

Political Theories of the Passions: Judgment, Justice, and Emotion

Political Science 119
Spring 2015

Mondays and Wednesdays, 4-6
Bunche 2209A

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Office hours: Wednesdays, 12-2
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Course Description

What should govern people's political choices, their reason or their passions? Until the recent "affective turn," it was frequently assumed that only reason had a place in the public sphere. Reason alone could be counted on to deliver fair and impartial decisions about shared concerns. Emotions, on the other hand, would only be detrimental to political deliberation, which requires the ability to assume a dispassionate and detached perspective. In spite of that, philosophers and political theorists (to say nothing of artists, musicians, and poets) have long sought to understand and describe the passions, insisting that they are integral to both our private and public lives.

The aim of this course is to examine the place where individual passions and political demands come into contact, and tension, with one another. How do we, as democratic citizens, adjudicate between our personal desires and our public responsibilities? Can we talk "reasonably" about our passions and still reach democratic conclusions? Are some passions more dangerous than others if introduced into the public sphere? What is the relationship between emotions and justice – is it, as Martha Nussbaum has recently argued, possible that passions are a necessary ingredient in the application of justice? Do the passions ultimately improve or pervert our ability to form political judgments?

To consider these questions, we begin the course by developing a theoretical framework, reading recent work in democratic theory on politics and emotions that highlight the tensions but also suggest several possible resolutions. We also explore several of the most influential historical typologies of the passions. In the second part of the course, we consider a series of individual emotions as theorized by a wide range of thinkers from ancient to modern, in order to develop our own understanding of the many possible and complex relationships between emotion, reason, and politics. In the class's third and final part, we address the recent turn in contemporary political theory to the study of affect.

Reading Schedule

All readings need to be completed in advance of that day's meeting. Readings marked with an asterisk (*) will be available on the course site.

Part I: When We Talk About the Passions, What Do We Talk About?

Week 1: What's the Problem with Passion?

Monday, March 30

Michael Walzer, "Passion and Politics," *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 28.6 (2002): 617-633*

optional: W.B. Yeats, "The Second Coming" (1919-1920)*

Wednesday, April 1

Cheryl Hall, "Passions and constraint: The Marginalization of Passion in Liberal Political Theory," *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 28.6 (2002): 727-748*

Week 2: Ancient Typologies of the Passions

Monday, April 6

Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, Book II*

Wednesday, April 8

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I; Book II, sections 1-6; Book III, sections 1-5; Book IX, section 9; Book X, sections 6-9

Week 3: classes cancelled!

Part II: An Anthology of the Passions

Week 4: Anger

Monday, April 20

Seneca, *On Anger*, pp. 3-51*

Wednesday, April 22

Seneca, *On Anger*, pp. 52-96*

Week 5: Sympathy

Monday, April 27

Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, pp. 13-18, 21-30, 73-78, 100-110, 156-161 (top), 258-262 (top), 264-267, 268 (beginning of chapter II)-273

Wednesday, April 29

MIDTERM

Week 6: Compassion and Pity

Monday, May 3

Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*

Wednesday, May 5

Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*, continued

Week 7: Le Ressentiment (Envy and Jealousy)

Monday, May 11

Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, preface, first treatise, and second treatise (pp. 1-66)

Wednesday, May 13

Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, third treatise (pp. 67-119)

Week 8: Happiness

Monday, May 18

Epicurus, *The Art of Happiness*, pp. 81-90, 155-179; 181-183

Wednesday, May 20

Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, pp. 65-69, 74-75 (sections XI-XIII), 86-89

Mill, *Utilitarianism*, pp. 272-298, 314-319, 332-338

Part III: Contemporary Inquiries into the Passions

Week 9: Emotion and Judgment

Monday, May 25

Memorial Day - no class!

Wednesday, May 27

Sharon Krause, *Civil Passions: Moral Sentiment and Democratic Deliberation*, chapter 4, pp. 111-141*

Week 10: From Emotion to Affect

Monday, June 1

Sara Ahmed, "Affective Economies," *Social Text* 22.2 (2004): 117-139*

Wednesday, June 3

Lauren Berlant, "Unfeeling Kerry," *Theory & Event* 8.2 (2005)*

Required Texts - All required texts will be available on reserve at Powell.

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (978-0872204645)

Bentham and Mill, *Utilitarianism and Other Essays* (978-0140432725)

Epicurus, *The Art of Happiness* (978-0143107217)

Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality* (978-0872202832)

Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (978-0143105923)

Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality* (978-0140444391)

Requirements and Grading

Midterm (35%): an in-class midterm

Final exam (45%): a take-home final exam

Quizzes (20%): three or four unscheduled quizzes

There will be no make-up exams for the midterm and no extensions granted for the final exam, except in the case of an emergency. Please plan accordingly! Late exams will lose three points for every day that they are late, including weekends.

Honors Contract

If you are interested in adding an honors contract to this course, you must be in touch with me by the end of week two.

Office Hours

You are welcome to drop by my office hours unannounced! If, however, you'd like to schedule an appointment, please go to mgallagher.youcanbook.me.

Academic Honesty

Integrity is essential to all of the work you do here at UCLA. I take academic honesty very seriously. *Anyone found cheating will automatically fail the related assignment(s). All issues of cheating and plagiarism will be documented and reported to the Dean of Students.* The best way to avoid any trouble is simply to ask me any questions you have about what does and does not constitute plagiarism – it can seem like a very confusing subject, but we can get a handle on it rather easily. Please read the [UCLA Student Guide to Academic Integrity](#) as a primer.

Classroom Decorum

It is to be expected that you will encounter a variety of arguments, opinions, and perspectives over the quarter, a number of which you may disagree with. Polite, reasoned disagreement is welcomed - even encouraged! - but please maintain a respectful tone, particularly when addressing your colleagues.

The Office for Students with Disabilities

If you are registered with the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD), or are considering registering, and you wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact me as soon as possible. No accommodations will be granted for the course without notification from OSD. You can find out more about the OSD and the services they provide at their [website](#).

General Grading Rubric*

A (100-90): demonstrates careful and thorough reading of the text; answers all parts of the question(s); provides a clearly articulated thesis; outlines the way in which thesis will be explicated; defends and supports thesis in the body of the paper using textual evidence; considers counter-arguments, if appropriate; argues, does not summarize; structurally elegant; writing is clear and straightforward. Excellent work.

B (89-80): demonstrates familiarity with the text, though may rely more on lecture and discussion than on own reading, or may demonstrate a cursory reading; provides a solid thesis but may not explain how it will be defended, support it thoroughly with textual references, or develop arguments as fully as they ought to; may make selective use of text to support claims; structurally, individual points may feel disconnected from one another. Writing is clear but with room for improvement. Good, but not excellent, work.

C (79-70): a weak, if appropriate or topical, thesis that either does not require a strong defense or relate entirely to the original question(s); demonstrates minimal passing acquaintance with the material; evidence may be drawn primarily from lecture; substance of paper may tend toward summary of the text rather than critical engagement; does not attend to counter-arguments; individual paragraphs may be well-crafted but the paper overall lacks a sense of cohesion and attention to detail. Fair, but not good, work.

D (69-60): does not provide a clear thesis; may not respond to the question(s); does not support claims with evidence; emphasizes opinion or summary over analysis; paper lacks structure; does not otherwise demonstrate mastery of the concepts presented and analyzed in class; lack of organization makes paper difficult to follow; neglect of grammar, style, and writing.

F (59-0): does not provide a thesis or respond to the question(s); may be purely opinion or summary of text(s); no attempt to convey an interpretation of the material; lacking structure, coherence; no attention paid to grammar, style, and writing.

** Grades will be broken down into, for example, B+/B/B-. This is just intended as a general guide.*