# Human Emotions

**Course Syllabus**

**(Provisional, as of Aug 20, 2018)**

## Wednesdays 10:00 am to 12:30 pm

##### Logan Hall 125

**Spring Term 2018**

**Psych 423 section 1, CRN 62418**

**Psych 623 section 1, CRN 62419**

## Instructor:

## Geoffrey Miller, Associate Professor of Psychology

Office hours: Thursdays 11 am to noon, Logan Hall 160

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**Brief course description for UNM course catalog**

Human emotions evolved to help solve specific problems of survival, reproduction, and social living. We’ll discuss the forms and functions of fear, disgust, love, jealousy, anger, pride, embarrassment, shame, guilt, empathy, trust, curiosity, and happiness.

## Overview

In this seminar we’ll read and discuss new ideas about human emotions viewed functionally as adaptations. In contrast to the traditional view that emotions are irrational or useless, we’ll consider how each specific emotion may contain a hidden adaptive logic that solves certain problems of survival, reproduction, or social life more effectively than conscious rational thought.

Instead of seeking any Grand Unified Theory of Emotion, we’ll focus on many specific emotions such as: fear, anxiety, disgust, lust, love, jealousy, anger, hatred, pride, embarrassment, shame, guilt, compassion, empathy, trust, surprise, curiosity, awe, and happiness.

We’ll also consider states of mind that carry an emotional impact but that aren’t traditionally considered ‘emotions’, such as: nightmares, phobias, sexual disgust, sexual arousal, orgasms, attachment, heartbreak, pride, confidence, friendliness, self-consciousness, cuteness, cruelty, moral outrage, moral conscience, group solidarity, mindfulness, and risky thrills.

We’ll see how emotions evolved in animals, how they function in humans, how they differ from motivations and moods, and how they promote individual success, social relationships, and group solidarity.

We’ll also look at the emotional aspects of mental disorders, especially anxiety disorders, phobias, depression, mania, sexual disorders, pathological jealousy, psychopathy, borderline personality disorder, sexual sadism, grandiose delusions, and narcissism.

Finally, we’ll consider how emotions play out in a wide variety of modern contexts, such as sexual relationships, families, psychotherapy, consumer marketing, public health, horror movies, action movies, bisexuality, BDSM/kink, reality TV series, mixed martial arts, adventure tourism, emotional contagion on Facebook, Internet trolling, group synchronization in dance and displays, group laughter, recreational drug use, crime victimization, homicide, warfare, Effective Altruism, political attitudes, religious conflict, and public policies to promote happiness.

**Course mechanics**

## We will meet once a week for two and a half hours, from 10:00 am to 12:30 pm on Wednesdays. I expect you to arrive punctually, with bags unpacked, readings in front of you, and your brain ready to participate, by 10:00 am. There will be a 10-minute break about half way through each class.

## If you have to miss a class for any reason, please let me know by email as soon as you know you’ll be absent. Unexplained absences will reduce your grade by reducing your class participation score.

**Readings**

Each week there will be 3 or 4 assigned readings, mostly journal papers, that should take about 3 hours on average to read. *Please do not take this course if you cannot commit about 3 hours a week to doing the readings*. The educational benefits of the course depend on you doing the readings on time, so you can contribute to class discussions. If you don’t read the assignments, you won’t learn much; if you do read them attentively, you’ll learn a lot. Some of the readings are harder than others; some weeks require more reading than other weeks. You won’t be expected to do any readings before the first class.

Most of the required readings will be scientific papers from psychology journals, which I will upload to the course’s UNM Learn site. I’ve assigned mostly short papers – their average length is about 8 pages. I recommend printing out hardcopies so you can underline and take notes more easily. You can keep the printed papers in a 3-ring binder for easy reference. There will be about 40 journal papers total to read during the term.

I expect all of each week’s required readings to be completed well before class, so you have time to digest them, think about them, compare and contrast them, and prepare intelligent comments and questions about them. Last-minute reading will not result in good comprehension or good in-class discussion. If you see a word, term, or concept that you don’t understand when reading, don’t just gloss over it and hope for the best; instead, look it up through Google search or Wikipedia. I’ve tried to find good, short, recent, interesting readings that aren’t too technical, but there will be some jargon that you’ll need to look up.

In the course schedule on the last few pages of this syllabus, I’ve included page-counts of actual text to read (not including references in the bibliography) for each assignment. The journal papers will probably take 3-4 minutes per page. Plan your study time accordingly.

**Grading.**

There will be no tests or exams in this course. Instead, your grade will depend on two kinds of work.

* **40%: class attendance, participation, and discussion points** (see below)
* **60% of grade: one term paper**, due in three stages (see below)

# Class attendance, participation, and discussion points: 40% of final grade

Most of our class time will be spent discussing the readings. Sometimes I’ll give little mini-lectures for a few minutes on particular ideas or findings that might need explaining from the readings. But for most of each class, I’ll be moderating discussions and debates among you, the students.

So, I expect regular attendance, knowledge of assigned readings, active participation and intellectual engagement, and thoughtful questions and commentaries about the readings. I will keep records of who attends each class, who asks good questions and makes insightful comments, who seem to have done the readings conscientiously, and who contributes to making this class an intellectually vibrant and rewarding experience for the other students.

**Before each class, you should write down one good discussion point about each assigned reading**. Since there are three or four assigned readings for a class, you should have at least three or four discussion points ready to go.

Each discussion point could be a thoughtful comment, question, critique, or comparison to other readings, theories, or findings. It should not just summarize the reading’s argument, but it should show that you have understood the reading, and developed your own thoughts in response. It should not just be a personal reaction or anecdote vaguely related to the reading, but it could relate the reading’s ideas to current events, controversies, or real-life issue. The best discussion points are both funny and intellectually serious.

If you haven’t understood the reading well enough to prepare a discussion point, you should be ready to say what specific theories, concepts, or findings you found most confusing, and why. If you didn’t understand something after reading it carefully, other students probably didn’t either, and we should discuss and clarify it.

You should write out these discussion points before each class, expressed clearly and concisely enough that you can read them our loud quickly, and written down clearly so you can read them.

I won’t collect these discussion points, but I will call on students to read them aloud to the class. If I call on you and you haven’t done that particular reading or prepared a thoughtful comment, your participation grade will be lower for that class. If I call on you and you have a great comment that sparks a lot of discussion, your participation grade will be higher.

If you’re shy, knowing that you have good discussion points written down ahead of time will make it easier for you to speak up without feeling awkward.

The best discussion points do not just show off how clever you are, but are effective at getting other students engaged in the intellectual life of our class. You’ll learn as the term progresses what kind of comments are good discussion-sparks and which fall flat.

## Term paper in 3 stages: 60% of final grade

The term paper determines 60% of your course grade, and will be developed in three stages that will be graded separately. You can choose any topic related to the course content and course readings. The final paper should be about 3,000 words, plus references – that’s about 12 pages double-spaced. I care more about clarity, insight, research, and the flow of argument than about length per se.

The final term paper must be in standard APA (American Psychological Association) research paper format. If you’re not familiar with APA style, skim the *APA Publication Manual* for details, or see one of the online sites that summarizes its key points, such as <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>. All 3 stages should be printed single-sided on standard size white paper, with 1 inch margins, double-spaced, in 12 point Arial or Times Roman font.

For graduate students, my goal is for you to produce a paper that could serve as a useful part of your master’s thesis, comprehensive examination, or dissertation – or that you could submit to a decent journal as a review or commentary piece.

To make sure that you are thinking, researching, and writing the paper on a good schedule throughout the semester, you’ll submit the three assignments about one month apart. I’ve used this system in many previous classes, and it really helps students pace their work and avoid any last-minute panic about their papers.

Stage 1: Provisional title, abstract, and annotated bibliography due in class (10% of final course grade).

Turn in a hardcopy document in class that day, including:

1) A provisional title, ideally about 8-20 words, that concisely explains what you think you’ll write about for the rest of the term. The title should be clear, concise, detailed, and take a stand on some issue in emotions research. A bad example title would be “Disgust and politics” – it’s too vague. A better example title would be “Sexual disgust explains conservative attitudes towards abortion and gay marriage.” If you change your mind about your topic later, no problem, just tell me in an email later. Pick a topic that you feel passionate about – you’ll have to live with it for several months! (Of course, also include your name under the title).

2) A one-paragraph abstract, just under your title, in APA format, ideally about 150-250 words. Your title alone should give me a clear idea what you expect to write about. This abstract should go into more detail, demonstrating that you’ve already been doing some background reading about your issue, and you’re already starting to develop some of your own ideas. It should give me a sense of how you’ll structure your final term paper, how your flow of argument will go, and what kind of examples and findings you’ll use to support your points. The best abstracts have no wasted words or fluff: they get straight to the point and have real detail.

3) A provisional bibliography, after the abstract, listing about 10 to 20 sources relevant to your topic that you have actually read. Most of them should be journal papers; a few could be books (if you really had time to read them); they should not just be online resources, blogs, popular science features, etc. They should not all be from the syllabus here – you should use UNM’s online library resources and Google Scholar to find additional journal papers. In citing them, use standard APA reference format, e.g. as explained here: <http://www.library.cornell.edu/resrch/citmanage/apa> .

Also, you should explain each reference’s relevance to your topic with a brief annotation right after the APA citation. A good annotation would be “This paper critically reviews 18 recent studies of domain-specific disgust effects, emphasizing the similarities between social disgust and cheater-detection, and between pathogen-avoidance disgust and nausea.” A bad annotation would be “Reviews disgust research”.

After I get this initial packet from you, I will write comments and suggestions on it and return it as soon as I can.

**Stage 2: Revised abstract, outline, and annotated bibliography due in class (20% of course grade).**

Before doing this assignment, you should consider very carefully the comments and suggestions that I gave on your stage 1 assignment. Students who take my feedback seriously tend to get better grades.

The assignment format here is similar: turn in a hardcopy documentin class that day, printed single-sided on standard size white paper, with 1 inch margins, double-spaced, in 12 point Arial font. This assignment should include:

1) A revised title – ideally, more concise, detailed, and exciting than before, but still about 8-20 words; include your name under the title.

2) A revised abstract that shows further research, thought, and organizational strategy, still about 150-250 words

3) An outline, around 2 pages long, that shows the planned structure of your paper. It should clearly show your flow of argument, and the specific theories, findings, and issues that you’ll consider.

The outline should include about 4 to 7 section headings that describe the overall organization of your term paper. A bad section heading would be a vague place-holder, such as “Introduction” or “Conclusion”. A good section heading would be much meatier, e.g. “Introduction: Three contrasting theories of sexual disgust”.

Under each section heading, you should have outline entries that show how you’ll flesh out your arguments. A bad entry would be “Tybur’s idea.” A good entry would be “Tybur’s (2011) mate-choice theory: Disgust modulates adaptive sexual preferences”. Outline entries can also cite bibliography entries as above.

4) A revised annotated bibliography. This should include about 20 to 30 references that you have actually read, and that you plan to cite in the final paper.

After I get this revised packet from you, I will write comments and suggestions on it and return it as soon as I can. This should allow you to submit a really good final draft, and I hope it will help you improve your writing generally.

##### Stage 3: Final term paper (due the Friday after last class, before Final Exam week): (30% of course grade):

##### *Turn it in to Geoffrey Miller’s mailbox in the Psychology Front Office, Logan Hall by* 4:00 pm, and *get it stamped by a front office staff member with the official date and time that you turn it in*.

This should be the culmination of three months of research, thinking, and writing about a topic that passionately interests you. It should take seriously my feedback on the stage 1 and 2 assignments. It must be in standard APA (American Psychological Association) research paper format; see the *APA Publication Manual* for details. This means double-spaced, single-sided, in 12 point Arial font, with a proper title page, abstract, references, and page numbering. It should be a well-polished document, thoroughly proofread, with very few spelling or grammatical errors.

The final term paper should include the following:

* Title: a clear, descriptive, engaging title, about 8-20 words, and your name
* Abstract: a concise, punchy abstract that interests the reader in your paper, about 150-250 words
* Introduction: Start with a bang. Pose the problem that interests you, and how you’ll approach it. Say where you stand, and why the reader should care. Be specific and clear; mix the theoretical and methodological level of discourse with real-life examples and issues; know when to be funny and when to be serious.
* Body of the paper: depending on what you’re writing about, this could include a literature review, a series of arguments, an overview of relevant ideas and research from a related area or field, a series of methodological analyses, criticism, and suggestions, or anything that advances your points. If you include literature reviews, don’t do generic overviews – review the literature with a purpose, critically, as it pertains to your topic.
* Research proposal: towards the end of your paper, sketch out a new empirical study that could resolve one of the issues you’ve raised in your paper. This could be a brief outline of a proposed experiment, an observational study, analysis of an archival dataset, or any other approach you think would be appropriate. You should explain what data would be collected, how it would be analyzed (roughly), and how the results would give insight into one of your paper’s key outstanding questions.
* Annotated Bibliography: This should include about 20 to 30 good, relevant references that you’ve actually read; only some of them should be from this class syllabus. If your bibliography includes good, relevant papers and books that I haven’t read before, I will be impressed.

**Grading differences for Psych 650 (graduates) vs. Psych 450 (undergraduates)**

Students taking this course for Psych 650 credit (as graduate students) will be expected to show higher levels of scientific expertise, intellectual sophistication, background research, and writing skill throughout their in-class comments and term paper assignments. In particular, I expect graduate students to (1) read the assigned papers and book chapters more attentively, closely, and critically, (2) make more thoughtful, integrative, and comparative comments on the readings, (3) show higher intellectual maturity, complexity, and flexibility in their responses to scientific controversies, and (4) produce final term papers that could be submitted, with a little polishing, to a decent scientific journal.

**Schedule of topics and readings week by week**

## Class 1: Aug 22: Course overview and mechanics

No assigned readings before first class.

## Class 2: Aug 29: Introduction to emotions, moods, and motivations

**Readings to complete before this class (30 pp total):**

Al-Shawaf, L., Conroy-Beam, D., Asao, K., & Buss, D. M. (2015). Human emotions: An evolutionary psychological perspective. *Emotion Review, 8*(2), 173-186. (11 pp)

Nettle, D., & Bateson, M. (2012). The evolutionary origins of mood and its disorders. *Current Biology*, R712-R721. (8 pp)

Griskevicius, V., & Kenrick, D. T. (2013). Fundamental motives: How evolutionary needs influence consumer behavior. *Journal of Consumer Psychology, 23*(3), 387-399 (11 pp)

## Class 3: Sept 5: Survival-related emotions

**Readings (26 pp total):**

Holbrook, C. (2016). Branches of a twisting tree: Domain-specific threat psychologies derive from shared mechanisms. *Current Opinion in Psychology, 7*, 81-86. (4 pp)

Clasen, M. (2012). Monsters evolve: A biocultural approach to horror stories. *Review of General Psychology, 16*(2), 222-229. (7 pp)

Boyer, B., & Bergstrom, B. (2011). Threat-detection in child development: An evolutionary perspective. *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral reviews, 35*(4), 1034-1041. (6 pp)

Curtis, V. (2011). Why disgust matters. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London B, 366*(1583), 3478-3490. (9 pp)

### Class 4: Sept 12: Mating-related emotions

**Readings (27 pp total):**

Ariely, D., & Loewenstein, G. (2006). The heat of the moment: The effect of sexual arousal on decision making. *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making, 19*, 87-98. (11 pp)

Puts, D. A., Dawoord, K., & Welling, L. L. M. (2012). Why women have orgasms: An evolutionary analysis. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 41*, 1127-1143. (13 pp)

Kuhle, B. X. (2011). Did you have sex with him? Do you love her? An in vivo test of sex differences in jealous interrogations. *Personality and Individual Differences, 51*, 1044-1047. (3 pp)

### Class 5: Sept 19: Aggression-related emotions

##### *Term paper stage 1 due in class: Provisional title, abstract, and bibliography*

**Readings (26 pp total):**

McDonald, M. M., Navarette, C. D., & Von Vugt, M. (2012). Evolution and the psychology of intergroup conflict: The male warrior hypothesis. *Phil. Trans. Royal Society London B, 367*, 670-679. (8 pp)

Duntley, J. D., & Shackelford, T. K. (2012). Adaptations to avoid victimization. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 17*, 59-71 (12 pp).

Jozifkova, E. (2013) Consensual sadomasochistic sex (BDSM): The roots, the risks, and the distinctions between BDSM and violence. Current Psychiatry Reports, 15, 392-400 (6 pp)

### Class 6: Sept 26: Social emotions

**Readings (41 pp total):**

Tracy, J. L., Weidman, A. C., Cheng, J. T., et al. (2014). Pride: The fundamental emotion of success, power, and status. In M. M. Tugade et al. (Eds.), *Handbook of positive emotions* (pp. 294-310). NY: Guilford. (17 pp).

Lewis, D. M. G., Al-Shawaf, L., Russell, E. M., & Buss, D. M. (2015). Friends and happiness: An evolutionary perspective on friendship. In M. Demir (Ed.), *Friendship and happiness across the life-span and cultures* (pp. 37-57). Springer. (16 pp)

Fleischman, D. S., Fessler, D. M., & Choulakians, A. E. (2015). Testing the affiliation hypothesis of homoerotic motivation in humans: The effects of progesterone and priming. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 44*(5), 1395-1404. (8 pp)

**Class 7: Oct 3: Care-taking emotions**

**Readings (30 pp total):**

##### Sherman, G. D., & Haidt, J. (2011). Cuteness and disgust: The humanizing and dehumanizing effects of emotion. *Emotion Review, 3*(3), 245-251. (6 pp)

##### Everett, J. A. C., Pizarro, D. A., & Crockett, M. J. (2016). Inference of trustworthiness from intuitive moral judgments. *J. Experimental Psychology: General, 145*(6), 772-787. (13 pp)

##### Griskevicius, V., Cantu, S. M., & van Vugt, M. (2012). The evolutionary bases for sustainable behavior: Implications for marketing, policy, and social entrepreneurship. *J. of Public Policy & Marketing, 31*(1), 115-128. (11 pp)

Class 8: Oct 10: Moral emotions

**Readings (41 pp total):**

### Haidt, J. (2013). Moral psychology for the twenty-first century. J*. of Moral Education, 42*(3), 281-297 (15 pp)

### Singer, P. (2014). The logic of effective altruism. Boston Review (6 pp) http://bostonreview.net/forum/peter-singer-logic-effective-altruism

### Asao, K., & Buss, D. M. (2016). The tripartite theory of Machiavellian morality: Judgement, influence, and conscience as distinct moral adaptations. In T. K. Shackelford & R. D. Hansen (Eds.), *The evolution of morality* (pp. 3-25). Springer. (20 pp).

**(No Class Oct 17: Geoffrey away at a conference in Arizona)**

**Class 9: Oct 24: Group emotions**

**Readings (16 pp total):**

Dezecache, G., & Dunbar, R. I. M. (2012). Sharing the joke: The size of natural laughter groups. *Evolution and Human Behavior, 33*(6), 775-779. (4 pp)

Launay, J., Tarr, B., & Dunbar, R. I. M. (2016). Synchrony as an adaptive mechanism for large-scale human social bonding. *Ethology, 122*, 1-11. (6 pp)

Atran, S., & Ginges, J. (2012). Religious and sacred imperatives in human conflict. *Science, 336*(855), 855-857 (3 pp).

### Kramer, A. D. I., Guillory, J. E., & Hancock, J. T. (2014) Experimental evidence of massive-scale emotional contagion through social networks. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA, 111*, 24, 8788-8790 (3 pp).

Class 10: Oct 31: Cognitive and aesthetic emotions

##### *Term paper stage 2 due in class: Revised abstract, outline, and bibliography*

**Readings (26 pp total):**

##### Silvia, P. J. (2009). Looking past pleasure: Anger, confusion, disgust, pride, surprise, and other unusual aesthetic emotions. *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts, 3*(1), 48-51. (3 pp)

##### Piff, P. K., Dietze, P., Feinberg, M. et al. (2015). Awe, the small self, and prosocial behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 108*, 883-899. (15 pp)

##### Buckley, R. (2012). Rush as a key motivation in skilled adventure tourism: Resolving the risk recreation paradox. *Tourism Management, 33*, 961-960. (8 pp)

### Class 11: Nov 7: Emotional expressions

**Readings (16 pp total):**

Waller, B. M., & Michelatta, J. (2013). Facial expression in nonhuman animals. *Emotion Review, 5*(1), 54-59. (4 pp)

Shariff, A. F., & Tracy, J. L. (2011). What are emotion expressions for? *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 20*(6), 395-399. (4 pp)

### Kraus, M. W., & Chen, T.-W. D. (2013). A winning smile? Smile intensity, physical dominance, and fighter performance. *Emotion, 13*(2), 270-279. (8 pp)

### Class 12: Nov 14: Emotions in personality disorders

**Readings (26 pp total)**

### Jonason, P. K., Webster, G. D., Schmitt, D. P., & Li, N. P. (2012). The antihero in popular culture: Life history theory and the Dark Triad personality traits. *Review of General Psychology, 16*(2),192-199. (6 pp text)

Buckels, E. E., Trapell, P. D., & Paulhus, D. L. (2014). Trolls just want to have fun. *Personality and Individual Differences, 67*, 97-102. (5 pp)

Herpertz, S. C., & Bertsch, K. (2014). The social-cognitive basis of personality disorders. *Current Opinion in Psychiatry, 27*(1), 73-77. (4 pp).

Briken, P., Bourget, D., Dufour, M. (2014). Sexual sadism in sexual offenders and sexually motivated homicide. *Psychiatric Clinics of North America 37*(2), 215-230. (11 pp)

**(No Class Nov 21: Day before Thanksgiving)**

### Class 13: Nov 28: Emotions in mood disorders

**Readings (30 pp total):**

Forgas, J. P. (2013). Don’t worry, be sad! On the cognitive, motivational, and interpersonal benefits of negative mood. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 2*(3), 225-232. (6 pp)

Durisko, Z., Mulsant, B. H., & Andrews, P. W. (2015). An adaptationist perspective on the etiology of depression. *Journal of Affective Disorders, 172*, 315-323. (8 pp)

Anderson, I. M., Haddad, P. M., & Scott, J. (2012). Bipolar disorder. *British Medical Journal, 345*, 1-10. (6 pp)

Knowles, R., McCarthy-Jones, S., & Rowse, G. (2010). Grandiose delusions: A review and theoretical integration of cognitive and affective perspectives. *Clinical Psychology Review, 31*, 684-696. (10 pp)

### Class 14: Dec 5: Happiness, mindfulness, neuroenhancement, and policy

**Readings (33 pp total):**

# Brand, R., Wolff, W., & Ziegler, M. (2016). Drugs as instruments: Describing and testing a behavioral approach to the study of neuroenhancement. *Frontiers in Psychology, 7*: 1226, 1-11 (9 pp).

# Garland, E. L., Farb, N. A., Goldin, P. R., & Frederickson, B. L. (2015). The mindfulness-to-meaning theory: Extensions, applications, and challenges at the attention-appraisal-emotion interface. *Psychological Inquiry, 26*(4), 377-387. (17 pp)

# Oishi, S., & Diener, E. (2014). Can and should happiness be a policy goal? *Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Sciences, 1*(1), 195-203. (7 pp)

##### \*\*\* Friday Dec 7: Final term paper (stage 3) due by 4:00 pm: in Geoffrey Miller’s mailbox in the Psychology Department Front Office, Logan Hall

# *(UNM final exams are Dec 10-15, but there’s no final exam in this class)*