

## POL 373H1F (Summer 2021): The Emotions and Political Theory

Lectures: Tuesdays and Thursdays 12- 2 pm on Zoom

Instructor: Rebecca Kingston, Professor of Political Science

Office Hours: by appointment or after class on Zoom on Thursdays

Email: [rebecca.kingston@utoronto.ca](mailto:rebecca.kingston@utoronto.ca)

### Course Description:

Some suggest that the art of proper political thinking involves following reason over passion, but recent scholarship across the humanities and social sciences has revealed the multiple ways in which emotion can be recognised as an inescapable and key component of morality and good politics. Writers offering revisionist approaches to the history of political thought have come to recognise that many political theorists were more receptive to emotion as a positive political force than previously thought. Still, the theoretical challenge in coming to appreciate the emotions is how to weigh the importance of emotional capacity and subjective experience without coming to the position that all emotional accounts have immediate normative authority (i.e. does my feeling it not only make it so, but the ultimate measure of what *should* be?).

In this context, this course has two objectives. The first objective is to provide a broad overview of some of the key issues concerning the nature of the emotions and their place in political life, as presented in the history of political thought. The first few sessions of the course will allow students to consider the nature of emotion, their place in social and political life and some competing perspectives on emotion in the history of political thought.

A second objective is to raise questions concerning the role of specific emotions in contemporary liberal democracy. The latter part of the course is structured around some current debates among political and cultural theorists who take the emotions seriously and ends with a consideration of a couple of contemporary case studies. This will help us develop a more sophisticated account of the emotional process and of its place in models of good citizenship.

### Basic outline:

**Introduction.** What is an emotion? What is the place of emotion in political life? (three sessions)

**Part I. The Emotions in history, theory and practice** (three sessions):

- A. Ancient virtue theory
- B. The rise of the rational subject of liberal theory in Enlightenment thought
- C. Critical approaches to the centrality of the rational subject for normative accounts in political thought

**Part II. Emotions and Politics in Contemporary Theory (six sessions):**

Introduction. Bringing the emotions back in to normative political thought

- A. Love and democratic citizenship
- B. Shame, society and the law
- C. Fear,
- D. Anger
- E. Courage

**Part III. Two case studies (two sessions)**

**Assignments (instructions for each assignment noted below):**

Reflection paper, 5 pp. due Tuesday May 18<sup>th</sup>  
10%

Three short Journal Entries (200 words max.) on emotion in relation to current events (more details below) 15%

Research essay, c. 10 pp., due Thursday June 3<sup>rd</sup>  
35%

Take-home exam (during June exam period)  
20%

Participation in class and on Quercus chat group  
20%

**Reflection Paper:**

This paper is intended as a reflective and analytic exercise, rather than a research exercise. While this course is largely devoted to the question of the role emotions play in political theory, in other words, what is the place of emotions in our vision of what politics *should be*, part of the process in beginning to answer this question requires some understanding of what emotions are and of how they actually function in politics as we know it. Through this we can begin to judge what promotes good politics and what doesn't. For this assignment you are *not* required to do extensive research with reliance on secondary sources, but you are asked to reflect on the features involved in an emotional appeal in politics. You are asked to choose one spoken or written speech or public argument by a public figure in contemporary political life (Canada or abroad). It can be a video publicly accessed (e.g. youtube) or a written text (provide full bibliographic details for either). 1) to what degree is emotion apparent as a

strategy of persuasiveness in the speech (as opposed to or alongside rational argument or appeals to the character of the speech giver- what Aristotle calls *ethos* as noted in our readings)? Through what particular words or phrases or symbolism does this appeal to emotion reveal itself? At what point in the speech does this appeal to emotion come? Identify the emotions appealed to and then focus on one in particular. 2) Once you have focused on one emotion seek to understand it in greater detail. Is the emotion a simple one or a mix of more basic emotions? If so, in what way? Would you call it a positive or negative emotion? Is it a mixture of pain and pleasure? How would you describe its dynamic and feeling? Is it oriented to the past, present or future, and if so, how exactly? If so, how?, etc This part of the exercise is to help develop your awareness of the often quite complex meaning and nature of political emotions. 3) How is the chosen emotion either expressed or appealed to in particular ways in the text or speech (depending on the circumstances what and how an emotion is expressed in political speech can be designed to elicit the same or a different emotion in the listeners/readers)? What are the words, gestures, silences, etc. associated with the emotional expression in this example and their presumed intended effects? 4) What is the effectiveness of the appeal to emotion, the manner and the timing of the appeal to the emotion, and the overall persuasiveness of the speech? 5) From your observations in this case what are your more general observations concerning the effectiveness of emotional appeals in politics. What might this case study of emotion teach us about the place of emotions in politics and the ethics of emotional appeal in political life?

If you do choose to integrate references to secondary materials, please use standard bibliographic formatting to document your sources appropriately (Chicago, APA or MLA is fine).

Your paper will be graded according to criteria of organisation (not just introduction, body and conclusion but dealing with similar points/ observations/themes at the same point in the analysis and placing those themes in an order that allows for reasonable flow and development of an overall position in your paper), depth and insightfulness of the analysis, and the overall quality of expression (style, spelling, grammar, etc.).

### Journal Entries:

For three classes of your choice during the short (!) semester I would like you to write up a paragraph (200 words max) which explores the dynamics of an emotion displayed in contemporary politics as you might discern from your daily life or from the news. Identify the emotion or mix of emotions you perceive, how they are expressed and then reflect on their significance (appropriate or inappropriate for the circumstances?), as well as what one might draw from the example as one expression of the place of emotion in political life. You can relate that example to the reading for that class if you choose. I may call on you to discuss your example in more detail during discussion period of class as a way to open up our discussions to a wide variety of current examples. You can write these up for any class starting May 6<sup>th</sup> until June 8<sup>th</sup>, but only one in one week, and post them to the discussion thread in Quercus devoted to these examples. Each journal entry is graded out of 5% for a total of 15% for three.

### Research essay:

Your essay should focus on a particular question related to the theme of the course and draw from scholarly sources in political theory and political science (check with me or with the TA if you are in

doubt about what constitutes a scholarly source- no encyclopedias or Wikipedia please!). In addition, it is strongly recommended that you approach this question through the study of the political theory of one or more thinkers, though you are not limited to thinkers on the course syllabus. I will provide a list of essay topics from which you should choose for your paper. Your paper should include a standard scholarly format for your references and bibliography.

Plagiarism is a serious offence and University policy on plagiarism will be strictly enforced. Materials discussing this policy will be made available on the course's Quercus site. Please keep all rough and draft work of your essay until the final grades are posted. Dates due are noted above. A penalty of 2% a day (out of 100%) will be assigned to all late papers. This includes weekends. I can accept electronic submissions of your essays, but please follow up with a printed copy.

### Turnitin.com:

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. This will be available via the Quercus site for the course (details to follow). In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com website.

### Participation:

Grades for participation will be determined in two ways, through active participation in class discussion and through participation in the discussion board on Quercus. The participation grade will reflect the student's quantity and quality of contributions to general class discussion both online and in class. To help facilitate discussion in class, I may prepare questions ahead of time based on the readings to discuss in the second hour of class.

### Accessibility Needs:

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: <http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/> or [accessibility.services@utoronto.ca](mailto:accessibility.services@utoronto.ca).

### Readings:

Weekly readings are noted below for the week they are assigned.

### Readings and assignments:

\*Please note that this schedule of readings may be subject to some modification over the course of the term. I will try to make all readings available through links on the Quercus site for the course.

Session 1 (May 4<sup>th</sup>)                      - Welcome to the course.

Session 2 (May 6<sup>th</sup>)

- Introduction. What is an emotion and how do we begin to think about the place of emotion in moral and political life?

-Read:

- 1) Ronald de Sousa, "Emotion," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Available online at <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/emotion>.
- 2) Lisa Feldman Barrett. How Emotions are Made. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017, chaps. 1 and 3.
- 3) Roger Giner-Sorolla, Judging Passions Moral emotions in persons and groups. London and New York: Psychology Press, 2012, chap. 3 "Emotions, morality and groups". Link available at: <https://www-taylorfrancis-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/books/mono/10.4324/9780203123874/judging-passions-roger-giner-sorolla>

Session 3 (May 11<sup>th</sup>)

-Introduction, con't.

-Read:

- 1) George Marcus, "Emotions in Politics," Annual Review of Political Science, 2000(3), 221-50. Link available on Quercus.
- 2) Neta C. Crawford, "The Passion of World Politics: Propositions on Emotion and Emotional Relationships," *International Security*, Vol. 24, No. 4 (Spring, 2000), pp. 116-156. <https://www-jstor-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/stable/2539317?sid=primo&seq=2#meta-data-info-tab-contents>
- 3) Elie Honig, "Note from Elie: Collective Trauma and Justice," (notes accompanying the Café Insider Podcast), Link available at: <https://cafe.com/elies-note/note-from-elie-collective-trauma-justice/?tcpp-brief-0423>

Session 4 (May 13<sup>th</sup>)

-I A. Ancient virtue theory and the importance of emotion in the long history of political thought

-Read:

- 1) Aristotle, On Rhetoric. A Theory of Civic Discourse trans. George A. Kennedy. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991, Book 1 part. 1 to 8 and Book 2 parts. 1 to 11. I would prefer that you consult the Kennedy translation but I have provided a link to an online version in the event that access to the that translation is not possible. Another translation of the text is also available at

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0060>.

Session 5 (May 18<sup>th</sup>)

- \*\*Reflection Paper Due (5pp.). See above for details\*\*

I.B, The Enlightenment turn and the rise of the rational subject of liberal theory

-Read:

1) Descartes, The Passions of the Soul. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1989), pp. 33-49.

2) Gerald Gaus, Contemporary Theories of Liberalism: Public Reason as a Post-Enlightenment Project. London: Sage, 2003, chap. 1 “Liberalism and Reason.” : <https://sk-sagepub-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/books/contemporary-theories-of-liberalism/n1.xml>

Session 6 (May 20<sup>th</sup>)

I. C. Critical approaches to the idea of the liberal subject as rational

-Read:

1) Mandeville, The Fable of the Bees and Other Writings, ed. E. Hundert, (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), pp. 19-73.

2) Rousseau, “Essay on the Origin of Languages,” In Collected Writings of Rousseau, vol. 7. Trans. John T. Scott. (Hanover: Dartmouth College Press, 1998) pp. 289-332

Session 7 (May 25<sup>th</sup>)

II. Bringing the emotions back in to modern political thought: Love and Democratic Citizenship

-Read:

1) Rebecca Solnit, “Icebergs and Shadows,” From The Encyclopedia of Trouble and Spaciousness (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 2014), pp. 133-141.

2) Martha Nussbaum, Political Emotions. Why Love Matters for Justice (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), chapter 1 “A Problem in the History of Liberalism,” pp. 1-24

3) Michael Hardt, “For Love or Money,” Cultural Anthropology, November 2011, Volume26 (Issue4), pp. 676-682

Session 8 (May 27<sup>th</sup>)

## II. Shame, Society and the Law

Read:

- 1) Martha Nussbaum, "Shaming Citizens?" In Hiding from Humanity. Disgust, Shame and the Law (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004), chap. 5, pp. 222-279.
- 2) Julien Deonna, Raffaele Rodogno and Fabrice Teroni, In Defense of Shame (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), chaps. 4 and 7.

Session 9 (June 1<sup>st</sup>)

- II. Fear

-Read:

- 1) Corey Robin, "The Politics and Antipolitics of Fear," Raritan Vol. 23, Iss. 4, (Spring 2004): 79-108: <https://search-proquest-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/docview/203918761?accountid=14771&pq-origsite=primo>
- 2) Neil Walker, "The Crisis of Democratic Leadership in Times of Pandemic," In Democracy in Times of Pandemic, ed. P. Kahn and M. Maduro. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020, pp. 23-37: <https://www-cambridge-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/core/books/democracy-in-times-of-pandemic/crisis-of-democratic-leadership-in-times-of-pandemic/18ABBCC845FAF03252DEDDD19F0525F9>
- 3) Dan Degerman , Matthew Flinders & Matthew Thomas Johnson, "In defence of fear: COVID-19, crises and democracy," Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy, Oct. 2020, pp. 1-22: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/13698230.2020.1834744?needAccess=true>
- 4) Vineet Kumar, "To Convince the Vaccine Hesitant, Understand Their Underlying Motivations," Yale Insights (Yale School of Management). Online at: <https://insights.som.yale.edu/insights/to-convince-the-vaccine-hesitant-understand-their-underlying-motivations>

Session 10 (June 3<sup>rd</sup>)

- II. Anger

-Listen/Read:

1) Davin L. Phoenix. The Anger Gap. How Race Shapes Emotion in Politics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020, chap. 1: <https://www-cambridge-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/core/books/anger-gap/967D469A566F389E0C69099BA5486069>

2) Guest Martha Nussbaum on Anger (Parts One and Two) on the Partially Examined Life, a podcast on Soundcloud. Part One released 30 July 2016. Accessible through the following link: <https://soundcloud.com/partially-examined-life> (search with terms Nussbaum and anger on the homepage).

3) Rebecca Solnit, “Facing the Furies” Harpers Magazine, May 2017. Accessible through the following link: <https://harpers.org/archive/2017/05/facing-the-furies/>

## Session II (June 8<sup>th</sup>)

### - II. Courage

#### -Read:

1) Barbara A. Misztal, Intellectuals and the Public Good: Creativity and Civil Courage. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, chap. 3 Courage: acting on conviction, pp. 65-87: <https://books-scholarsportal-info.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/en/read?id=/ebooks/ebooks1/cambridgeonline/2012-11-06/1/9780511488825#page=77>

2) Jason Scorza, “The Ambivalence of Political Courage,” The Review of Politics 63.4(2001), pp. 637-662. Available on the UTOR library site or click on the following link: <http://journals1.scholarsportal.info.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/browse/00346705/v63i0004/>

## Session 12 (June 10<sup>th</sup>)

### \*Final Paper due\*

Case Studies in the place of emotion in the psychology of resistance to tyranny and authoritarian rule:

#### -Read:

1) Vitrierat Ng and Kin-man Chan, “Emotion Politics: Joyous Resistance in Hong Kong,” China Review Vol. 17, No. 1 (February 2017), pp. 83-115: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44160410?seq=1>

2) Van Tran, “To understand post-coup Myanmar, look to its history of popular resistance — not sanctions,” On the Brookings Institute blog. Order from Chaos, Feb. 9, 2021: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2021/02/09/to->

[understand-post-coup-myanmar-look-to-its-history-of-popular-resistance-not-sanctions/](#)

- 3) Webpage for the Civil Disobedience Movement in Myanmar:  
<https://www.mmcdm.org/>

Final Exam in the June exam period.