

Professor Andrew Poe
TTH 10:00-11:20 in 100 Clark House
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Political Science 71

POLITICAL EMOTIONS

-Introduction-

This course explores debates on the place of emotions in democratic politics. While many political theorists once considered political emotions as dangerous (at worst) or unnecessary (at best) to a well-functioning democracy, some have recently sought to challenge this assumption, advocating for a reconceptualization of political emotions as useful and necessary to the formation and practice of central components in democratic politics.

To make sense of this debate, this course investigates the following questions: What are political emotions? Do some emotions help smooth the functioning of democratic politics more than others? What is the role of emotion in the formation of political allegiances? What, if anything, is the relationship between political obligation and feeling? (Between justice and feeling? Between freedom and feeling?) Do we need to understand emotion better in order to conceptualize – and perhaps enact – the functioning of these central democratic processes?

The first half of the course delves into the parameters of ‘political emotions’ as a general conceptual category; engaging arguments on what emotions are and how emotions function provides a framework for the second half of the course, which examines particular emotions as presented in the works of a variety of prominent political theorists.

-Course Requirements-

There are **three** requirements for this course:

1. 8-10 page Mid-Term Paper: Topics will be distributed on March 1st and will cover the first half of the course; papers will be due in class on March 10th - 35%
2. 10-12 page Final Paper: Topics will be distributed on April 26th and will cover the second half of the course; papers will be due to my departmental mailbox by noon on May 10th - 45%
3. Attendance and participation in the course - 20%

Late Papers: Except in documented cases of serious emergency, late papers will receive a 1/3 grade penalty for each calendar day the paper is late.

-Texts-

The following books are available for purchase at Amherst Books:

Spinoza, *The Ethics*
Martha Nussbaum, *Hiding from Humanity*
Plato, *Gorgias*
Seneca, "On Anger"
Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*
Aurel Kolnai, "Disgust"
Bill Miller, *The Anatomy of Disgust*

The remainder of the readings will be available on course e-reserve.

-Schedule and Readings-

Part I: Politics and Emotions

Introduction

January 25th - Placing Emotion in Politics

Rising Emotions

January 27th - Jay Bernstein, "The Very Angry Tea Party"
- Mark Lilla, "The Tea Party Jacobins"
- Obama, "Remarks in Tucson"

February 1st - Rousseau, *Emile: or, On Education* (selections)

The Problem with Political Emotions

February 3rd - Stephen Holmes, *Passions and Constraint: On the Theory of Liberal Democracy* (chapter 1)

February 8th - Michael Walzer, "Passion and Politics"

What exactly are Emotions? (Some Competing Theories)

February 10th - James, "What is an Emotion?"

February 15th - Darwin, *The Expression of Emotion in Man and Animals* (selections)

February 17th - Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions*

Placing Emotion (Historically)

February 22nd - Aristotle, *On Rhetoric* (selections)

February 24th - Freud, "The Unconscious"

Distinguishing Passions and Emotions

March 1st - Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul* (selections)

March 3rd - Hume, "Of Superstition and Enthusiasm"

Also Recommended: Thomas Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions*

On the Purported Dichotomy Between Reason and Emotion

March 8th - Spinoza, "Of Human Bondage, or the Powers of the Affects," from *The Ethics*

March 10th - Sharon Krause, "Recent Alternatives to Rationalism" chapter 2 in *Civil Passions: Moral Sentiment and Democratic Deliberation*

Contemporary Debate – Rethinking Emotions as Political

March 22nd - Cheryl Hall, "Passion and Constraint: The Marginalization of Passion in Liberal Political Theory"

March 24th - Robert Solomon, "The Politics of Emotion," from *Bringing the Passions Back in: The Emotions in Political Philosophy*
-Rebecca Kingston, "The Political Relevance of the Emotions from Descartes to Smith," from *Bringing the Passions Back In*

Part II: On Particular Political Emotions

Shame

March 29th - Martha Nussbaum, *Hiding from Humanity* (selections)

March 31st - Plato, *Gorgias*

Also Recommended: Christina Tarnopolsky, "Prudes, Perverts, and Tyrants: Plato and the Contemporary Politics of Shame," in *Political Theory*, 2004.

Fear

April 5th - Hobbes, *Leviathan* (selections)

April 7th - Arendt, "Ideology and Terror" (excerpted from *The Origins of Totalitarianism*)

April 12th - Heidegger, *Being and Time* (selections)

Anger

April 14th - Seneca, "On Anger"

April 19th - Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals* (selections)

Also Recommended: Max Scheler, *Ressentiment*

Enthusiasm

April 21st - Shaftesbury, "A Letter Concerning Enthusiasm"

April 26th - Kant, "An Old Question Raised Again, 'Is The Human Race Constantly Progressing'"

Disgust

April 28th - Aurel Kolnai, "Disgust"

May 3rd - Bill Miller, *The Anatomy of Disgust* (selections)

Conclusions

May 5th - Defining the Parameters of Political Emotions