

The Emotions—Philosophical and Psychoanalytic Perspectives

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Syllabus

The Emotions seem to have aspects of a variety of other types of mental states: they seem to disclose objective aspects of the world just as beliefs do. They seem to be motivating just as desires are. They seem to have a felt aspect just as perceptions do. And they seem to essentially involve the body, just as pains and itches do. Emotions are thus very much like Descartes's pineal gland: the function where mind and body most closely and mysteriously interact. A topic of study in the Ancient, Medieval and Early Modern traditions, the emotions have been neglected in much of the twentieth century by philosophers of mind and cognitive scientists alike—perhaps because of the sheer variety of phenomena covered by the word “emotion” and perhaps precisely because of the resistance of the phenomena to disciplinary classification. In recent years, however, emotions have become the focus of vigorous interest in philosophy, as well as in cognitive science. In this course we will examine the nature of the emotions from three perspectives: Philosophical, Psychological-Psychoanalytic, and Natural Scientific. The following question will serve as our guide in this investigation: are these perspective does the capacity to feel and freedom stand in necessary opposition? We will thereby not only gain preliminary insights into the nature of the emotions, but also an understanding of the power and limitations of these perspectives in the study of the emotions in particular, and the human being in general.

Texts: where links to online sources of the readings are not provided, copies of the readings will be posted on the chalk site.

Requirements, Grading:

1. Attend, participate. 20%
2. A final seminar paper of ~10-15 pages. Topics to be submitted for instructor approval by instructor by beginning of week 9, at the latest. You are encouraged to schedule a meeting to discuss the paper. 50%
3. Each seminar meeting, we will have at least one student presentation. Presentations will last for 30min. The presentations should be centered on the topic for the day. The presenter may wish, for example, to explore the background for the reading assigned, delve into the topic in greater depth, attend to a closely related problem, etc. The presenter will post a short paper up to 48 hours before the class meeting on chalk. The class presentation can thus be a brief introduction of the paper, with an aim to maximize discussion. 30%

Class 1, Introduction.

Seminar Part I. Philosophical Perspectives

Class 2. Aristotle

- *Nicomachean Ethics* Book I.13, Book II, Book VII.11-14, Book X. 1-5
- *Rhetoric* Book I.10, Book II.1-2, II.5
- *On the Soul* Book I.1 (from 403a2 to end of chapter at 403b19).
- Optional Secondary: “Being Properly Affected: Virtues and Feelings in Aristotle's Ethics.” By: L. A. Kosman. Posted on chalk.

Class 3. Stoics, emotions as false judgments, a failure of Rationality.

- Selections from Early Stoics (Arius 88-89); (On Chalk)
- Seneca, *De Ira* in John M. Cooper and J. F. Procopé (eds.), *Seneca: Moral and Political Essays*. Sections “On The Horrors of Anger” “What Counts as Anger” “Is Anger Natural?” “Can Anger Be Useful, or Controlled?” “Is Anger Voluntary?”
- Epictetus: *The Discourses*, Book I. 5, 8, 27, 28, 29. Book II.3, 13, Book 4. 1. (less than 30 pages total)
- Secondary Optional: Cooper, J.M., 2005, ‘The Emotional Life of the Wise,’ in *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 43 (Supplement): 176–218.

Class 4. The Early Moderns, Descartes

- Descartes, Selections from, *The Passions of the Soul*, “Of the Passions in General, and Incidentally of the Whole Nature of Man”: Articles I, XVII, XVIII, XIX, XXII, XXV, XXVI, XXVII, XXVIII, XXIX, XXXIV, XXXV, XXXVI, XXXIX, XL, XLV, XLVI, XLVII, “Of the Number and Order of the Passions and an Exposition of the Six Primitive Passions” Articles LI, LII, LXIX, LXXIV, LXXIX, LXXX, LXXXVI, XCI, XCII, XCIII

Class 5. The Early Moderns, Spinoza

- Spinoza, selections from *Ethics*,
 - Part III—On the Origin and Nature of the Emotions: Preface, P1-15, P56-59. “General Definition of the Emotions”
 - Part IV—On Human Servitude, or, on the Strength of the Emotions. Preface, P 38-58
 - Part V—On the Power of the Understanding, or of Human Freedom. Preface, P1-10

Seminar part II. Psychological-Psychoanalytic Perspectives

Class 6. James and Lange.

- William James, “What is an Emotion?” (1884) electronic copy at <http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/James/emotion.htm>
- Optional Secondary:
 - Differentiating individual emotions: The Two-Component Theory of Emotion. Stanley Schachter, and Jerome E. Singer, “Cognitive, Social, and Physiological Determinants of Emotional State” electronic copy at: http://faculty.uncfsu.edu/tvancantfort/Syllabi/Grsearch/Readings/A_Schachter1.pdf
 - Accounting for emotions' various ties to rationality: Taylor, Gabriele, 1975. “Justifying the Emotions,” *Mind*, 84: 390–402.

Class 7. Psychoanalysis

- Sigmund Freud,
 - “The Unconscious”, from *Papers on Metapsychology* (1915b), Section I. Justification for the Concept of the Unconscious, Section III. Unconscious Feelings. Online source: <http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=se.014.0159a#p0159>
 - Freud, S. (1915a). Repression. In *Standard edition* (Vol. 14, pp. 143–158).
 - “Fear and Anxiety” from *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*. (1916-1917) <http://www.bartleby.com/283/25.html>.
 - Freud. two principles of mental functioning, http://www.sas.upenn.edu/~cavitch/pdf-library/Freud_Two_Principles.pdf
 - Optional: Selections from *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*, 1926.

Class 8. Sartre

- Sartre, readings from *The Emotions: A Sketch of a Theory* (Critique of James-Lange and psychoanalytic theory)

Class 9. Melanie Klein

- Love, Guilt, and Reparation (Chalk)
- Envy and Gratitude (Chalk)

Class 10. Conclusion. Focus and Readings TBD with class consultation.

Options include:

- Contemporary philosophers on the ethical significance of the emotions: Selections from Nussbaum, de Sousa, Amélie Rorty. Charles Taylor.
- Solomon
- Phenomenological Perspectives: Brentano, Scheler, Heidegger.
- Neuroscientific Perspectives in conversation with Philosophy:
 - Antonio Damasio.
 - "Biological Regulation and Survival" and "Emotions and Feelings." In *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason and the Human Brain*. New York: HarperCollins, 1994. (114-164).
 - Secondary Optional: from Chapter 9 of *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness*, "Feeling Feelings," "The Substrate for Feelings of Emotion," "From Emotion to Conscious Feeling," "What are Feelings For?" (279-290).
- Peter Fonagy, et al. Affect Regulation and Mentalization
 - Fonagy, P.; Gergely, G.; Jurist, E.; Target, M. (2002). *Affect Regulation, Mentalization, and the Development of the Self*. Other Press. Intro, Chapters 1-2.