

Emotion and Cognition: Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives (PHIL 360b)

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Office hours: DC: T 1:30-3pm
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Classroom: WHL 203
Class time: T TH 11:35am-12:50pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION

How we act and react is often based on emotions such as hope and fear, affection and hate, anger and pride. While we can perhaps imagine some wholly rational beings who do not experience the world in these ways, experiencing emotion seems to be a basic part of the human condition. In some cases, emotions can be disabling as when people suffer from irrational phobias, incapacitating anxiety, or clinical depression.

But what are emotions? Can they be modified by reason? How are they connected with experience and action? How are they related to mood? Can there be a general theory of the emotions? Why are they so important for our interactions with other people and situations we encounter in lives? Is there one unified theory of the emotions?

These issues have been studied by philosophers from the time of the Greeks but also, more recently by psychologists and neuroscientists. In this Seminar, the aims will be:

- to introduce philosophical accounts that address these questions and to consider the strengths and weaknesses of different accounts.
- to introduce some related discussions of these topics from the perspective of other academic disciplines, such as psychology and neuroscience.
- to address these issues in a synthetic way, considering how the differing approaches to be studied can be complementary.

INTENDED AUDIENCE AND PREREQUISITES

A previous course in philosophy (or equivalent) is a prerequisite to take the course. Although this is a course in philosophy, we shall consider emotions from varied perspectives, and we hope to attract students interested in related fields such as psychology, psychiatry, and neuroscience.

We aim to have a seminar-style discussion, which is why this course caps out at 25 students. We hope that all interested students meeting the requirements are able to take it, but priority will be given to philosophy majors in their upper years, followed by philosophy majors in their lower years, and then to non-philosophy students in their upper years whose interests closely align with the topic of the course (as judged by the instructors). If these criteria do not sufficiently narrow the list of students, the remaining spaces will be determined by lot.

Auditors will be allowed only if the number of students taking the course for credit falls below 25. (This does not apply to philosophy graduate students).

Finally, we are committed to ensuring that the class is accessible to all students. If you have a disability that requires special accommodations, please get in touch with the instructors so we can discuss ways to ensure that you can get the most out of the class.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Assignment	Final grade %
Short paper (<2K words)	25%
Abstract of Final Paper (<1K words)	10%
Final Paper (<4K words)	35%
In-Class Presentation	15%
Participation (including activities)	15%

Late penalty: 3% of the assignment grade will be deducted for each day of lateness. Extensions require a dean's excuse.

Expectations

Students enrolled in the course should bear in mind the following points:

1. The reading will not be extensive; on average, you will be asked to read around 50 pages per week, divided into two 25-page assignments. This is to give you time to read (and re-read!) texts that are difficult. Throughout the semester, we will provide you with guidance about how particular reading assignments should be approached.
2. Regular participation in class discussions is crucial to engaging fully with the material. Our goal is to establish a seminar environment in which all of you feel comfortable asking questions, expressing opinions, making observations, pointing out connections, and thinking about issues that excite you intellectually and matter to you personally. Your job is to come to class prepared, interested, and ready to engage.

3. Throughout the semester, individuals and groups of students will be asked to give (informal) class presentations. Sometimes these will involve presenting readings that only part of the class has done. Sometimes they will involve reconstructing an argument, or comparing two views, or defending a position in a debate. The exact details of these presentations will depend on the interests and composition of the seminar.
4. You will be asked to submit a short essay and a long essay in which you address a freely-chosen topic at somewhat greater length. For the final essay, we also request a long draft, which will enable us to provide you with feedback on your ideas in advance of submitting the paper. Detailed instructions concerning these assignments will be distributed during the semester. It goes without saying that academic integrity is of the utmost importance in completing these assignments. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion at: <http://www.yale.edu/bass/writing/sources/plagiarism/index.html>

READINGS (All readings will be available through canvas.)

Week 1: Introduction and Plato	1/15: Introduction 1/17: Plato, <i>Republic</i> (selections)
Week 2: Aristotle	1/22: Aristotle, <i>De Anima</i> (selections) 1/24: Aristotle, <i>Rhetoric</i> (selections).
Week 3: Stoics and their Critics	1/29: Stoics, <i>Hellenistic Philosophers</i> (selections from Long and Sedley) 1/31: Posidonius's criticisms (selections)
Week 4: The Development of the Cognitive Theory 1	2/5: Mediaeval Cognitivism? Adam Wodeham and Aquinas (selections) 2/7: Descartes, <i>Passions of the Soul</i>
Week 5: The Development of the Cognitive Theory 2	2/12: Sartre, <i>Sketch of a Theory of Emotions</i> (selections) 2/14: DeSousa, R. <i>The Rationality of Emotion</i> (selections)
Week 6: The Development of the Cognitive Theory 3	2/19: Beck, A. T. <i>Cognitive Therapy and the Emotional Disorder</i> (selections) [First paper due] 2/21: Clark, D.M. "A Cognitive Approach to Panic"

Week 7: The Development of the Cognitive Theory 4 2/26: Wolheim, R., *On the Emotions* (selections)
2/28: Solomon, R., *In Defense of Sentimentality* (selections)

Week 8: The Development of Cognitive Theory 5 3/5: Teasdale and Barnard, *Affect, Cognition and Change* (selections)
3/7: Goldie, P., *The Emotions* (selections)

-----**Spring Recess Mar 8-24**-----

Week 9: Problems for Cognitive Theory 1 3/26: Segal, Williams, and Teasdale, *Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy for Depression*
3/28: Szabó Gendler, T., “Alief and Belief”

Week 10: Emotion and Action 4/2: Hursthouse, R., “Arational Actions”
Döring, S., “Explaining Action by Emotion” **[Abstract of Final Paper due]**
4/4: Szabó Gendler, T., “Alief in Action (and Reaction)”

Week 11: Problems for Cognitive Theory 2 4/9: Damasio, A. R., *Descartes’ Error* (selections)
4/11: Alanen, L. “The Metaphysics of Affects and the Unbearable Reality of Confusion”

Week 12: Alternatives 4/16: Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (selections)
4/18: James, W. “The Physical Basis of Emotion”

Week 13: Alternatives 2 4/23: *DSM* and *RDoc*: extracts from a contemporary debate about the classification of disorder.
4/25: Damasio, A.R., *The Feeling of What Happens* (selections)