

Emotions (PSY 218) Syllabus

Justin Dainer-Best

Fall 2021

Course Number	Time	Location	Online Office Hours
PSY 218	M/W, 10:20-11:40	Olin 203	Th, 10:00-11:30

Make an appointment to come to my office hours.

Pre-requisites: Introduction to Psychological Science.

This course fulfills the psychology major's Cluster A requirement.

Overview

This course explores the psychological process and experience of emotion. Emotions influence what we pay attention to, what we remember, and how we behave. In this course we will discuss current psychological understanding of emotional processing; as well as theories of emotion including evolutionary accounts, categorical theories, and dimensional approaches. We will learn about the neural and physiological processes underlying emotions as well as the psychological processes that affect emotional perception, expression, and regulation. We will also cover how the dysregulation of emotions can result in psychopathology. Readings will include fiction and nonfiction accounts, empirical and review articles, and case studies.

The course is discussion-based; you will be “getting your hands dirty” with research, discussions of theories and case studies, and debates. You should come to class having read the reading for that day and prepared to ask questions and interrogate it.

This course will sometimes discuss topics that are sensitive or personal for many students. If something discussed in class leaves you feeling upset, please speak to a trusted person about your experience. Further, if you find that you are struggling to cope with some of the topics discussed in class, you may contact Bard Counseling Services, and make an appointment; you may also email counselingservice@bard.edu or call 845-758-7433.

Land Acknowledgment

In the spirit of truth and equity, it is with gratitude and humility that we acknowledge that this class will take place on the sacred homelands of the Munsee and Muhheaconneok people, who are the original stewards of this land. Today, due to forced removal, the community resides in Northeast Wisconsin and is known as the Stockbridge-Munsee Community. We honor and pay respect to their ancestors past and present, as well as to future generations, and we recognize their continuing presence in their homelands. We understand that our acknowledgment requires those of us who are settlers to recognize our own place in and responsibilities towards addressing inequity, and that this ongoing and challenging work requires that we commit to real engagement with the Munsee and Mohican communities to build an inclusive and equitable space for all.

Objectives

By the end of the semester you should. . .

- be better able to read scientific articles about psychology research,
- explain the causes and functions of emotions,
- understand a variety of theories of emotion,
- discuss individual differences and commonalities in emotion,
- understand the mechanisms of regulation and dysregulation of emotion, and
- understand and practice empathy.

Instructor

The instructor for this course is Assistant Professor of Psychology Justin Dainer-Best (he/him/his).

Materials

Readings

This course does not use a textbook. Readings will be assigned through PDFs posted to the Brightspace page.

All readings should be accessible to a screen reader; if you need one but the reading is not processed correctly, please let me know and I will convert it, or you may do so using this conversion tool. You should complete each reading *in preparation for class*, as listed below on the schedule.

Class Policies

Attendance

We will move at a rapid pace; material that is missed due to absence will not be repeated in class or office hours. Our classes are designed as interactive, and your absence will impact both your own understanding and the class or your group. Missing multiple days of group work may impact your grade.

However, this is a college class and you are an adult; your attendance is your decision. Late arrivals can be disruptive to the class, especially in the current moment. Consistent patterns of lateness are unfair to other students. Please be on time.

If you are not feeling well, please do not come to class.

Masks

If you have recently been ill, please feel free to wear a mask when you attend; masks are effective at reducing spread of many respiratory illnesses. Each of us shares responsibility for the health and safety of all in the classroom. For the first two weeks of class, all students (and the instructor) are required to wear masks. Following these two weeks, we will follow College guidance, but you may choose to wear a mask at any time.

Accommodations & Accessibility

Bard College is committed to providing equal access to all students. If you anticipate issues related to the format or requirements of this course, please contact me so that we can arrange to discuss. I would like us to discuss ways to ensure your full participation in the course. Together we can plan how best to support your learning and coordinate your accommodations. Students who have already been approved to receive academic accommodations through disability services should share their accommodation letter with me and make arrangements to meet as soon as possible if necessary.

If you have a learning difference or disability that may relate to your ability to fully participate in this class, but have not yet met with the Disability Support Coordinator at Bard, you can contact their office

through <https://www.bard.edu/accessibility/students/> or by emailing disabilityservices@bard.edu; the Coordinator will confidentially discuss the process to establish reasonable accommodations. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and thus you should begin this process as soon as possible if you believe you will need them.

Additionally, as my office in Preston Hall may be physically difficult to access, you may always request to meet with me in another location if we plan to meet in-person.

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

It is important to me that this course provides an open and supportive learning environment for all students. I invite you to speak with me if you have concerns or questions regarding issues of belonging, safety, or equity in the classroom. I want our discussions to be respectful of all students. If I am not helping the classroom to feel like an inclusive environment, I invite you to provide me with [anonymous] feedback. All forms of knowledge regarding emotions are valuable in this class.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

I expect you to be familiar with what plagiarism is and is not. You may not present someone else's work as your own without proper citation. You may not copy someone else's work. You may not simply reword text from another source without giving credit. Please cite others' work where relevant, and use your own writing. If you are not sure about the definition of plagiarism, or whether something constitutes plagiarism, please consult with me or with someone at Bard's Learning Commons. Students caught plagiarizing will be reported to the Academic Judiciary Board, will get no credit for the assignment, and may fail the course.

I operate from the standpoint that you are interested in learning this material, and are doing your best to operate with integrity.

Cell phones and laptops

Before class, you should silence your cell phone, and you should not be on your phone during class unless you are asked to be (e.g., to respond to a poll). I do not recommend taking notes on your phone as a rule. I *do* recommend taking notes on paper wherever possible. If you text or access materials unrelated to class during our class time, you are mentally absent from class.

When using a laptop, I encourage you to turn off notifications / turn on Do Not Disturb whenever possible. Browsing unrelated materials is distracting to you and also to your classmates.

Late Assignments

Most assignments can be turned in **within two days** of their due dates without penalty. For example, if an assignment is due before class on a Monday, it may be turned in by Wednesday at midnight without penalty. However, please note that many assignments are intended to develop into conversations; even if you have not turned in a final document to me, you should be prepared to discuss your work in class.

Assignments may still be turned in after their late date. However, such assignments are considered "missing" (see section on grading below). If your work is consistently turned in late, this also may impact your grade unless you discuss this lateness with me. All assignments are due by the last day of the semester.

Assignments

Group papers

At three planned points throughout the semester, you and several classmates will discuss specific topics:

1. Theories of emotion
2. Types of emotion

3. New emotions

Each group will create a single document incorporating all group members' work and answering the questions for that topic. You will be graded based on your completing all components of the assignment. You do *not* need to include a breakdown of who did what, but all of your names *should* be on the paper. (I recommend using reverse alphabetical order for listing—authorship order is irrelevant in these day projects.) Group papers are due one week following the class in which they are assigned.

The class after each group project, you and your group will prepare a 5-minute presentation discussing what you designed. These presentations do not need to include slides, but they may. This will receive a separate grade as a group (except in special cases where grades may differ).

At the end of the semester, you will work **individually** to convert one of these group papers into a longer project (a “**polished project**”). Such projects can be a short podcast (\approx 3–5 minutes), a website, a creative project, or any alternative that extends and adapts the projects into a larger form. These polished projects will be graded on their ability to inform the audience about the topic, how well they connect to the previous paper, and their ability to add information or knowledge. Generally speaking, a statement that connects the project to the paper should precede the project.

Group presentation grading

I suggest that your group discuss the presentation and potentially practice in advance. Your presentation should strive to be no longer than 3min 30s while also reviewing your conclusions, which means that you should work to **condense** your ideas into an approachable format and be sure to take turns speaking.

Presentations will receive the highest scores for interaction (i.e., the presentation suggests that it stems from collaboration), discussion of specific (named) theory or research, and appropriate use of visuals (slides/images/notes on the board).

Missed group work due to absences

Students who miss a group work day (e.g., due to illness) should plan to turn in a shorter version of the same assignment (approximately half of the designed length) that they complete alone. Such assignments will be available on Brightspace.

They should also either plan to speak for 90 seconds describing their work in class, or plan to submit a 90s video recording to me (via Google Drive or other link). Students who solely miss the presentation day should submit a 90s video recording, which can speak to the group's ideas. (If the absence is due to illness, students may without penalty request an extension for these assignments; they should suggest alternative due dates.)

Research proposal

You will write two drafts of a research proposal paper. The first draft, due early in the semester (see the schedule), will solely expound on a research question that you think bears further scrutiny—i.e., it will be a literature review. This draft (\approx two single-spaced pages) should incorporate at least four research articles that you find yourself. The first draft should direct to a specific research question, but should not yet include hypotheses or methods. It must address *significance*: why would this matter?

Towards the end of the semester, you will revise this introduction based on my feedback and a classmate's feedback, and develop a research methodology. Your research methodology must be something that you could carry out with minimal support (i.e., it cannot involve large sums of money, serious pathology, or complicated instruments). You should also briefly include a “predicted results” section (what would you expect to find?) and a “conclusion” which discusses what your results might mean if they happened as you expect.

The final draft should therefore include the following sections and subsections:

- Introduction (2–2.5 pages)
 - Hypotheses (half page)
- Methods (2+ pages, incl. each of the subsections)

- Participants
- Measures
- Procedures
- Predicted Results (half page)
- Conclusion

Grades

Assignment	Points
Group papers	30
Group presentations	15
Polished project	20
Proposal paper first draft	15
Proposal paper final draft	20
Total	100

Your grades in this course will come from the assignments described above: three **group papers** and three **group presentations**, one **polished project**, and a **research proposal** with two drafts. The rough draft and two group papers are due before midterm.

Completing the reading and thoughtfully participating in the class is an important component of your learning. If you must miss a group paper, you should plan to complete the work individually, and contact me to receive the assignment.

As discussed above, all assignments may be turned in up to two days late without penalty. Assignments turned in later than that will not receive full points—at maximum a point off for each day late.

Grade	Range
A-range	90-100
B-range	80-89
C-range	70-79
D-range	60-69
F	below 60

Schedule

The schedule may change over the course of the semester. Changes to assignment dates will be announced via email and also changed on the course website. You are responsible for keeping up with the readings, showing up to class prepared, and turning in assignments on-time.

Readings are listed by author last name; PDFs can be found on Brightspace.

Day	Date	Topic	Reading	Due
Monday	Aug 30	What is an emotion?	Syllabus	
Wednesday	Sep 1	Function of Emotion	Keltner and Gross (1999)	
Monday	Sep 6	Group paper 1: Theories of Emotion		
Wednesday	Sep 8	Presentations 1; Theories of Emotion: Somatic	Lang (1994); optional: Cannon (1927)	Presentations
Monday	Sep 13	Theories of Emotion: Two-Factor Theory	Schachter and Singer (1962)	Group paper 1
Wednesday	Sep 15	Theories of Emotion: Evolutionary		
Monday	Sep 20	Theories of Emotion: Neurobiological	Keltner et al. (2014, 2006)	
Wednesday	Sep 22	Theories of Emotion: Neurobiological II	Dalgleish (2004); optional: LeDoux (2000)	
Monday	Sep 27	Theories of Emotion: Dimensional Approaches	Scherer et al. (2013)	
Wednesday	Sep 29	Basic Emotions?	Ekman (1992)	
Monday	Oct 4	Facial Expressions	Ekman and Friesen (1975); Crawford (2021)	First draft

(continued)

Day	Date	Topic	Reading	Due
Wednesday	Oct 6	Comments on each others' papers; Group paper 2: Types of Emotions		
Monday	Oct 11	<i>No Class: Fall break</i> (Indigenous People's Day)		
Wednesday	Oct 13	Emotion Regulation	Gross (2002)	Group paper 2
Monday	Oct 18	Presentations 2; Emotion Dysregulation	Hofmann et al. (2012)	Presentations
Wednesday	Oct 20	Consequences of Dysregulation	Polack et al. (2021)	
Monday	Oct 25	Disordered Emotions	Beck (1979)	
Wednesday	Oct 27	Empathy	Zaki and Ochsner (2018)	
Monday	Nov 1	Happiness	Lyubomirsky and Layous (2013)	
Wednesday	Nov 3	Sadness	Freud (1917)	
Monday	Nov 8	Shame	Morrison (1983)	Final draft
Wednesday	Nov 10	Anger	Gutierrez and Giner-Sorolla (2007)	
Monday	Nov 15	Disgust	Armstrong et al. (2010)	
Wednesday	Nov 17	Fear	Smits et al. (2004)	
Monday	Nov 22	Group paper 3: New emotions		
Wednesday	Nov 24	<i>No class: Thanksgiving break</i>		
Monday	Nov 29	Presentations 3; Cultural understandings of emotion	Matsumoto and Hwang (2012)	Presentations; Group paper 3
Wednesday	Dec 1	Emotion development in children	Widen (2018)	
Monday	Dec 6	Social and Emotional Learning	Mahoney et al. (2020)	
Wednesday	Dec 8	<i>No class: Advising day</i>		
Monday	Dec 13	<i>Completion week</i>		Polished project
Wednesday	Dec 15	<i>Completion week</i>		

References

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