

Reading Schedule: Philosophy of Emotions

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Class: MW 11am-12:30pm, LA #248 • Office hours: W 2:30-4pm, or by appointment, in JHB #433

Part I: What is an emotion?

- 1 **Sept. 11** **Opening.** *Which characteristics are distinctive of emotions? Our best theory of what emotions are will need to explain these.*

- 2 **Sept. 13** **Emotions as feelings & objects of emotions.** *We consider whether emotions are just feelings and become acquainted with their objects.*
 William James, “What is an Emotion?”
 Handout, “Objects of Emotion”

- 3 **Sept. 18** **Emotions as judgments.** *It seems that emotions are not just feelings, for at least the reason that feelings do not have objects, but emotions do. One way to capture the intentionality of emotions is to consider them as judgments. In this class, we evaluate the judgment theory.*
 Martha Nussbaum, “Emotions as Judgments of Value and Importance”

- 4 **Sept. 20** **Emotions as belief/desire composites.** *One way to avoid (some of) the problems with the judgment theory is to consider emotions as composites of judgments (or beliefs) and desires.*
 Joel Marks, “A Theory of Emotion”

- 5 **Sept. 25** **Against emotions as composites.** *We examine problems for the thesis that emotions are composites.*
 Peter Goldie, *Emotions*, ch. 2

- 6 **Sept. 27** **Feeling towards.** *We reconsider whether feelings might be able to have objects after all.*
 Peter Goldie, *Emotions*, ch. 3

- 7 **Oct. 2** **Emotions as perceptions.** *Perhaps the leading theory of the emotions is the perceptual theory, on which emotions are non-sensory perceptions. In this class, we consider how this theory avoids the problems noted so far with the feeling theory and judgment theory, and we evaluate reasons for believing it.*
Christine Tappolet, “Emotion and Perception”
Optional. Julien Deonna & Fabrice Teroni, “In What Sense are Emotions Evaluations?”, pgs. 21-25
- 8 **Oct. 4** **Emotions as processes.** *We consider whether emotions might not be best thought of as processes, as well as a way to combine the best parts of the feeling theory and judgment theory.*
Jenefer Robinson, “Emotion as Process”
Optional. Jonathan Dancy, “Emotions as Unitary States,” pgs. 80-89
- 9 **Oct. 9** **Thanksgiving.** *No class.*

Part II: Ethics, rationality, and epistemology of emotions

- 10 **Oct. 11** **“Right” emotions #1: justification.** *Emotions can be “right” in several senses: correct, justified, morally good, rational, prudent, what all things considered one ought to feel, authentic, etc. We begin examining these senses in this class, beginning with the question of when an emotion is justified.*
Gabriele Taylor, “Justifying the Emotions”
- 11 **Oct. 16** **“Right” emotions #2: moral status and correctness.** *What is the relationship between the moral status of an emotion and its correctness? In particular, is it ever okay to infer that an emotion is incorrect because it is morally wrong?*
Justin D’Arms and Daniel Jacobson, “The Moralistic Fallacy”

- 12 Oct. 18 **“Right” emotions #3: moral status and correctness.** *Perhaps the most plausible counterexamples to the “moralistic fallacy” concern cases of amusement. In some instances, it seems that amusement would be incorrect because it would be morally wrong. We consider that claim in this class.*
 Berys Gaut, “Just Joking: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Humor”
- 13 Oct. 23 **“Right” emotions #4: rationality.** *When is an emotional rational? In this class, we consider a subtle answer to that question: an emotion is rational if it non-accidentally leads to a rational framing.*
 Karen Jones, “Emotional Rationality as Practical Rationality”
- 14 Oct. 25 **“Right” emotions #5: rationality.** *We continue with the Jones article.*
 Karen Jones, “Emotional Rationality as Practical Rationality”
- 15 Oct. 30 **Recalcitrant emotions #1.** *Sometimes our emotions are recalcitrant: we feel them despite thinking we should not. That seems irrational. In this class, we consider one explanation for why it would be.*
 Michael Brady, “Recalcitrant Emotions and Visual Illusions”
- 16 Nov. 1 **Recalcitrant emotions #2.** *We reconsider whether recalcitrant emotions really are irrational.*
 Sabine Döring, “What’s Wrong with Recalcitrant Emotions?”
- 17 Nov. 13 **Trustworthy emotions #1.** *Can emotions justify beliefs all on their own?*
 Adam Pelsler, “Emotion, Evaluative Perception, and Epistemic Justification”
 Michael Brady, “Emotions, Perceptions, and Reasons,” pgs. 142-148
- 18 Nov. 15 **Trustworthy emotions #2.** *How can we know when to trust our emotions?*
 Michael Lacewing, “Emotional Self-Awareness and Ethical Deliberation”
- 19 Nov. 20 **Peer review.** *See syllabus.*
- 20 Nov. 22 **Time to revise papers.** *No class.*

Part II: Exciting topics

- 21 Nov. 27 **Existential despair.** *Existential despair often causes people to become convinced that all of life is meaningless. Have they been misled, or have they achieved an insight?*
Matthew Ratcliffe, “Evaluating Existential Despair”
- 22 Nov. 29 **Empathy.** *It can seem difficult to empathize with people who do morally atrocious actions. In this class, we consider why, and we rethink whether actually it is so difficult.*
Adam Morton, “Empathy for the Devil”
- 23 Dec. 4 **Authentic emotions.** *Pills can make us feel emotions that we otherwise would not feel. Can those emotions be authentic?*
Felicitas Kraemer, “Authenticity Anyone? The Enhancement of Emotions via Neuro-Psychopharmacology”
- 24 Dec. 6 **Alienated emotions.** *Some jobs require employees to ‘have’ certain emotions. Is that a big deal?*
Talbot Brewer, “On Alienated Emotions”