COURSE OVERVIEW

A revolution in the science of emotion is underway, with important implications for decision making and public policy. This course covers key scientific debates in emotion science. Is it necessary to think in order to feel? Who’s in charge - cognition or emotion? Does emotion make us less rational? When and why do emotions from one situation bias decisions in other, ostensibly unrelated, situations? What is happiness and can we attain it? As students acquire a solid understanding of emotion science, they will apply the material to a policymaking topic of their choice. Some examples: How do social movements harness emotion to recruit members? How can the emotional devotion that some child warriors feel toward extremist groups be reduced? How do political advertisements use emotions to persuade versus manipulate voters? How does sleep deprivation alter brain processing of emotion, and should knowledge of such be applied to high-stakes decision settings? What is “emotional intelligence” and should it be taught in public schools? Should the analysis of micro facial expressions be used in lie detection, job selection, and other key decisions? Across all topics, the course draws from psychology, behavioral economics, and neuroscience. Eminent speakers from across Harvard University are scheduled to give provocative guest lectures, enriching the diverse topics we will cover.

1 Email Alison Baron for an appointment.
**INTENDED STUDENTS**
Enrollment is open to any Harvard University student with graduate student standing. Undergraduates may enroll only by permission of the instructor. There are no specific prerequisites. Students who previously took MLD-305 may not also take MLD-302 for credit.

**COURSE GOALS**
Throughout the course, the primary goals are to: (1) learn about the academic field of emotion, its major theories, results, and debates; (2) develop the ability to effectively write and speak about the application of scientific evidence to challenging public problems; (3) become familiar with a broad set of public problems that can be informed by emotion science, and become expert in at least one of them; and (4) acquire practical skills for improving human wellbeing, broadly defined.

**GRADING POLICY**
1) Quizzes on assigned reading.........................30%
2) TED talk.........................................................30%
3) Op-ed................................................................30%
4) Contributions to discussion and peer feedback....10%

**TOTAL...............100%**

1) **Quizzes (30%)**
Every class for which readings are assigned, there will be a 45% chance of having a short quiz that tests your knowledge of the readings assigned that day. Whether or not you have a quiz will be determined by a random number generator. Thus, having a quiz one day is not predictive of whether you will have a quiz the next day. These quizzes are designed to ensure that you have carefully read all that you have been assigned to read. So long as you carefully do the readings, and you retain the most important information in them, you should not have to study for these quizzes. You will do well on them.

Most of the quizzes will require you to summarize one (or more) of the readings, but other quiz formats (e.g., multiple choice; short answer) are possible. By analogy, if the quiz readings pertained to Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, the quiz question might be: “Why were Romeo and Juliet forbidden to marry?” The answer would be: “They were forbidden because they came from feuding families.” The quiz would not ask you to remember inconsequential details like: “Who died first – Romeo or Juliet?” The point (spoiler alert) is that they both died. Each quiz will be graded on a scale ranging from 0 to 2. On any day that a quiz occurs, it will take place at the start of class. You will receive a score of zero if you are absent or late for a quiz. Your lowest quiz score will be dropped.

2) **TED Talk (30%)**
Each presentation will seek to elucidate a public problem in a new, scholarly and creative way by bringing scientific findings on emotion to bear on it. The presentation will take the form of a TED talk. Just like in many TED talks, slides and carefully-written narration are required in each presentation. Each member of the class will participate in evaluating the presentation and preparing written, constructive feedback for the presenter. A handout later in the semester will provide detailed guidelines for the content, format, and evaluation of the presentation. The quality of the peer-evaluations will also be graded, rewarding the provision of fair, thorough, detailed, and constructive comments. What follows is a partial list of possible topics for your TED talk. In each case, your job is to convincingly explain how specific scientific findings on emotion shed new, important insights on the issue:

- Workplace violence
- SES differences in sadness
- War and aggression/inter-state conflict
- Allegiance to terrorist organizations
- Political advertising
- Insurance advertising
- Social change movements
- Financial market volatility
- Crisis decision making; insufficient sleep, tunnel vision
- Workplace stress and labor guidelines
- Chemotherapy versus palliative care in final weeks of life
- Rationale for the death penalty
- Problematic economic behavior
  - Credit card debt
  - Insufficient savings
  - Compulsive shopping
- Risk perception & preferences, gambling
- Selection of impartial jurors (e.g., Marathon bombing case)
- Jury decision making
- Debates on teaching emotional intelligence in public schools
- Designing public service announcements to reduce tobacco use and increase health-promoting behavior
- The pursuit of happiness
- Human rights issues in orphanages (Bucharest Project)
- State abortion laws that dictate (un)emotional state of mind
- Social & economic costs of:
  - Depression
  - Bullying
  - Gangs
  - Cults
  - Addiction
  - PTSD
  - Suicide

3) Op-ed (30%)
Your op-ed will address the same topic as in your TED talk, and it should incorporate feedback received in the presentation. Your goal is to write an outstanding op-ed that will be suitable for publication either in an on-line forum or in a printed news outlet.
The top three op-eds in the class (as determined by evaluation scores from me and class peers) will also receive the chance to be posted on my website with special recognition.

The text of the op-ed should be 700 - 780 WORDS MAX (12 pt. font, Times New Roman), and should be submitted with your name, ID number, and signature on the cover page. You should also include an APA-style reference list on an attached page that includes all the papers from which you have *directly* drawn.

Having a shorter paper than a typical term paper may lead you to think that you can write this paper quickly. Please do not fall into that trap. I expect that you will proofread, re-organize, read aloud to others, and re-write your piece many times. By the time you hand it in, you should almost have it memorized word-for-word.

The main criteria in grading will be the extent to which your op-ed demonstrates intelligent, creative, and convincing (i.e., well-reasoned and well-articulated) use of course concepts to shed scholarly light on an applied problem. A template with detailed grading guidelines will be distributed closer to the deadline.

Here are essential online resources for this assignment. I will expect that you have read them when I grade to op-eds:

- How to write an op-ed or column:

- How to access the HKS writing consultants:
  - [http://shorensteincenter.org/communications-program/writing-consultants/](http://shorensteincenter.org/communications-program/writing-consultants/)

- A variety of writing resources and a list of HKS spring workshops on communication (open to all students):
  - [http://www.hkscommunicationsprogram.org](http://www.hkscommunicationsprogram.org)

- Sample op-eds written by students as part of HKS class projects:
  - (many op-eds at this site) [http://shorensteincenter.org/communications-program/students-in-the-news/](http://shorensteincenter.org/communications-program/students-in-the-news/)

- One of Prof. Lerner’s favorite op-eds using psychology to inform policy:
  - [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/31/opinion/31epley.html?_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/31/opinion/31epley.html?_r=0)

- Sample op-eds written by HKS faculty and students:
  - [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/28/opinion/sunday/its-easy-being-king.html?_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/28/opinion/sunday/its-easy-being-king.html?_r=0)
  - [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/18/opinion/nato-when-im-sixty-four.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/18/opinion/nato-when-im-sixty-four.html)

- Sample op-ed on use of evidence in designing social programs
4) Individual Contributions to Class Discussion and Peer Feedback on TED Talks (10%)
I expect that everyone will have something to contribute to discussion, and I encourage you to come to class prepared to discuss the readings either by raising questions and comments about the articles or by relating the material to your own experience or current events. It will be important for you to listen to your classmates and constructively build upon their statements, and generally put effort into making our class work. If you feel that you have difficulty jumping in to discussion, then send me an Email and I will find a way to call on you.

I expect that everyone will attend all the TED talks, which take place in class. I also expect that each student will use the feedback template (to be handed out later) to provide fair, accurate, thorough, and constructive evaluations of your classmates‘ talks. I will evaluate the quality of your feedback using a simple, 4-point scale (0-3): 0 (no feedback), 1 (poor quality of feedback), 2 (good quality of feedback), 3 (excellent quality of feedback). Your average score across all feedback will constitute your percentage points for class participation. The rationale for including peer feedback is twofold. First, it is useful for you to be evaluated by your peers because in the world of policy and public problems, you must be able to convince not only experts (a professor) with your arguments but also the public at large. Second, it is useful for you to gain experience giving constructive criticism, crafting the kind of useful, incisive yet benevolent, critique that you yourself would like to receive.

Although participation counts for only 10% of your final grade, this amount makes a critical difference when/if a semester grade hangs at the balance of two letter grades such as an A or a B.

INFORMAL COMMUNICATION
I encourage you to come to office hours with me in order to further converse about course topics. I will also host a series of free lunch sessions at local restaurants. If you wish to participate in a lunch group, please Email your name to my assistant, Ms. Alison Barron. She will randomly select 3-5 names per lunch and the details will be announced at least one week in advance.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
Almost every year, HKS expels students for cheating. You must observe HKS and Harvard University rules on honesty and ethics, which you can find at the following website: http://www.hks.harvard.edu/degrees/registrar/procedures/integrity. Please also encourage your classmates to uphold the highest standards. Let us build a community that values correct attribution of others’ ideas.
You can make sure that you do not inadvertently plagiarize if you follow good note-taking “hygiene.” Harvard has prepared a website on how to keep track of your sources: http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k70847&pageid=icb.page342057. Remember, turning an assignment in late carries a far less severe penalty than turning in an assignment that contains plagiarism.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES
I strongly advise you to take notes by hand rather than to type on a laptop. Studies show that you learn the information more effectively when you write it by hand because it requires you to synthesize the information. In order to benefit the class as a whole, all internet access should be shut off. In addition, electronic devices other than laptops (music/audio players, mobile phones, cameras, audio/video recorders, MP3 players, and iPods) should be off and placed out of sight.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

Religious observance: If you cannot attend a particular class because of religious reasons, please arrange with me at least one week ahead of time so we can make alternate plans for covering the material. If any quizzes or deadlines conflict with religious observance, please tell me within the first two weeks of the semester. There is a chance we can modify the schedule for everyone.

Illness: If you are sick and miss a class on the day of a quiz or deadline, please bring a note from your physician. If you have a protracted illness, please bring a note from your physician so we can make special arrangements.

COURSE TOPICS AND READING SCHEDULE

Note a: There may be some small changes to the reading schedule. Material sometimes takes longer than expected and sometimes students want to stay with particular topics for more time than originally allotted. Any schedule adjustments will be announced in class and posted online.

Note b: We will use one text book and myriad papers this semester. The Coop has copies of the text for your purchase or you may purchase it elsewhere. Keltner, D., Oatley, K., & Jenkins, J.M. (2014). Understanding emotions (3rd ed.). Location: John Wiley & Sons.

WEEK 1 ORIENTATION TO CLASS AND TOPIC

1.27: TOPIC: Class cancelled due to snowstorm
       Read: no assignment
1.29: **TOPIC: What is an Emotion?**

---

**WEEK 2**

**OVERVIEW OF EMOTION | RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT ON SLEEP**

2.3: **TOPIC: Spotlight research talk: Sleep and emotion, Dr. Robert Stickgold, Harvard Medical School**

2.5: **TOPIC: Overview of emotion theories and research**

---

**WEEK 3**

**RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT ON CHILDREN IN INSTITUTIONS | THE BIOLOGY OF EMOTION**

2.10: **TOPIC: Class cancelled due to snowstorm**

2.12: **TOPIC: The biology of emotion**

---

**WEEK 4**

**EMOTION AND DECISION MAKING | SPOTLIGHT TALK ON INTER-GROUP EMOTION**

2.17: **TOPIC: Emotion and decision making: Eight overarching themes**

2.19: **TOPIC: Spotlight research talk: Inter-group emotion, Dr. Mina Cikara, Department of Psychology**

---

**WEEK 5**

**EMOTION AND DECISION MAKING**

2.24: **TOPIC: Emotion and decision making: Eight overarching themes, cont.**

2.26: **TOPIC: Spotlight research talk: Human rights issues for children in institutions, Dr. Charles Nelson, Harvard Medical School, Harvard Graduate School of Education, & Children’s Hospital.**

---

**WEEK 6**

**EMOTION AND DECISION MAKING CONTINUED | SPOTLIGHT TALK ON FACIAL EXPRESSIONS AND NBA RECRUITING**

3.3: **TOPIC: Emotion-driven responses to terrorism**

3.5: **TOPIC: Facial expression of emotion. Spotlight research talk: Dr. Dan Hill, author of Emotionomics**
WEEK 7  STRESS – WHAT IS IT?  WHO HAS IT?  IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS?

3.10:  **TOPIC:** Fundamentals of stress  

3.12:  **TOPIC:** Stress and social hierarchy  

WEEK 8

3.17:  Spring Break, no class

3.19:  Spring Break, no class

WEEK 9  SPOTLIGHT TALK ON MORAL TRIBES | EMOTION AND MORALITY

3.24:  **TOPIC:** Spotlight research talk: Dr. Joshua Greene, Department of Psychology  

3.26:  **TOPIC:** Emotion and morality  

WEEK 10  EMOTION IN POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

3.31:  **TOPIC:** Balancing purely emotional appeals with cognitive reason in political campaigns  

4.2:  **TOPIC:** Election examples linked to the emotional brain  

WEEK 11  SPOTLIGHT TALK ON END-OF-LIFE DECISION MAKING | TED TALK POLICY FEST I

4.7:  **TOPIC:** Spotlight research talk: Dr. William Pirl, Harvard Medical School, Mass General Cancer Center  

4.9:  **TOPIC:** TED Talk Policy Fest I  
**Read:** None prior to class. After class, IF YOU DID NOT PRESENT THIS DAY, read your notes on each talk presented that day, complete an evaluation sheet for each presenter, and submit them to the course website by 9 AM the next day.

WEEK 12  TED TALK POLICY FEST II - III

4.14:  **TOPIC:** TED Talk Policy Fest II  
**Read:** None prior to class. After class, IF YOU DID NOT PRESENT THIS DAY, read your notes on each talk presented that day, complete an evaluation sheet for each presenter, and submit them to the course website by 9 AM the next day.

4.16:  **TOPIC:** TED Talk Policy Fest III  
**Read:** None prior to class. After class, IF YOU DID NOT PRESENT THIS DAY, read your notes on each talk presented that day, complete an evaluation sheet for each presenter, and submit them to the course website by 9 AM the next day.

WEEK 13  TED TALK POLICY FEST IV - V

4.21:  **TOPIC:** TED Talk Policy Fest IV – Extended Day Wine & Cheese  
**Read:** None prior to class. After class, IF YOU DID NOT PRESENT THIS DAY, read your notes on each talk presented that day, complete an evaluation sheet for each presenter, and submit them to the course website by 9 AM the next day.

4.23:  **TOPIC:** TED Talk Policy Fest IV
Read: None prior to class. After class, IF YOU DID NOT PRESENT THIS DAY, read your notes on each talk presented that day, complete an evaluation sheet for each presenter, and submit them to the course website by 9 AM the next day.

WEEK 14  THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS AND A MEANINGFUL LIFE

4.28:  TOPIC: What good are positive emotions? How do we cultivate positive emotions?

4.30:  LAST DAY OF CLASS TOPIC: Who feels positive emotions? Correlations with SES?

5.4:  (Reading period) Op-eds due

Online Resources

Human Emotion – Online course with June Gruber, Yale University
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLh9mgdi4rNewieO9Dsj-OhNBC9bF4FoRp

Yale Experts in Emotion Series – watch research experts on key topics
http://gruberpeplab.com/teaching/psych131_summer2013/expertseries.php

Examples of Emotion in the News

Bill Passed to Help Veteran Mental Health:

Facial Coding and Hiring Decisions in Sports:

The Power of Emotion in Growing Allegiance to Terrorist Organizations:

The Impact of Strong Emotions during Complicated Jury Selections:
The Importance of Collective Intelligence and Empathic Abilities when Working in Groups:

Incorporating Social-Emotional Learning into Education:


The Influence of Emotions on Public Risk Perception:

Preventing Dangerous Consequences of Anger in Sports:

The Emotional Component of the Presidency: