

Please note: This is a draft syllabus intended to give prospective students and idea about what this course will be about. The structure, order, and time-management is subject to change.

**PSYCHOLOGY 1702 • THE EMOTIONAL MIND
HARVARD UNIVERSITY**

Spring 2013 • Mondays & Wednesdays 2:30PM-4:00PM • Location TBA

Instructor.

Professor Leah Somerville

Office • Northwest Science Building, Room 295.05

Contact • somerville@fas.harvard.edu

Office hours • Tuesdays 2:00-3:30PM

Location • See Contact page of <http://andl.wjh.harvard.edu> for directions to Professor Somerville's office

Course description. Not only do emotions permeate our everyday lives, they have aided in the survival of the human species. But what are emotions, and what are they good for? What causes us to experience an emotion? And how do emotional responses, in turn, influence our perception, memory, decision-making, and psychological well-being? This course will address these questions by drawing on key advances from historical, philosophical, psychological, and neuroscientific perspectives.

Course objectives. This course is designed to achieve the following three learning objectives:

1. Based on the course content, students will become experts on the psychological construct of emotion and the **effects of emotion** on humans' daily lives.
2. Students will develop a working knowledge of the **neurobiological underpinnings** of emotion-related processes.
3. By incorporating reading and discussion of basic research findings, students will learn how to be **informed consumers** of psychological theory and basic research as reported for a scientific audience.

Course format. Each class period will primarily consist of lecture-based presentation by Professor Somerville, which will include ample multimedia elements, demonstrations, and time for questions & discussion. In addition, once a week the class will include a *Research Focus* session (designated 'RF' in the schedule of course meetings). These class meetings will include a 30-minute interlude in which students will work together, in small groups, to respond to selected questions about an original and influential research study relevant to the day's topic. RF sessions will factor into students' grades as described below in the Grading section.

Course materials. There is no assigned textbook for this course. Rather, Professor Somerville has compiled a set of course readings that will be provided electronically, in PDF format. All course materials including all handouts and readings will be posted on the PSY1702 course website: <http://isites.harvard.edu/k91812>. A draft version of the lecture slides will be posted the night before class to facilitate in-class notetaking. The draft version of lecture

slides will be replaced with a 'final' version that aligns with the content and coverage for each class. The final version of lecture slides will be posted within two days after each class. However, much of what is covered in class is not written down on the lecture slides, so attending and paying attention during class is critical to success in this course.

Course schedule.

| Introduction | | | |
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| Week | Date | Topic | Reading |
| Week 1 | Jan 28, 2013 | What are emotions and why should we care about them? <i>Course overview</i> | All readings TBA |
| | Jan 30, 2013 | Slobbering dogs, crying Alberts, and William James <i>History of emotion science</i> | |
| Unit 1 • An emotion is many things | | | |
| Week 2 | Feb 4, 2013 | Feelings, nothing more than feelings? <i>Why feelings alone do not define emotions</i> | |
| | Feb 6, 2013 | My heart is going pitter-patter <i>Physiological components of emotion</i> | |
| Week 3 | Feb 11, 2013 | Good or bad? It depends... <i>Appraisals & contextual influences on emotion</i> | |
| | Feb 13, 2013 | Express yourself <i>Communication of emotion</i> | RF |
| Week 4 | Feb 18, 2013 | No class – President’s Day | |
| | Feb 20, 2013 | Sad versus glad versus mad <i>Specific emotions: taxonomy, defining features, & commonalities</i> | |
| Week 5 | Feb 25, 2013 | How do emotions help us survive? <i>Emotions as evolutionary adaptations</i> | |
| | Feb 27, 2013 | EXAM 1 – in class | |
| Unit 2 • Emotions in action | | | |
| Week 6 | Mar 4, 2013 | Building blocks of the emotional brain <i>Emotional brain circuitry – history & overview</i> | |
| | Mar 6, 2013 | Hooray! <i>Reward prediction & reward response</i> | |
| Week 7 | Mar 11, 2013 | Eek! <i>Threat processing & fear learning</i> | RF |
| | Mar 13, 2013 | Emotions go undercover <i>Conscious & unconscious emotion processes</i> | |
| Week 8 | | Spring recess | |
| Week 9 | Mar 25, 2013 | Emotional rubbernecking <i>Emotion-guided attention</i> | |
| | Mar 27, 2013 | Everyone knows where they were on 9/11. Why? <i>Emotional memory</i> | |

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| Week 10 | Apr 1, 2013 | Making a molehill out of a mountain <i>Emotion regulation</i> | RF | |
| | Apr 3, 2013 | Trusting your gut? <i>The influence of emotion on decision making</i> | | |
| Week 11 | Apr 8, 2013 | Catch-up and questions | | |
| | Apr 10, 2013 | EXAM 2 – in class | | |
| Unit 3 • Factors that influence our emotional lives | | | | |
| Week 12 | Apr 15, 2013 | Emotions across the globe <i>Cultural differences in emotion expression and understanding</i> | | |
| | Apr 17, 2013 | Neurotic or cool-as-a-cucumber <i>Attachment, personality, & temperament</i> | | |
| Week 13 | Apr 22, 2013 | Tortured teen, grumpy grandpa? <i>Emotion across the lifespan</i> | RF | |
| | Apr 24, 2013 | Crushes, blushes, & adrenaline rushes <i>Emotion in the social context</i> | | |
| Week 14 | Apr 29, 2013 | The good stuff of emotion <i>Using what we know about emotion to make ourselves (and others) happier</i> | | |
| | Unit 4 • Philosophical issues in the study of emotion | | | |
| | May 1, 2013 | Are there core ingredients of emotions? <i>The structure of emotion</i> | RF | |
| Week 15 | May 6, 2013 | In sickness and in health <i>Healthy and pathological emotion: are they the same thing?</i> | | |
| | May 8, 2013 | Course summary & TBA | | |
| Week 16 | | FINAL EXAM Exam group 7,8 | | |

Grading overview. The course will *not* be graded on a curve. In other words, it is possible for all students in the class to get an A. The grade breakdown will be announced in the final version of the syllabus, distributed at the beginning of the Spring 2013 semester.

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| <p>Components of final grade</p> <p>Exam 1: Introduction and Unit 1 • 25% of grade</p> <p>Exam 2: Unit 2 • 25% of grade</p> <p>Final Exam: Units 3 & 4, ‘the big picture’ • 25% of grade</p> <p>Research Focus responses: 5 total • 5% of grade each = 25% of grade</p> |
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- Exams.** Exams will consist of a mixture of multiple choice, short answer, and short-essay items. The final exam will primarily cover Units 3 & 4, but students should also expect the final exam to include a few ‘cumulative’ questions that relate to the main themes of the course.

- 2. Research focus responses.** On the 'RF' marked class dates, we will spend part of the class discussing classic papers that have been influential to the field of emotion science. Students are expected to read the assigned article *in its entirety before class*. During class, students will be split into small groups and will discuss a series of questions about the article. After class, students should write a two to three page response paper addressing the questions discussed in class. Students are expected to collaborate during class to form responses to these questions, and expected to *work alone* to write their response paper. Students will be provided with an example response paper.

Each RF will be graded on a 0 to 10 scale. 5 points will be derived from class participation and the remaining 5 points will be determined by the written response. If students attend and participate in RF discussion, they will automatically receive the full 5 class participation points. The remaining 5 points will be determined based on the quality of the response paper. If students must miss RF classes for documented religious, emergency, or medical reasons cleared in advance with Professor Somerville, the entirety of the 10 point grade will instead be based on the quality of the written response. Unexcused absence on RF dates will result in a score of 0/5 for the class participation portion of the grade. Late papers will not be accepted and will result in an automatic score of 0/5 for the written response portion of the grade.

Course policies.

- 1. Policy on collaboration for written assignments.** Discussion and the exchange of ideas are essential to academic work. For assignments in this course, you are encouraged to consult with your classmates on the choice of paper topics and to share sources. You may find it useful to discuss your chosen topic with your peers, particularly if you are working on the same topic as a classmate. However, you should ensure that any written work you submit for evaluation is the result of your own research and writing and that it reflects your own approach to the topic. You must also adhere to standard citation practices in this discipline and properly cite any books, articles, websites, lectures, etc. that have helped you with your work. If you received any help with your writing (feedback on drafts, etc), you must also acknowledge this assistance.

For guidance on what constitutes appropriate citation for all course assignments, see:

<http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic657773.files/WritingSourcesHarvard.pdf>

- 2. Policy on collaboration for exams.** Collaboration, use of outside sources, and any form of cheating during exams is explicitly prohibited.

For further detail, the Harvard College Handbook chapter on academic dishonesty is available online at:

<http://handbook.fas.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k88702&pageid=icb.page516359>

- 3. Policy on missed deadlines and exams.**

... *In the case of a family or medical emergency.* If you are sick or experience a family emergency that conflicts with a class deadline or exam, email Professor Somerville as soon as possible. It is expected

that the student will inform Professor Somerville of such emergencies before the class or deadline, not after. Alternative arrangements will be made on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of Professor Somerville. In these cases, it is expected that the student will provide a detailed note from their Resident Dean or from UHS documenting the affected dates and need for an extension.

... If you are unable to complete an in-class exam because the regularly scheduled exam falls on a religious holiday. Please look at the calendar **now**. If you will be unable to appear for a regularly scheduled exam because it falls on a religious holiday, you must notify Professor Somerville **by February 8th, 2013**. If you follow this procedure, the Professor Somerville will determine the best way to ensure that you are not penalized for your absence.

... If the deadline falls on a busy day, a day with another class deadline, or if you oversleep or otherwise do not make it to class. With the exception of the reasons listed above, Professor Somerville will not hear requests to modify deadlines or exam dates.

If a student misses an exam without a documented family or medical emergency, it is at the discretion of Professor Somerville whether the student will be allowed to take the exam at a later date and what scoring penalty will be applied. The best case scenario will be that students will lose ten points from their exam total score (equivalent to >1 letter grade reduction). The worst case scenario is that the students would not have the opportunity to take the exam and thus would receive a zero grade. For my sake and yours, do not find yourself in this position.

Research Focus response papers will not be accepted after the deadline. If a paper is not received by the deadline, the student will receive 0 points out of 5 possible points for the written portion of the RF. Broken computers, faulty wi-fi, or other technological fails will *not* be accepted as excuses for lateness, so plan ahead and back up your files! Dropbox can be a real lifesaver.

- 4. Accessibility.** Any student needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to present their letter from the Accessible Education Office (AEO) and speak with the professor by the end of the second week of the term, Feb 8, 2013. Failure to do so may result in the Course Head's inability to respond in a timely manner. All discussions will remain confidential, although AEO may be consulted to discuss appropriate implementation.