

Syllabus

Social Processes: Gender Differences in Emotion

Instructor: David W. Haley

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Office Hours: Wednesday, 1:00 – 3:00 PM

Course Meetings: Tuesdays, 11:00 – 1:00 PM

Course Location: Room MW264

Course Description

This course will examine gender differences in emotion. Its goals are to provide an in-depth theoretical perspective into why gender differences in emotion exist and to generate relevant hypotheses that can be tested in future studies. The readings assigned draw on theories and research findings from developmental, cultural, postmodernist, critical feminist, psychoanalytic, neurobiological, and evolutionary literatures. One of the chief points that emerge in these readings is that neither a biological nor a social account can fully explain the research findings on gender and emotion. Addressing these limits, the readings assigned include material from a growing theoretical and interdisciplinary body of work focused on relational constructs in psychology, such as intersubjectivity (i.e., mutual recognition between two people) and mutual regulation (e.g., the ability of one person to affect how another person feels). This body of work is providing new insight into the nature of self, identity, consciousness, emotion, and gender. A second area of growing theoretical interest discussed in the readings is dynamic systems theory, which offers a unique set of assumptions and perspectives for understanding the behavior of complex systems. Application of dynamic systems theory to the study of emotion and gender offers a potential way to account for the multiplicity, plasticity, and variation of human experience, which often changes across developmental, biological, and social contexts.

<u>Evaluation</u>	<u>Date(s)</u>	<u>Weight</u>
Class participation	Weekly	10%
Reviews of readings	TBD	10%
	TBD	10%
	TBD	10%
	TBD	10%
Research proposal topic (written)	Feb 27	5%
Research proposal topic (presentation)	Feb 27	5%
Group Presentations	TBD	10%
Research proposal (final paper)	April 10	30%

Class Participation: This is an advanced undergraduate seminar in which enthusiastic class participation is important. Participation includes attendance, punctuality, facilitating discussion, paying careful attention to classmates' presentations, offering constructive feedback, questions, and comments, and showing respect for others' contributions. To create a stimulating, safe, equitable discussion environment, each participant should try to strike a balance between listening and speaking.

Reviews: The goal of the written review is to provide a critical reflection on the readings. This does not entail simply summarizing the text, but also offering insights, concerns, reactions, and questions. There are many ways of reviewing a text. One way is to elaborate on the following questions: 1) What is it trying to show (main ideas, assumptions, models, methods)? 2) How convincing is it (evidence, arguments used, consistency)? and 3) What significance does it have to society (what are its applications, usefulness, and ethical implications)? The reviews should be between one and two double-spaced pages (500 words max) and follow APA style. *You are required to turn in a total of four reviews. You can choose which readings to review. Each review must be turned in on the day the seminar group discusses the reading you have reviewed. Reviews are due at the end of class. You may not turn in a paper on the readings that you are presenting to the class as part of your group presentation (see below).* Reviews will not be accepted late unless you can provide me with a UTSC medical note or the death certificate of a close relative who passed away shortly before the due date.

Research Proposal Topic (written): You will be required to submit a half-page (maximum 250 words) summary and rationale for your research proposal topic. This should address the following questions: What is the purpose of the study, how does your study add to what is known in the literature, how will you conduct the study, and what do you expect to find?

Research Proposal Topic (presentation): You will present your research proposal topic to the class briefly (2-3 minutes).

Group Presentations: The group presentation (2-3 persons) will be based on the weekly readings and consist of two primary components. The first component will involve each member speaking for 5-10 minutes. You will be required to go beyond summarizing the chapter and to provide the class with an expanded perspective and critical analysis of the assigned reading. To this end, you may wish to present readings supplemental to those assigned for the week (e.g., relevant journal articles, book chapters, etc.). Your presentations will be evaluated individually in terms of your 1) clarity of presentation, 2) comprehension/organization, 3) effective use of supplementary readings, if used, and 4) capacity to answer questions from the class. It will be important to integrate the different speakers of the group so that there is no redundancy and the presentation seems coherent as a whole. You will be expected to use presentation slides (e.g., PowerPoint) as part of the presentation. The second component of the presentation is to stimulate and lead an active class discussion of the assigned readings.

Research Proposal: The research proposal will be 15–20 double spaced pages, in APA format, and will be based on library research on any topic related to gender differences in emotion. You will need to provide a review of the literature relevant to your topic and a rationale for the hypotheses. You will also need to describe the research methods for conducting the proposed study. It will be important to establish the significance of the proposed research to the field. How does the proposed research add new knowledge or enhance our understanding? Is there a gap in the literature that your proposal addresses? You should consult with me when choosing your topic, and as your paper progresses. I must approve all paper topics. This is just a proposal; no data needs to be collected. This paper is due during Finals Week. The term paper must be received by no later than 4:00 PM on Tuesday April 10th. Papers turned in after this time will not be accepted.

Schedule and Readings

Meetings

Topics

Jan 9

Introduction

Jan 16

Gender and Emotion. In *Engendering Emotions*, Alan Petersen provides a postmodernist account of gender and emotion. Raising questions more than providing answers, the first two chapters of this book, “Conceptualizing Gender and Emotion” (pages 1–27) and “Psychology, Gender, and Emotion” (pages 28–55), critically assesses some of the theoretical blind spots in current social and biological perspectives on gender and emotion.

Petersen, A. (2004). *Engendering Emotions*. Pp. 1-55. Palgrave Macmillan: New York.

Jan 23

Mutual Regulation and Gender Differences in Emotion. The concepts of self-regulation and mutual regulation are elucidated in Ed Tronick’s classic article “Emotions and Emotional Communication in Infants,” which introduces the Mutual Regulation Model (MRM). This model significantly sheds light on the interactive nature and function of the parent-infant relationship. MRM offers two interpretations: infants regulate their emotions and/or parents help infants to regulate emotions. These interpretations reflect distinct perspectives associated with the social and biological sciences and do not appear mutually exclusive. Further, the MRM has been used to explain gender difference in infant emotion (Weinberg et al, 1999; Haley and Stansbury, 2003), raising some key questions and perhaps serving as the starting point for this course.

Tronick, E. Z. (1989). Emotions and Emotional Communication in Infants. *American Psychologist* 44: 112–119.

Weinberg, M. K., Tronick, E. Z., and Cohn, J. F. (1999). Gender differences in emotional expressivity and self-regulation during early infancy. *Developmental Psychology* 35: 175–188.

Jan 30

Social Construction of Gender and Emotion. What does emotion have to do with gender? Does social context affect the expression and recall of emotions? These basic questions are addressed by Stephanie Shields in her chapter “Thinking about Gender, Thinking about Theory: Gender, and Emotional Experience.” Surveying the field, this chapter offers a methodological critique of theories of gender and emotion. Grounded in a social constructivist viewpoint and influenced by feminist theories, Shields ends the chapter by calling for a more dynamic and specific approach to the study of gender differences in emotion.

Shields, S. A. (2000). Thinking about Gender, Thinking about Theory: Gender, and Emotional Experience. In A. H. Fisher (ed.), *Gender and Emotion: Social Psychological Perspectives*, pp. 3–23. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Feb 6

Biology, Gender, Sex, and Emotion. In her chapter “The State of the Art: Biological Differences?” Brody (1998) provides a critical but extensive review of the biological differences in gender and emotion that focuses on sex hormones and brain asymmetry. How biological differences may develop and how brain development interacts with social conditions are considered in this chapter. In Larry Cahill’s article “Why Sex Matters for Neuroscience?” the neurobiological evidence supporting sex differences is presented, and their implications for emotion and memory are considered.

Brody (1998). *Gender, Emotion, and the Family*. Pp. 101-127. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Cahill, L. (2006) Why Sex Matters for Neuroscience? *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, 7, 477-484.

Feb 13

Socialization of Gender and Emotion. After presenting the biological mechanisms contributing to gender differences in emotion, Brody addresses the family context in her chapter “Transactional Relationships within Families,” which extensively reviews developmental studies of the role of parenting in the socialization of infants and children. In the following chapter, “Gender Identification and De-identification in the Family,” Brody introduces Nancy Chodorow’s theory of gender development and offers a review of the evidence that supports and/or fails to support the predictions of this theory.

Brody (1998). *Gender, Emotion, and the Family*. Pp. 147–175. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Feb 20 Reading Week

Feb 27 **Research Proposal Topics (presentations)**

March 6 Developmental and Cultural Contexts of Emotion. Michael Lewis provides a general introduction to the study of emotion, reviews some of the central definitions and debates, and offers a detailed account of when discrete emotions first emerge in young infants in his chapter "The Emergence of Human Emotions." In addition, he makes a compelling case for the existence of primary and secondary emotions based on the development of self-consciousness. There has been relatively little systematic study of cultural differences in gender and emotion. The authors of the second reading, "The Relation between Gender and Emotions in Different Cultures," review and analyze some of the only data on this topic in their chapter.

Lewis, M. (2000). The Emergence of Human Emotions. In M. Lewis and J. M. Haviland-Jones (eds.), *Handbook of Emotion*, pp. 265-280. Guilford Press: New York.

Fischer, A. H. and Manstead, A. S. R. (2000). The Relation between Gender and Emotions in Different Cultures. In A. H. Fisher (ed.), *Gender and Emotion: Social Psychological Perspectives*, pp. 70-94. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, England.

March 13 Evolutionary Account of Gender Differences. The perspective advanced in Charles Darwin's *The Descent of Man* appears throughout David Geary's *Male, Female: The Evolution of Human Sex Differences*. In the chapter assigned, Geary presents an extensive review of the sex/gender differences and a neo-Darwinian framework for interpreting these findings based on the theory of natural and sexual selection. The chapter includes a review of sex differences in emotional, social, and physical development in infants and young children. Some of the findings are not consistent with other studies reported in our previous readings. It will be important to understand why this might be the case. Is it because of how the studies were conducted or the interpretations and assumptions made?

Geary, D. C. (1998). *Male, Female: The Evolution of Human Sex Differences*. Pp. 209-238. American Psychological Association: Washington, D.C.

March 20 Dynamic Systems Theory of Emotion. What is a dynamic systems approach, and why apply it to the study of emotion? These questions are addressed by Camras and Witherington (2005) in their chapter "Dynamical Systems Approaches to Emotional Development." Earlier

models of emotion assumed that emotions were universal and had unique patterns of physiology and cognitive correlates. The authors review some of the infant emotion research that is inconsistent with these basic assumptions of a neo-Darwinian view of emotion. It will be important to understand the 6 principles of a dynamic systems and the relevance of these principles to evolutionary theories of emotional development.

Camras L. A., and Witherington, D. C. (2005). Dynamical Systems Approaches to Emotional Development. *Developmental Review*, 25, 328–350.

March 27 **Interpersonal and Critical Feminist Theory of Gender.** In her essay “Recognition and Destruction: An Outline of Intersubjectivity,” Benjamin recasts the boundaries between self and other as overlapping rather than distinct and views the self and other as co-constructed (i.e., an outcome or process fueled by momentary acts of mutual recognition). This perspective addresses unanswered psychoanalytic and philosophical questions such as how one person can understand the subjective contents of another person. In the next set of readings, Judith Butler questions the conventional notions of gender and sex and criticizes mainstream feminist theory in her famous book *Gender Trouble*. The readings include prefaces from the 1990 and 1999 editions of the book and the third chapter “Bodily Inscriptions, Performative Subversions” (all taken from the *Judith Butler Reader*) and includes an introduction by the editor. The central idea of the reading is that gender is not natural but rather a construction, one that is practiced (i.e., performed) in a social environment.

Benjamin, J (1995). *Like Subjects, Love Objects: Essays on Recognition and Sexual Differences*. Pp. 27-48. Yale University Press: New Haven and London.

Butler, J. *The Judith Butler Reader*. Pp. 91–118.

April 3 **Dynamic Systems Theory of Gender.** In the introduction (pp. 1–21) to *Gender as Soft Assembly*, Adrienne Harris provides an interdisciplinary overview that refers to some of the seminal figures and ideas in developmental psychology, psychoanalysis, chaos and dynamic systems approaches, gender and feminist studies, and the philosophical traditions that have contributed to our understanding of human relatedness, the formation of gender, and the cognitive and emotional processes that mediate our relationships to others.

Supplemental Readings (not required)

1) Brody and Hall (2000) summarize research on gender and emotional expression and gender stereotypes in adults and present a new model of gender and emotion (see figure 22.1) in their chapter “Gender, Emotion, and Expression.”

Brody L. R., Hall, J. A. (2000). Gender, Emotion, and Expression. In M. Lewis and J. M. Haviland-Jones (eds.), *Handbook of Emotion*, pp. 338-349. Guilford Press: New York.

2) Marc Lewis applies a dynamic systems approach to the study of emotion and the brain.

Lewis, M. D. (2005). Self-organizing Individual Differences in Brain Development. *Developmental Review*, 25, 352–377.