

Phil 142: Philosophy of Emotion

UC San Diego, Fall 2023, Dr. Duncan

Instructor

Dr. Emma Duncan
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Office hours: MW 2:00-3:00

or by appointment.

0470 Arts & Humanities Building
(Ridgewalk Academic Complex)

Class time & Location

WLH 2209 MWF 10-10:50a

Course description

Most of us have a lot of experience with emotions. In your lifetime thus far you've likely experienced a wide array of emotions, from simple ones like anger or fear, to more complex ones like pride in yourself for having done the right thing. Despite their ubiquity and importance in our daily lives, emotions can still be a bit mysterious! For example, how is it that we can be mistaken about which emotion we're experiencing when it's *our* emotional experience? What role do emotions play in how we perceive, reason, and behave? What sort of control do we have over our emotional experiences? Are some emotions "good" or "bad"? Are some emotional experiences inappropriate? Does it matter morally if someone cannot experience emotions in typical ways?

In this course, we will investigate these questions (and more) by delving into the nature and normativity of emotions. While our primary focus will be various philosophical theories of emotion, we will also incorporate insights from research in psychology and neuroscience in order to enhance our understanding of what emotions are, how they impact moral deliberation and behavior, and how they help shape and reflect our attitudes towards the world more broadly.

The course material will be *challenging*. Many of the readings will be from professional journals and book volumes intended for graduate students and professors. You *can* do well in this course, but you should be prepared to put forth extra effort. If you need help, please let me know – I want you to succeed in this course!

Learning objectives and outcomes

During this course, you will learn new philosophical concepts and perspectives that will enable you to reflect on the nature and role of emotions in human life in new ways. You will practice interrogating your assumptions about emotional phenomena, evaluating arguments, and reading and writing philosophical texts. And, importantly, we will practice respectful and detailed discussion of philosophical, psychological, and moral topics. By the end of this course, you will be able to describe and evaluate core theories of emotion, and construct and defend your own arguments about how we ought to understand emotions and their significance in our lives.

Required materials: All materials will be downloadable on Canvas.

Assessments

- Lecture attendance: 10%
- Asynchronous quizzes: 15%
- Midterm Essay: 30% (end of week 6)
- Final paper: 45% (finals week)

Grading Scale			
A	93-100	C	73-76
A-	90-92	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	63-66
B-	80-82	D-	60-62
C+	77-79	F	Below

Lecture attendance: 10%

Lectures are an opportunity to ask questions, clarify and fill out complex concepts and ideas, and to give you an idea of how well you're tracking the arguments and ideas presented in the readings and videos. You may miss up to 2 lectures without penalty. Each absence thereafter lowers your attendance grade by 10%.

Asynchronous quizzes: 15%

Recognizing that we all need a little flexibility in our schedules, I have opted to hold one lecture each week *asynchronously*. I will post a lecture video on Canvas each Friday by the normal lecture time, and you will have until **5 pm** each **Sunday** to watch the video and take the associated quiz. There will be 8 quizzes, and I will drop your 3 lowest scores.

No late quizzes are permitted, and there are no make-up opportunities.

Midterm Essay: 30%

The midterm essay will be available in two formats to accommodate different styles and skill sets. The first format will be a traditional essay (4-5 pages, submitted on Canvas). The second format option is a podcast-style presentation (the project will be turned in as an audio or video file on Canvas). It's a bit like writing and presenting a midterm paper in a more conversational but still philosophically rigorous style. Note: you'll also need another participant on the podcast to ask you some questions. Details and prompts will be provided closer to the midterm date, which is tentatively planned for the *end of week 6*.

Final paper: 45%

This essay will be due on Canvas at the beginning of our designated final exam period (listed on UCSD Webreg). You will need to write 8-10 pages making and defending an argument in response to one of the prompts provided. Prompts and detailed instructions will be provided approximately 10 days before the due date.

Late work, make-ups, and extensions

There are no make-ups for missed lectures or quizzes, and no late quizzes will be accepted. To give you some flexibility, your three lowest quiz scores will be dropped, and you are entitled to a one-time 48-hour extension on the midterm. To use your extension, you must email me by noon (12 pm, Pacific Time) on the day the assignment is due. Unfortunately, no extensions or make-ups can be granted for the final essay. Late papers will receive a 10% grade deduction for each day they are late, up to 3 days. Papers submitted later than 3 days after the deadline will not be accepted.

The only exception to the late work and extension policies is for cases of a properly documented medical emergency. This *excludes* things like having to stay late at work, having an urgent personal matter to attend to, etc. so please try to complete assignments early whenever possible in case something unplanned arises. You *must* provide *adequate documentation* of your medical emergency. You must be in contact with me *immediately* with documentation of your medical emergency so appropriate accommodation can be made. If you have a prolonged illness, you must contact me ASAP with documentation. Please do not wait until *after* you've missed several assignments to contact me about medical accommodation! At that point there's not much flexibility to be given.

*Submitting the correct file for an assignment on time is *your responsibility!* Make sure the file you submit is (i) the correct assignment and version, and (ii) a format readable by Canvas (.doc, .docx, .pdf are all safe). I won't chase you down to confirm it's the right/wrong submission.

**When submitting anything to Canvas, including completing quizzes, you should (i) take a screenshot of the submission confirmation message (this is like a receipt) and (ii) click on the file you submitted to confirm it is the correct one. Sometimes there are glitches with Canvas and submissions don't register properly – it is *your responsibility* to make sure quizzes and other assessments are recorded by Canvas when you complete them. Without proof of your submission there's not much I can do.

Information for OSD students

If you are a student approved by OSD for special accommodations, you need to coordinate with me prior to the time when the accommodation is needed. I am happy to provide all necessary accommodations, but since it can take time to do so it is important that you communicate your needs at least a week in advance via the appropriate channels and documentation.

Academic Integrity

I know it can be tempting, especially when you have a heavy course load or a busy personal life but...*Just. Don't. Plagiarize!* This includes collaborating on assessments meant to be completed individually (like quizzes and essays), passing off another author's ideas or words as your own (i.e. not citing work belonging to another), submitting a paper you wrote from another course, or using AI tools, such as ChatGPT, to write your essay. Students are expected to conduct themselves according to UCSD's guidelines for academic integrity:
<https://academicintegrity.ucsd.edu/>.

Schedule of Readings

**Check Canvas regularly for updates as weekly readings are subject to change.

	Monday	Wednesday	Friday (asynch.)
Unit 1: The Nature of Emotions	Wk 1	Welcome & Intro No reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P. Goldie “Emotion” (2007) • <i>Recommended:</i> Scarantino & de Sousa “Emotion” [sec. 1-7] Asynchronous video + quiz
	Wk 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • W. James “From ‘What is an emotion?’” (1884) in Solomon’s “What is an Emotion?” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J. Prinz “Embodied Emotions” (2004) in Solomon’s “Thinking about feeling” Asynchronous video + quiz
	Wk 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R. Solomon “Emotions, Thoughts, and Feelings: Emotions as Engagements with the World” (2004) in Solomon’s “Thinking About Feeling” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P. Goldie “Emotion, Feeling, and Knowledge of the World” (2004) in Solomon’s “Thinking About Feeling” Asynchronous video + quiz
	Wk 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M.C. Nussbaum “Emotions as Judgments of Value and Importance” (2004) in Solomon’s “Thinking About Feeling” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B.W. Helm “Emotions a Evaluative Feelings” (2009) Asynchronous video + quiz
Unit 2: Morality and the Emotions	Wk 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H. Read “A Typology of Empathy and Its Many Moral Forms” (2019) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J. Prinz “Against Empathy” (2011) Asynchronous video + quiz
	Wk 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J. Tangney et al. “Moral Emotions and Moral Behavior” (2007) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L. Damm “Emotions and Moral Agency” (2011) No Class: Veterans Day
	Wk 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J. Kennett “Autism, Empathy and Moral Agency” (2002) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I. Haji “Psychopathy, Ethical Perception, and Moral Culpability” (2010) Asynchronous video + quiz

Unit 3: Class-selected Topic	Wk 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBA 	No Class: Thanksgiving
	Wk 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBA 	Asynchronous video + quiz
	Wk 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBA 	Asynchronous video + quiz