

Emotions

Spring 2025 // PSY 218

Justin Dainer-Best

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Course Number	Time	Location	Office Hours
PSY 218	M/W, 10:10-11:30	Olin 201	M/Th or by appointment

[Make an appointment to come to my office hours.](#) The instructor's office hours are as follows (or by appointment):

- Mondays, 3–4:30pm
- Thursdays, 11am–12pm

Pre-requisites: Introduction to Psychological Science.

This course counts as one of the required 200-level courses for Psychology, and fulfills the requirements of Cluster A. It is not a “core” course.

Wherever possible, I hope to work to make this course accessible and approachable for all students. For more information on accessibility for this course, please view [the section on that subject](#) below.

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.

Acknowledgments

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.

The College also acknowledges that its origins are intertwined with slavery, which has shaped the United States and American institutions from the beginning. The exploitation of enslaved people was at the foundation of the economic development of New York and the Hudson Valley, including the land now composing the Bard College campus. Recognition and redress of this history are due. As students, teachers, researchers, administrators, staff, and community members, we acknowledge the pervasive legacy of slavery and commit ourselves to the pursuit of equity and restorative justice for the descendants of enslaved people within the Bard community.

Such anticolonialist and antigenocidal work extends beyond Bard’s campus and the classroom. [Learn more](#).

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

You are expected to come to each class prepared to discuss the assigned reading. Laptops are not generally expected during class discussions. Instead, you should plan to bring paper or a notebook. (Digital copies of readings are appropriate; you need not print readings if you do not choose to.)

Instructor

The instructor for this course is Associate Professor of Psychology Justin Dainer-Best. In person or via email, you can refer to me as Justin or as Professor Dainer-Best (or Dr. Dainer-Best); I use he/him pronouns.

Materials

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

You should not upload slides or readings to AI tools. Doing so gives materials created by me or the authors with AI tools without our agreement.

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](#) and on Brightspace.

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.

However, this is a college class and you are an adult; your attendance is your decision. Late arrivals can be disruptive to the class. 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. If you have recently been ill, please 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.

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 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/>; 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. I am available for meetings online as well as those 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. Different forms of knowledge can be valuable in a psychology classroom. In this class, we will engage with complex topics of mental health and illness and, as such, respect for experiential and other viewpoints is extremely important.

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. Using AI-generated text is not a replacement for your own writing, and automated tools to edit grammar and spelling should be used sparingly. 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. Using text generators like chatGPT or rewriting features of Grammarly take away your ability to learn from the process of writing. Do your best to learn from the assignments in this class.

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. I do not recommend taking notes on your phone. Instead, I 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 a Monday class, it may be turned in by Wednesday at midnight without penalty. However, please note that some 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.

Further, do note that when you have an assigned presentation in class, it cannot generally be rescheduled. If you must miss group work or a group presentation, please be in touch with me as soon as possible.

Assignments, including drafts, may still be turned in after their late date. However, such assignments are considered “missing” (see section “[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 and presentations

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 not part of my grading in these projects.) Group papers are due one week following the class in which they are assigned.

The class following each group project, you and your group will prepare a 5-minute presentation discussing what you designed. These presentations should generally include slides, and will receive a separate grade as a group (except in special cases where grades may differ between members).

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 (approximately 3–5 minutes), a website, another creative project, or any alternative that extends and adapts the projects into a larger form *while making use of research*. 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 it. This statement may be longer for a creative project and less needed for something that was directly proposed in the group paper.

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. Speaking from bullet points on slides, or notes, is strongly preferred to reading pre-written text.

Presentations will receive the highest scores for interaction between group members (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

If you miss the group work day

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. Assignments will be available on Brightspace.

They should also *either* plan to speak for 90 seconds describing their work in class (if they are present that following class), *or* plan to submit a 90s video recording to me (via Google Drive or other method).

If you miss the presentation

Students who solely miss the presentation day should submit a 60-90s video recording, which can speak to the group's ideas. This presentation can be submitted alone or be a recording played as part of the group's presentation. (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; additional information will be provided on Brightspace. The first draft, due early in the semester (see the [schedule](#)), will solely expound on a research question that you think bears further scrutiny as a review of the psychological literature. This draft (approximately 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, single-spaced:

- Introduction (2 pages)
 - Hypotheses (paragraph)
- Methods (2+ pages, incl. each of the subsections)
 - Participants
 - Measures
 - Procedures
- Predicted Results (half page)
- Conclusion

Your paper should follow APA style, with increased expectations if you are a Psychology major.

Grades

Assignment	Points
Group papers	30
Group presentations	15
Polished project	20
Proposal paper first draft	10
Proposal paper final draft	25
Total	100

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

As described above, many 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. “Missing” assignments are those which are not turned in by the late deadline, and which you have not contacted me about. If you miss assignments, you should always plan to be in touch with me as soon as possible to discuss when they will be turned in.

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	Jan 27	What is an emotion?	Syllabus	

Day	Date	Topic	Reading	Due
Wednesday	Jan 29	Function of Emotion	Keltner & Gross (1999)	
Monday	Feb 3	Group paper 1: Theories of Emotion		
Wednesday	Feb 5	Presentations 1; Theories of Emotion: Somatic	Lang (1994); optional: Cannon (1927)	Presentations
Monday	Feb 10	Theories of Emotion: Two-Factor Theory; Evolutionary	Schachter & Singer (1962)	Group paper 1
Wednesday	Feb 12	Theories of Emotion: Neurobiological	Keltner et al. (2014, 2006)	
Monday	Feb 17	Theories of Emotion: Neurobiological II	Dalgleish (2004); LeDoux (2000)	
Wednesday	Feb 19	Theories of Emotion: Dimensional Approaches	Scherer et al. (2013)	
Monday	Feb 24	Basic Emotions?	Ekman (1992)	
Wednesday	Feb 26	Facial Expressions	Ekman & Friesen (1975); Crawford (2021); Auslender (2024)	
Monday	Mar 3	Peer Review		First draft
Wednesday	Mar 5	Group paper 2: Types of Emotions		
Monday	Mar 10	Presentations 2; Emotion Regulation	Gross (2002)	Presentations
Wednesday	Mar 12	Emotion Dysregulation	Hofmann et al. (2012)	Group paper 2
Monday	Mar 17	<i>Spring Break</i>		
Wednesday	Mar 19	<i>Spring Break</i>		
Monday	Mar 24	Consequences of Dysregulation	Gadassi-Polack et al. (2024)	
Wednesday	Mar 26	Disordered Emotions	Beck (1979)	
Monday	Mar 31	Empathy	Zaki & Ochsner (2018)	
Wednesday	Apr 2	Contentment	Lyubomirsky & Layous (2013)	
Monday	Apr 7	Sadness	Freud (1917)	
Wednesday	Apr 9	Shame	Morrison (1983)	Final draft
Monday	Apr 14	Anger	Gutierrez & Giner-Sorolla (2007)	
Wednesday	Apr 16	Disgust	Armstrong et al. (2010)	
Monday	Apr 21	Fear	Smits et al. (2004)	

Day	Date	Topic	Reading	Due
Wednesday	Apr 23	Group paper 3: New emotions		
Monday	Apr 28	<i>No class: Advising day</i>		
Wednesday	Apr 30	Presentations 3; Cultural understandings of emotion	Matsumoto & Hwang (2012)	Presentations; Group paper 3
Monday	May 5	Emotion development in children; Social and Emotional Learning	Widen (2018); Jones & Doolittle (2017)	
Wednesday	May 7	<i>No class: Board week</i>		
Monday	May 12	<i>No class: Advising day</i>		Polished project
Wednesday	May 14	<i>Completion week</i>		
Monday	May 19	<i>Completion week</i>		

Note

Please note that all readings are [available on Brightspace](#).

Armstrong, T., Olatunji, B. O., Sarawgi, S., & Simmons, C. (2010). Orienting and maintenance of gaze in contamination fear: Biases for disgust and fear cues. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 48(5), 402–408. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2010.01.002>

Auslender, V. (2024). The myth of AI emotion recognition: Science or sales pitch? *CTech*. <https://www.calcalistech.com/ctechnews/article/blarjx2vjx>

Beck, A. T. (1979). Chapter 4 & 5. In *Cognitive Therapy and the Emotional Disorders*. Penguin Group.

Cannon, W. B. (1927). The James-Lange theory of emotions: A critical examination and an alternative theory. *The American Journal of Psychology*, 39(1/4), 106–124. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1415404>

Crawford, K. (2021). Artificial intelligence is misreading human emotion. *The Atlantic*. <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2021/04/artificial-intelligence-misreading-human-emotion/618696/>

Dalgleish, T. (2004). The emotional brain. *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, 5(7), 583–589. <https://doi.org/10.1038/nrn1432>

Ekman, P. (1992). An argument for basic emotions. *Cognition and Emotion*, 6(3-4), 169–200. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02699939208411068>

- Ekman, P., & Friesen, W. V. (1975). *Unmasking the face: A guide to recognizing emotions from facial clues* (pp. 10–20). Prentice-Hall.
- Freud, S. (1917). Mourning and melancholia. In J. Strachey (Ed. & Trans.), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XIV (1914-1916): On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement, Papers on Metapsychology, and Other Works* (pp. 243–258). The Hogarth Press.
- Gadassi-Polack, R., Paganini, G., Zhang, A. K., Dworschak, C., Silk, J. S., Kober, H., & Joormann, J. (2024). It's a balancing act: The ratio of maladaptive (vs. All) emotion regulation strategies is associated with depression. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, *180*, 104600. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2024.104600>
- Gross, J. J. (2002). Emotion regulation: Affective, cognitive, and social consequences. *Psychophysiology*, *39*(3), 281–291. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0048577201393198>
- Gutierrez, R., & Giner-Sorolla, R. (2007). Anger, disgust, and presumption of harm as reactions to taboo-breaking behaviors. *Emotion*, *7*(4), 853–868. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1528-3542.7.4.853>
- Hofmann, S. G., Sawyer, A. T., Fang, A., & Asnaani, A. (2012). Emotion dysregulation model of mood and anxiety disorders. *Depression and Anxiety*, *29*(5), 409–416. <https://doi.org/10.1002/da.21888>
- Jones, S. M., & Doolittle, E. J. (2017). Social and emotional learning: Introducing the issue. *The Future of Children*, *27*(1), 3–11. <https://doi.org/10.1353/foc.2017.0000>
- Keltner, D., & Gross, J. J. (1999). Functional accounts of emotions. *Cognition and Emotion*, *13*(5), 467–480. <https://doi.org/10.1080/026999399379140>
- Keltner, D., Oatley, K., & Jenkins, J. M. (2014, 2006). Chapter 6. In *Understanding Emotions* (3rd ed., pp. 137–160). Kohn Wiley & Sons.
- Lang, P. J. (1994). The varieties of emotional experience: A meditation on James-Lange theory. *Psychological Review*, *101*(2), 211–221. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.101.2.211>
- LeDoux, J. E. (2000). Emotion circuits in the brain. *Annual Review of Neuroscience*, *23*(1), 155–184. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.neuro.23.1.155>
- Lyubomirsky, S., & Layous, K. (2013). How do simple positive activities increase well-being? *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *22*(1), 57–62. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721412469809>
- Matsumoto, D., & Hwang, H. S. (2012). Culture and emotion: The integration of biological and cultural contributions. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *43*(1), 91–118. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022111420147>
- Morrison, A. P. (1983). Shame, ideal self, and narcissism. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, *19*(2), 295–318. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00107530.1983.10746610>
- Schachter, S., & Singer, J. (1962). Cognitive, social, and physiological determinants of emotional state. *Psychological Review*, *69*(5), 379–399. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0046234>
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- meets the wheel: Assessing emotional feeling via self-report. In J. J. R. Fontaine, K. R. Scherer, & C. Soriano (Eds.), *Components of Emotional Meaning: A Sourcebook* (pp. 281–298). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199592746.003.0019>
- Smits, J. A., Powers, M. B., Cho, Y., & Telch, M. J. (2004). Mechanism of change in cognitive-behavioral treatment of panic disorder: Evidence for the fear of fear mediational hypothesis. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 72*(4), 646–652. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-006X.72.4.646>
- Widen, S. C. (2018). The development of children’s concepts of emotion. In L. F. Barrett, M. Lewis, & J. M. Haviland-Jones (Eds.), *Handbook of Emotions* (4th ed., pp. 307–318). Guilford Press.
- Zaki, J., & Ochsner, K. (2018). Empathy. In L. F. Barrett, M. Lewis, & J. M. Haviland-Jones (Eds.), *Handbook of Emotions* (4th ed., pp. 871–884). Guilford Press.