

# Topics: Ancient Theories of Emotion

Winter 2015, Phil 450-01

## Dr. Krisanna Scheiter

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Office Hours: Friday 1-3pm  
and by appointment

Time: MW 3:05-4:45pm

Classroom: Lippman 200

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## Course Description

Emotions play an important role in almost every aspect of our lives. Our relationships with other people are often shaped by how we feel about them. We spend most of our time with those we love or care about. We avoid those we hate, envy, or fear. Emotions influence our beliefs about what is right and wrong. We consult our feelings in order to resolve moral dilemmas. If something “feels” wrong we generally judge it to be immoral. But what are emotions? Are they merely feelings of pleasure and pain or are they also rationally informed judgments? Do our beliefs about the world determine how we feel about the world or is it the other way around? These are the sorts of questions ancient philosophers puzzled over. In this course we will look at how Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoic philosophers define emotions and examine specific individual emotions, such as anger, fear, pity, hate, envy, shame, friendly feelings, and love. All texts will be read in English.

## Required Texts

- Graver, Margaret. *Cicero on the emotions: Tusculan Disputations 3 and 4*. University of Chicago Press, 2002
- Corbett, Edward PJ, W. Rhys Roberts, and Ingram Bywater. *The rhetoric and the poetics of Aristotle*. Trans. Rhys Roberts, 1984.
- Konstan, David. *The emotions of the ancient Greeks: Studies in Aristotle and classical literature*. Vol. 5. University of Toronto Press, 2006.
- *Anger, Mercy, Revenge (The Complete Works of Lucius Annaeus Seneca)*, University Of Chicago Press; Reprint edition, Translated by Nussbaum and Kaster, 2012
- Additional readings will be available on *Nexus*.

## Resources

**Writing Center:** The Writing Center (second floor of Schaffer Library) provides free one-on-one consultation, both by appointment and as available on a walk-in basis. I encourage you to visit the writing center for any and all writing assignments.

<http://www.union.edu/Resources/Academic/writing/index.php>.

**Accommodations:** It is the policy of Union College to make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities. If you have a specific disability that qualifies you for academic accommodations, please bring your accommodation ID card to your instructor's office hours as soon as possible. Your instructor will then discuss with you any necessary special arrangements. No accommodations will be provided to students who do not have an accommodation ID card from the Office of Student Support Services (x8785).

**Assignments**

5% Participation

20% Class Presentations

35% First Short Paper

40% Final Research Paper

**Description of Assignments**

**Participation:** This is a discussion-based course. Active student participation will be a central feature of the learning experience. Class discussion, office hours (in which we discuss class material), and participation in the online forums all count towards your participation grade. In order to ensure successful participation, it is important that you attend to two main tasks:

- **Reading Assignments:** You should complete the assigned reading prior to the class for which they are assigned in order to contribute meaningfully to class discussion. If you have not read philosophy before, you may find the readings difficult at first. Don't give up! As you read try to identify core claims and arguments. Take notes, jotting down questions or critiques.
- **Class Discussion:** You should contribute to class discussions regularly and in a respectful manner, either by asking questions relating to the topic or contributing your own meaningful insights. Discussion will be based on the reading assignments. One way to prepare for class discussions is by trying to answer the study questions at the end of the reading assignments.

**Term Papers:** There are two papers for the course. The first paper is a short paper (2-3 pages) that is on a topic of your choice (to be approved by me). The second paper is a longer paper (12-15 pages) that should be an expansion of your first paper (if it is a new topic it must also be approved by me). I will provide you with a grading guideline and a guide to writing philosophy papers, as well as a description of all the requirements you must meet before turning in the paper.

**Class Presentation:** Each student will give 2 presentations on the reading for class and essentially lead the class discussion. Each presenter must have a one-page handout highlighting the main arguments in the reading. **The handout must be emailed to me 48 hours prior to the presentation day.** I will post the handout on Nexus. In your presentation you should explain the thesis of the passage(s) you are presenting on and explain how the author argues for the thesis.

You should also feel free to focus on specific parts of the reading (you do not have to present on the entire assignment). When presenting on secondary readings you should study the parts of the primary text (from Plato, Aristotle, or the Stoics), which the paper refers to and tell us whether or not you agree with the author's interpretation. Both the handout and the presentation will be graded on organization and clarity as well as content (see rubric).

## Expectations and Classroom Policies

### Attendance

Attendance is mandatory and will be taken at the beginning of every class. You are permitted three unexcused absences (in which you do not have to notify me of your absence). Your grade will be dropped 3% for every unexcused absence after the first three. Excused absences are ones that have been approved by me in advance of the class.

### Email

- Please feel free to email me any time, but allow me 24 hours to respond.
- If you have questions about the class or the assignments please **check the syllabus** first before emailing.
- If you cannot find the information you need on the syllabus, then send me an email.
- If you have any questions about the content of the class or would simply like to discuss some philosophical thoughts of your own do not hesitate to come to my office hours or set up an appointment.

### General Expectations

- Come to class prepared, on time, and with your books.
- Turn off your phone, no texting, no laptops unless absolutely necessary, no newspapers, no talking to one another unless it is part of class discussion, no sleeping.
- You are expected to pay attention and engage respectfully with your classmates.
- If you must use your laptop for note taking, please be aware that you may not use the Internet *for any purpose* during class and you may wish to disable it if you will be otherwise tempted. Failure to abide by this requirement will result in loss of the privilege to use your laptop in class.

### Plagiarism

Students are expected to adhere to the Union College Academic Honor Code, which you can access at: [www.union.edu/academic\\_depts/ethics/union/Honor%20Code.php](http://www.union.edu/academic_depts/ethics/union/Honor%20Code.php)

## TOPICS AND READINGS

### INTRODUCTION

**January 5:** Introduction to ancient Greek philosophy and emotion

### WHAT IS EMOTION?

#### ARISTOTLE

**January 7:** **Required:** Aristotle, *Rhetoric* II.1; David Konstan "Pathos and Passion" (pp. 3-40)

**Recommended:** Robert C. Roberts, "Emotion"; W.W. Fortenbaugh, *Aristotle on Emotion* (Reserved); Simo Knuuttila, *Emotions in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy* (Reserved)

**January 12:** **Required:** Aristotle, *Rhetoric* II.2-12; Selections from *De Anima*, *Nicomachean Ethics*, and *Topics* (Nexus); Price, Anthony W. "Emotions in Plato and Aristotle." *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion* (2009) (Nexus)

**Recommended:** Stephen Leighton, "Aristotle and the Emotions" (Nexus)

**January 14:** **Required:** *De Anima* II.12 and III 1-3; *De Memoria* 1; *Rhetoric* II.5; Scheiter, "Images, Imagination, and Appearances" (Nexus)

**Recommended:** Caston, Victor, "Why Aristotle Needs Imagination" (Nexus)

**January 19:** **Required:** Martha Nussbaum, "Aristotle on Emotions and Rational Persuasion" (Nexus); John Cooper, "An Aristotelian Theory of Emotion" (Nexus)

**Recommended:** Striker, Gisela. "Emotions in Context: Aristotle's Treatment of the Passions in the Rhetoric and his Moral Psychology." *Essays on Aristotle's Rhetoric* (1996): 286-302 (Nexus); Dow, Jamie. "Aristotle's Theory of the Emotions'." *Moral Psychology and Human Action in Aristotle* (2011) (Nexus).

#### PLATO

**January 21:** **Required:** Aristotle, *Rhetoric* I.10-11; Plato *Philebus* 31b-50e and *Republic* IV (Nexus)

**Recommended:** Frede, Dorothea. "Mixed feelings in Aristotle's Rhetoric." *Essays on Aristotle's Rhetoric* (1996): 258-85 (Nexus).

**January 26:** Jessica Moss, "Pictures and Passions in Plato" (Nexus); *Protagoras* 352b-c, *Phaedo* 83b-84a, *Timaeus* 69c (Nexus)

### STOICS

**January 28:** **Required:** A.A. Long & D.N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers* §§39, 53, 57-63 (Nexus); Tad Brennan, "The Old Stoic Theory of Emotion" (Nexus)

**Recommended:** *The Emotions in Hellenistic Philosophy*, edited by J. Sihvola, T. Engberg-Pedersen (Reserved); Richard Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind: From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation* (Reserved); Sorabji, Richard. *Chrysippus—Posidonius—Seneca: A High-Level Debate on Emotion*. Springer Netherlands, 1998; Martha Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Reserved)

**February 2:** **Required:** Margaret Graver, Preface and Introduction to *Cicero on Emotion: Tusculan Disputations* 3 and 4

**Recommended:** Graver, Margaret R. *Stoicism and emotion*. University of Chicago Press, 2008.

**February 4:** **Required:** *Tusculan Disputations* 3

**Recommended:** Graver, Margaret. "Philo of Alexandria and the Origins of the Stoic Προπάθειαι." *Phronesis* (1999): 300-325.

**February 9:** **Required:** *Tusculan Disputations* 4

**Recommended:** Frede, Michael. "The Stoic doctrine of the affections of the soul." Schofield and Striker 1986 (1986): 93-110; Brennan, T. (2005). "The Stoic life: Emotions, duties, and fate"; Lloyd, A. C. (1978). "Emotion and decision in stoic psychology". *The stoics*, 233-246.

### INDIVIDUAL EMOTIONS

#### ANGER, FRIENDLY FEELING, AND HATRED

**February 11:** **Required:** Aristotle *Rhetoric* II.2-3; *Nicomachean Ethics* IV.5 (Nexus); *Topics* 2.7 and 4.5 (Nexus); Konstan, "Anger" (pp. 41-76)

**Recommended:** Giles Pearson, *Aristotle on Desire*; Scheiter, Review of Pearson's *Aristotle on Desire*; Leighton, Stephen. "Aristotle's Account of Anger: Narcissism and Illusions of Self-Sufficiency." *Ratio* 15.1 (2002): 23-45; Stocker, Michael. "The Complex Evaluative World of Aristotle's Angry Man," *Valuing emotions*. Cambridge University Press, 1996.

**February 15:** **Required:** Aristotle *Rhetoric* II. 4; Konstan, "Hatred" (pp. 185-200)

**Recommended:** Konstan, David. "Aristotle on Anger and the Emotions: the Strategies of Status." *Ancient Anger: Perspectives from Homer to Galen* 32 (2003): 99; Christof Rapp, "The Emotional Dimension of Friendship: Notes on Aristotle's Account of 'Philia' in 'Rhetoric' II 4" (Nexus)

**February 18:** **Required:** Seneca, *On Anger (De Ira)* (pp. 3-34)

**February 23:** **Required:** Seneca, *On Anger* (pp. 34-62)

**February 25:** **Required:** Seneca, *On Anger* (pp. 62-96); Katja Vogt, "Anger, Present Injustice, and Future Revenge in Seneca's *De Ira*" (Nexus)

#### FEAR

**March 2:** **Required:** Aristotle, *Rhetoric* II.5; *Nicomachean Ethics* III.6-9 (Nexus)

**Recommended:** Stephen Leighton, "Aristotle's Courageous Passions" (JSTOR); Plato's *Laws* I (Nexus); Susan Sauv  Meyer, "Pleasure, Pain, and 'Anticipation' in Plato's *Laws*, Book I" (GOOGLE)

**March 4:** **Required:** Konstan, "Fear" (pp.129-155)

#### PITY

**March 9:** **Required:** Aristotle, *Rhetoric* II. 8-9; *Poetics*, chs. 6, 9-19 (Nexus); Konstan, "Pity" (pp. 201-218)

**Recommended:** Belfiore, Elizabeth S. *Tragic pleasures: Aristotle on plot and emotion*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton university press, 1992; Konstan, David. "Aristotle on the Tragic Emotions." *The Soul of Tragedy: Essays on Athenian Drama* (2005): 13-25.

SHAME

**March 11:**           **Required:** Aristotle, *Rhetoric* II.6; *Nicomachean Ethics* IV.9 (Nexus); Konstan, "Shame" (pp. 91-110); Jessica Moss, "Shame, Pleasure, and the Divided Soul" (Nexus)

**Recommended:** Bernard Williams, *Shame and Necessity*

**March 13:**           **Wrap Up**

**March 18:**           **Final Paper due by Midnight. Submit through Nexus.**