Philosophy 6930.

Explaining Emotions: **Reconciling philosophical, biological and cultural perspectives.**

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Office hours: 3:30-4:30 M/W or by appointment

This course will investigate human and animal emotions from the perspectives of philosophy, biology and cultural anthropology. Of particular interest are the apparent disagreements among these viewpoints over what an emotion is. Within the biological sciences emotions have traditionally been regarded as non-cognitive, automatic, physiological responses with an ancient evolutionary history. In philosophy and cultural anthropology the emotions have traditionally been viewed as norm-governed judgments that are largely socially constructed. In recent years there has been growing recognition that both of these perspectives offer important insights. However, there is no consensus over how the two frameworks might be reconciled. In this course we will begin by familiarizing ourselves with the two traditional conceptions of emotion. We will then evaluate several recent attempts to bring the two perspectives into alignment. By the end of the course students will be expected to have developed a position on whether the biological and constructivist accounts of emotion can be reconciled and, if so, how.

Evaluation will be based on short weekly position statements and a final paper.

Course outline

Week 1: Discuss course objectives.

Week 2: Emotions in non-human animals.

Required

1. Filippo Aureli and Darlene Smuchney (2000), "The role of emotion in conflict and conflict resolution", in Aureli and DeWall (eds) *Natural Conflict Resolution* (199-224).

2. Beth Dixon (2001) "Animal Emotion", *Ethics & the Environment* 6(2): 22-30

Options

1. Arne Ohman (1986), "Face the beast and fear the face: Animal and social fears as prototypes for evolutionary analysis of emotion", *Psychophysiology*, *23*: 123-145.

2. Sarah Brosnan (2006), "Nonhuman Species' Reactions to Inequity and their Implications for Fairness", *Social Justice Research*, 19 (2): 153-185.

3. Marian Stamp-Dawkins (2000), "Animal minds and animal emotions", American Zoologist, 40: 883–888.

Week 3: Basic emotion theory.

Required

1. Paul Griffiths, *What Emotions Really Are*: Chapter 3, "The psychoevolutionary approach" and Chapter 4, "Affect Programs/emotion modules" (44-100).

2. Paul Ekman (1992), "An argument for basic emotions", *Cognition and Emotion*, 6: 169-200.

Options

1. James A. Russell (1994) "Is There Universal Recognition of Emotion From Facial Expression? A Review of the Cross-Cultural Studies", *Psychological Bulletin*

115 (1): 102-141.

2. Robert Solomon, *Not Passions Slave*, "Back to Basics, on the very idea of basic emotions" (115-142).

3. N.L. Stein and K Oatley, (1992) "Basic emotions: theory and measurement" Cognition and Emotion, 6 (3-4) 161-168.

Week 4: Cognitive theories of emotion.

Required

1. Paul Griffiths, *What Emotions Really Are, "*Chapter 2, "Philosophy and Emotion, the poverty of conceptual analysis" (21-43) & Chapter 5 "The Higher cognitive emotions, some research programs (100-136).

2. Robert Solomon, "Thoughts and Feelings: What is a 'Cognitive Theory" of emotion and does it neglect affectivity?" (178-194).

Week 5: Jamesian (or 'Somatic') accounts of emotion.

Required

1. Robert Solomon, "Getting Angry: The Jamesian theory of Emotion in Anthropology", (76-91).

2. Jesse Prinz, “Are Emotions Feelings?”

Week 6: Social Constructivist theories of emotion

<u>1 Required</u>

1. Paul Griffiths, *What Emotions Really Are,*. “The social construction of emotions”, (137-167).

2. Carl Ratner, (1989) “A Social Constructionist Critique of Naturalistic Theories of Emotion”, *Journal of Mind and Behavior* 10: 211-230

<u>Options</u>

1. A. Hochschild, (1979). Emotion work, feeling rules, and social structures. American Journal of Sociology, 85, 551-575.

2. Hannelore Weber, *(2004)* “Explorations in the Social Construction of Anger*”,* *<u>Motivation and Emotion</u> 28(2): 197-219*

3. Sabini J. Silver M (1998), “The Not Altogether Social Construction of Emotions: A Critique of Harré and Gillett”, *<u>Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour</u>*, 28(3): 223-235.

Week 7: Well deserved break

Week 8: The ‘situated’ perspective on emotion.

<u>Required</u>

1. Robert Solomon, “The politics of Emotion” (143-161).

2. Paul Griffiths and Andreas Scaratino (2005) Emotions in the wild: The situated perspective on emotion”, in *Cambridge Handbook Of Situated Cognition*, Robbins, P and Aydede, M (Eds) (1-28).

(The following weeks involve a critical reading of De Sousa’s influential book, *The Rationality of Emotion*).

Week 9: The Rationality of Emotion

De Sousa, Chapters 1-4 (1-105).

Week 10 Rationality of Emotion (part 2)

De Sousa Chapters 5-7 (107 – 201)

Week 11 Rationality of Emotion (part 3)

De Sousa Chapters 8- 10 (205 – 262)