attending to class discussion will help a lot here, since test questions will emphasize the material we focus on during class.

Papers: There will be a short 6 page paper early in the semester and a longer 8-10 page paper on a topic of your choice in the philosophy of emotions due near the end. The second paper will involve more choice of topic, and can also involve relevant examples from literature or film.

Texts: Jon Elster, *Alchemies of the Mind* (Cambridge University Press, 1999)
Amélie O. Rorty, *Explaining Emotions* (University of California Press, 1980)
Robert Roberts, *Emotions: An Essay in Aid of Moral Psychology* (Cambridge U. Press, 2003)
Course packet required for all the other course readings.

Grading System

1st essay:	18%	
2nd essay:	28%	This breakdown of course components is a basic guide
November test:	24%	for you, but there will also be a certain amount of
Oral presentation.	15%	leeway in assigning the final grade. Due credit will
Class participation	15%	be given for improvement as the semester progresses.

Honesty and Citation: (this text was written for the freshman & sophomore core classes, but I'll include it anyway): I take the issue of academic honesty very seriously; cheating is the one unforgivable sin in my class. Handing in work you did in another class without clearing it with me is cheating. Handing in work written in whole or part by anyone else, or copying from any secondary source, *without citing it* constitutes plagiarism. Copying from an uncited Internet webpage constitutes plagiarism, even if the wording has been significantly changed. You are welcome to bring in ideas and quotes from secondary sources, but you must cite them either by footnotes, or parenthetical references in the main text referring to a bibliography at the end of the paper. Even if you acknowledge an internet site, for example, you can't just lift large sections of its text wholesale: only take short quotations, clearly indicated as such in your paper. Every quote should be explained and have a clear purpose in your argument.

—This includes paraphrases: even if you reword what the author said, cite the page number.

—It also includes websites: give the full URL of the page you cite. Note that webpages should *never* be the only source you cite in college essays.

—Every semester I fail someone for academic dishonesty. Don't let it be you. Be fair to other students, and to yourself, by honoring the values of academic honesty..

Absences: More than one unexcused absence will significantly lower your class participation grade. More than four absences can put that component of your grade into negative numbers.

Tentative Schedule

9/1: Introduction: Emotion vs Reason

- (1) Theories of emotion in psychology: an historical sketch.
- (2) Discussion of the James-Lange model; see handout on the opponent-process theory.
- (3) Discussion of Jean-Paul Sartre: "The Emotions: Outline of a Theory" (course packet)

9/5: Labor Day: No classes: class on Wednesday instead!

9/7-8: Sartre and Solomon: Emotions as Judgments rather than Mere Feelings

- (1) Sartre continued.
- (2) Robert Solomon, "Emotions and Choice," ch.10 of Rorty, *Explaining Emotions*.
- (3) Robert Solomon, "The Myth of the Passions," ch.3 of *The Passions* (course packet).

9/12-15: Test Cases: Jealousy, Compassion, and Pride

- (1) Jerome Neu, "Jealous Thoughts," ch.18 of Rorty, *Explaining Emotions*.
- (2) Lawrence Blum, "Compassion," ch.21 of Rorty, *Explaining Emotions*.
- (3) Gabrielle Taylor, "Pride," ch.16 of *Explaining Emotions*.

9/19-22: Affectivist Responses: Wollheim's neo-Freudian theory and Delancey's 'Affect Program Theory'

- (1) Richard Wollheim, *On the Emotions*, ch.2: "As the Emotion Forms" (course packet)
- (2) Craig Delancey, *Passionate Engines*, chs. 2-3 (pp.3-47) (course packet)

9/26-29: De Sousa's Mixed Model

- (1) Delancey continued
- (2) Ronald de Sousa, "The Rationality of Emotions," ch.5 of *Explaining Emotions*.

10/3-6: Sexual Attraction, Romantic Emotion, and perversions thereof. [Happy Rosh Hashanah]

- (1) Thomas Nagel, "Sexual Perversion" (course packet)
- (2) Kierkegaard on boredom on romanticism: selections from "The Seducer's Diary" in *Either/Or* vol.1 (course packet): especially pp.411-45.
- (3) First essay due.

10/10: No classes: Columbus Day.

10/13: Love -- romantic and pure

- (1) Neil Delaney, "Romantic Love and Loving Commitment" (course packet).
- (2) Martha Nussbaum, "Constructing Love, Desire, and Care" (course packet)
- (3) *Recommended*: Keith Lehrer, "Love and Autonomy" (course packet).

10/17-20: Elster on Self-Binding

- (1) Discussion of love continued.
- (2) Jon Elster, *Ulysses Unbound*, ch.1: "How and Why People Bind Themselves" (course packet)

10/24-27: Elster on Emotions and Culture

- (1) Jon Elster, *Strong Feelings*, chs.2, 4.1, and 4.2 (course packet)
- (2) Begin Elster, *Alchemies of the Mind*, ch.2-4 (pp.139-327)

10/31-11/3: Elster on Social Emotions

- (1) Continue Elster, *Alchemies of the Mind*, ch.2-4.

11/7-10: Morality and Emotions

- (1) Amélie O. Rorty, "Agent Regret," ch.XX of Rorty, *Explaining Emotions*
- (2) Gabrielle Taylor, "Deadly Vices?" in *How Should One Live*, ed. Crisp (course packet).
- (3) Michael Stocker, "How Emotions Reveal Value and Help Cure the Schizophrenia of Ethical Theories," in *How Should One Live*, ed. Crisp (course packet)
- (4) *Recommended*: Karen Jones on Trust (course packet)

11/14-17: Sincerity and Integrity

- (1) Gabrielle Taylor, "Integrity," ch.5 of *Pride, Shame, and Guilt* (course packet)
- (2) Sabini and Silver, "Sincerity," in *Emotion, Character, and Responsibility* (course packet).
- (3) *Recommended*: Richard Wollheim, "On Persons and Their Lives," ch.12 in *Explaining Emotions*.

11/21: Sincerity and Integrity continued [possible conflict with AAR conference]

- (1) Discussion of sincerity and integrity continued.
- (2) Take-home test due.

11/24: Happy Thanksgiving!

11/28-12/1: A more comprehensive theory: Robert Roberts's analysis of emotions

- (1) Roberts, *Emotions: An Essay in Aid of Moral Psychology*, chs. 2-3 (pp.60-263).

12/5-8: Roberts on emotions, character, and virtue.

- (1) Roberts, *Emotions*, ch.4 (pp.264-312).

12/12: Conclusion

- (1) Roberts continued.
- (2) *Final essay due!*

Other theoretical readings on ERES

- (1) Bennett Helm on Rational Control.
- (2) Robert Gordon on "Pivotal Distinctions" among emotions.
- (3) Sabini and Silver, "Emotions, Responsibility, and Character."

Opponent-process theory

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

This article is about a theory of emotion and motivation. There is also a color theory called opponent process.

Opponent-process theory is a psychological model proposed by Richard Solomon in 1980 to account for addictive behavior. It asserts that emotions are paired, and that when one emotion in a pair is experienced, the other is suppressed. The theory has its origins in a study Solomon conducted along with J.D. Corbit in 1974, in which the researchers analyzed the emotions of skydivers. It was found that beginners have greater levels of fear than more experienced skydivers, but less pleasure upon landing. In the opponent process model, this is the result of a shift over time from fear to pleasure in the fear-pleasure emotion pair.

According to opponent-process theory, drug addiction is the result of an emotional pairing of pleasure and the emotional symptoms associated with withdrawal. Initially, there are high levels of pleasure and low levels of withdrawal. Over time, however, as the levels of pleasure from using the drug decrease, the levels of withdrawal symptoms from *not* taking the drug increase, thus providing motivation to use the drug despite a lack of pleasure from it.