

Political Science 4903/5903  
Special Topics in Political Theory:

## **Passion and Politics**

Spring 2020

Instructor: Dr. Andrew Ross <[rossa@ohio.edu](mailto:rossa@ohio.edu)>  
Office: Bentley Annex 255  
Office hours: see link to MS Bookings on Bb

Location: Bentley 210  
Meeting times: W 3:05 – 5:50pm

### **Overview**

This course examines the political significance of emotion, aiming to understand better why certain political issues attract strong passions and what impact those passions have on the conduct of politics. The course will consider perspectives on both the risks and potentials associated with human emotion, both historically and in the present. One goal will be to develop critical vantage points on contemporary exclusions and injustices, which are often underpinned by emotions, real or imagined. The course will consider historical texts as well as contemporary readings from political theory, cultural theory, and (briefly) the science of emotion. Topics include: anger and justice, the dark sides of empathy, political polarization, the affective roots of racial and sexual subjugation, passion and populism, and politicized representations of emotion and emotional conduct. Students should complete the course with a better understanding of the complex emotional underpinnings of contemporary political action and discourse.

### **Learning Outcomes**

Students should complete the course with an ability to:

1. employ basic concepts in the multi-disciplinary study of emotion and affect;
2. evaluate competing perspectives on how to study emotion and what sorts of political, social, and cultural impacts it can have;
3. think critically about the political effects of emotion, including the “positive” impact of seemingly “bad” emotions and vice versa;
4. write clearly and persuasively and implement peer feedback through revisions;
5. explain challenging ideas and readings through class discussion;
6. design, plan, and deliver written projects that are organized coherently and logically, that employ relevant evidence and examples, and that evaluate ideas in a clear and compelling way; and
7. cite and document primary and secondary sources to support an argument using a consistent format and formal method of citation.

### **Assignments for POLS 4903**

**Participation:** Regular attendance and participation are essential requirements for this course. Students are expected to come to class having completed and thought about the readings; you should also bring them to class, preferably in print form. The participation grade will be based on the quality and quantity of your contributions in class and during office hours; it may also be affected by your attendance (see policy below). I will place greater value on contributions that demonstrate engagement with assigned readings. I also ask that students listen while others are speaking and not carry on side conversations.

**Critical Response Papers:** for Weeks 2-4, you will complete short reflections based on weekly readings and uploaded to Bb *in advance of class time*. These will be 500-600 words (2 pages double-spaced) and will (a) summarize the key ideas in the assigned readings and (b) develop either a critical commentary on some specific assumption/argument contained in these readings, or identify *and explain the significance of* a question you have about the reading. Critical response papers are **due by 3pm Tuesday** of the week for which the readings are assigned.

**Presentation:** Each student will deliver a 5-7 minute “kickstarter” presentation to get discussion rolling at the beginning of one class, beginning Week 5. Up to two students may sign up for each class; you may work together on all readings or divide them up. Students may apply to opt out of the presentation and instead write two additional critical response papers during weeks of their choosing.

**Paper #1:** A 4–5 page paper on Nussbaum’s *Monarchy of Fear*. The paper will be due **Friday Feb. 28 (Week 7) by 11:59pm**, but a 3–4 page draft must be ready for a peer review exercise Feb. 19 (Week 6).\*

**Paper #2:** A 4–5 page paper based on the **reading assigned for Week 7/8 or Week 9**. The paper will be due **Friday Apr. 3 (Friday of Week 11) by 11:59pm**. Full drafts for peer review exercise on Apr. 1.\*

**Paper #3:** A 4–5 page paper based on the **reading assigned for Week 11 or Week 12/13**. The paper will be due **Wednesday, Apr. 29 by 11:59pm**. Full drafts for peer review exercise on Apr. 22.\*

\*On each of these days, you will bring a draft of your paper to class. Arriving to these class meetings on time and participating in each peer review workshop is worth 2% of your final grade.

### **Longer paper option for POLS 4903**

Undergraduates may opt to write a longer, research-oriented paper in lieu of the second and third short papers. The paper will be 10-12 pages long (excluding footnotes and bibliography/references) but will otherwise follow all the same requirements and due dates as the research paper for 5903. If your proposal receives a B- or lower, I will require you to revert to the default undergraduate option above.

## **Assignments for POLS 5903**

**Participation, Critical Response Papers, Presentation, and Paper #1:** Same as for POLS 4903 above.

**Research paper:** You will write a research paper of 15-18 pages (excluding bibliography/references) on a topic relating to this course (and not substantially focused on *The Monarchy of Fear*). You will choose your topic but obtain my approval by the end of Week 8 (meeting with me at least once to discuss the paper topic). There are then three graded (and one non-graded) components to this assignment:

**Paper Proposal:** A two-page (double-spaced) prospectus for the paper and bibliography of the materials you have gathered to date. This document is due by **Friday of Week 9 (Friday, March 20) at 11:59pm**;

**Work-in-progress workshop** (not graded): be prepared to give a brief (2-3 min.) account of your project and receive feedback in class on Apr. 1;

**Paper draft:** submit and circulate a draft of your paper by **Monday, Apr. 20 at 11:59pm**. You will submit this via Bb, and I will then forward it to the classmates in your working group for a final peer review workshop on Apr. 24. Be prepared to read drafts for one or (more likely) two other students. On-time submission of the full draft is worth 1% of your overall course grade, and participation in the peer review on Apr. 24 is worth another 2%; and

**Final paper:** Revise your draft and submit the final paper by **Wednesday, Apr. 29 at 11:59pm**.

## Grades

Overall grades will be calculated as follows:

4093		4093 longer paper option		5093	
Participation	15 %	Participation	15 %	Participation	15 %
Critical response papers	15 %	Critical response papers	15 %	Critical response papers	15 %
Presentation	10 %	Presentation	10 %	Presentation	10 %
Paper #1 draft + wksp	2 %	Paper #1 draft + wksp	2 %	Paper #1 draft + wksp	2 %
Paper #1	18 %	Paper #1	18 %	Paper #1	18 %
Paper #2 draft + wksp	2 %	Proposal	5 %	Proposal	5 %
Paper #2	18 %	Rsch paper draft + wksp	3 %	Rsch paper draft + wksp	3 %
Paper #3 draft + wksp	2 %	Research paper	32 %	Research paper	32 %
Paper #3	18 %				

## Course Policies

**Academic misconduct:** Students in this course are expected to follow the University's standards of academic integrity and honesty and are responsible for understanding what constitutes plagiarism. One reference is here: <http://www.ohio.edu/communitystandards/academic/students.cfm>. If you are caught cheating or plagiarizing, you may receive a grade deduction on the assignment, a failing grade for the assignment, or a failing grade for the class. You may also be reported to the Office of Community Standards and Student Responsibility for additional sanctions. Students may appeal academic sanctions through the grade appeal process.

**Attendance:** I strongly encourage students to attend as close to every class as possible. To accommodate minor illness and other occasional events, I allow all students to miss up to three classes (excluding any paper workshop, if applicable) without documentation or explanation. Note that the allowable absences will not enhance your participation grade: they won't adversely impact it, but they also won't raise it. If you miss class due to minor illness, traffic delays, student conferences, athletics events, family obligations, or the like, that missed class will count toward the allowed absences. Your participation grade will be reduced starting with the fourth missed class. The penalty will increase for each class missed, up to six absences. If you miss seven or more classes, you will get zero for your participation grade. Do not expect full attendance credit if you arrive late or leave early; arriving late on a regular basis will count as part of the allowed absences. Students are responsible for all course materials covered and announcements made during missed classes. If you are missing class due to on-going health problems (physical or mental), please discuss the situation with me as early as possible.

**Blackboard:** I expect you to use the Bb system to access readings, announcements, and assignment information. I will not use Bb to calculate or communicate your running average or overall grade in the class. If you encounter a broken link, a missing content item, or something else I need to fix, please let me know via email asap. If you are having general Bb problems, contact the Help Desk. You will also submit writing assignments on Bb; it is your responsibility to ensure that your documents are properly uploaded. Uploading formats other than .pdf and MS Word-created .docx may cause problems; again, it is your responsibility to ensure that your document is intact and accessible to me. Bb will always give you both an on-screen and email confirmation once your document is uploaded.

**Devices in class:** Please silence your phone and put it away during class time. I will allow laptops and tablets during class time *only for the purposes of accessing digital readings*. I reserve the right to ask one or more students to discontinue the use of devices for the remainder of the semester if they become

distracting. By enrolling in this course, students are agreeing not to use devices during class time for purposes other than accessing electronic readings.

**Disability accommodations:** Any student who suspects s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the class instructor privately to discuss the student's specific needs and provide written documentation from the Office of Student Accessibility Services. If the student is not yet registered as a student with a disability, s/he should contact the Office of Student Accessibility Services.

**Email:** Check your OU email regularly for announcements or other communications. You may contact me via email at any time, but please try first to answer your question using the syllabus and the resources on Blackboard. I do my best to reply to student emails same or next day M-F, and Monday for messages sent Friday. If you want to discuss course themes and readings, or if you have a complex or sensitive question, please come to office hours.

**Grading:** There will be no make-up assignments, extra credit assignments, or opportunities to revise and resubmit assignments for a higher grade. The peer review exercises are your chance to improve your writing and raise your grade on an assignment. If you have concerns about your grade or questions about my expectations, please schedule a meeting with me as early as possible in the semester. I use the following grading scale for determining letter grades: A = 93 and above; A- = 90-92; B+ = 87-89; B = 83-86; B- = 80-82; C+ = 77-79; C = 73-76; C- = 70-72; D+ = 67-69; D = 63-66; D- = 60-62; F = <60. I consider 90, 91, and 92 to be excellent grades, 93 and above outstanding; I rarely award assignments grades above 95. I also do not begin from 100 and deduct points.

**Late papers** will be penalized 6 points per day (e.g. a paper awarded an 88/B+ submitted one day late will receive an 82/B-), including weekend days, to a maximum of three days (after which the assignment will not be graded). No exceptions in cases of computer malfunction, loss of data, or incomplete Bb submission. Cases of serious illness (physical or mental) or family emergency should be brought to my attention, with documentation from the appropriate University office, prior to or immediately following the missed assignment. Late papers may not receive instructor feedback and will be graded when I have time; in some cases, this may not be until the end of the semester.

**Office hours** are designated blocks of time for consultation with students, to discuss your progress in this course, the Political Science major, or general educational and career plans. This semester, I am using online booking (see Bb for the link), but you are also welcome to stop by unannounced.

**Required texts:** The following books are required for this course:

- Ahmed, Sara. *The Promise of Happiness*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010. (~\$28)
- Appadurai, Arjun. *Fear of Small Numbers: An Essay in the Geography of Anger*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006. (~\$20)
- Breithaupt, Fritz. *The Dark Sides of Empathy*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2019. (~\$22)
- Coates, Ta-Nehisi. *Between the World and Me*. New York: Spiegel and Grau, 2015. (~\$13)
- Nussbaum, Martha C. *The Monarchy of Fear: A Philosopher Looks at Our Political Crisis*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2018. (~\$11-\$17)

These books will be available for purchase at the Little Professor Book Center on Court St., but they are also widely available via OhioLink and on overnight reserve at Alden Library. If you do make use of the reserve copy, please return it on time so that another student can access it. Other course readings are available for download on Bb. If you have any concerns about the cost of books for this course, please come to see me; I will try to help you find a solution. Minor modifications to weekly readings may become necessary; I will notify you of any changes in class and/or via email.

**Syllabus changes:** In the event of a flu epidemic or other campus emergency beyond the instructor's control, course requirements, deadlines, and grading percentages are subject to change. Any changes will be communicated in class and/or via Bb/email.

The lectures, classroom activities, and all materials associated with this class and developed by the instructor are copyrighted in the name of Andrew Ross on January 15, 2020.

## Course Topics and Readings

### I. Introduction and Key Concepts

#### Week 1 (1/15): Introduction and Overview

Nussbaum, Ch.1 (Introduction), *Monarchy of Fear*

#### Week 2 (1/22): Rethinking Passion and Reason

Hume, David. *A Treatise of Human Nature*

- Book II, Part III, Section III-IX (36pp)
- Book III, Part I, Sections I-II (21pp)
- Book III, Part III, Section I (18pp)

Krause, Sharon. "Passion, Power, and Impartiality in Hume." In: *Bringing the Passions Back In: The Emotions in Political Philosophy*, edited by Rebecca Kingston and Leonard Ferry, 126-144. Toronto, ON: UBC Press, 2008.

#### Week 3 (1/29): The Science of Emotion

James, William. "What Is an Emotion?" *Mind* 9, no. 34 (1884): 188-205.

Damasio, Antonio and Hanna Damasio. "Minding the Body." *Daedalus* 135, no. 3 (2006): 15-22.

Barrett, Lisa Feldman. Introduction, Ch. 2, Ch. 7. In: *How Emotions Are Made: The Secret Life of the Brain*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017. [pp. ix-xv, 25-41, 128-151]

#### Week 4 (2/5): The "Turn to Affect"

Connolly, William E. "The Body/Brain/Culture Network." Ch. 1 in: *Neuropolitics: Thinking, Culture, Speed*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002. [pp. 1-21]

Massumi, Brian. "The Autonomy of Affect." In: *Parables of the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002. [pp. 23-45]

Leys, Ruth. "The Turn to Affect: A Critique." *Critical Inquiry* 37, no. 3 (2011): 434-472.

### II. Passion and Democracy

#### Week 5 (2/12): Fear and Insecurity

Nussbaum, Ch. 2, 4, 6-7, *Monarchy of Fear*

#### Week 6 (2/19): Affect and Fascism (plus first peer review)

Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. "1933: Micropolitics and Segmentarity." In: *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translated by Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987. [pp. 208-231]

Connolly, William E. "Trump, the Working Class, and Fascist Rhetoric." *Theory & Event* 20, no. 1 (supplement) (2017): 23-37.  
Nussbaum, Ch. 5, *Monarchy of Fear*

**Week 7 (2/26): "Happy Objects" and "Feminist Killjoys"**

Ahmed, Sara. Introduction, Ch. 1-3. *The Promise of Happiness*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010.

**Week 8 (3/4): "Happy Objects" cont'd**

Ahmed, Sara. Ch. 4-5, Conclusion. *The Promise of Happiness*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010.

**III. Passion and Violence**

**Week 9 (3/18): Fear, Globalization, and Conflict**

Appadurai, Arjun. *Fear of Small Numbers: An Essay in the Geography of Anger*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006.

**Week 10 (3/25): No class this week**

Start reading Coates for Week 11

**Week 11 (4/1): Fear and Racialized Bodies (plus second peer review)**

Coates, Ta-Nehisi. *Between the World and Me*. New York: Spiegel and Grau, 2015.

Rogers, Melvin L. "Between Pain and Despair: What Ta-Nehisi Coates is Missing." *Dissent* (31 July 2015).

**IV. Passion and Justice**

**Week 12 (4/8): Rethinking Empathy**

Breithaupt, Introduction, Ch. 1-2. *The Dark Sides of Empathy*.

**Week 13 (4/15): Rethinking Empathy cont'd**

Breithaupt, Ch. 3-5, Epilogue. *The Dark Sides of Empathy*.

**Week 14 (4/22): Anger and Forgiveness (plus final peer review)**

Nussbaum, Ch. 3, *Monarchy of Fear* [pp. 63-95]

Nussbaum, Martha C. Ch. 7. *Anger and Forgiveness: Resentment, Generosity, Justice*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018. [pp. 211-46]

Thompson, Debra. "An Exoneration of Black Rage." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 117, no. 3 (2017): 457-81.