Culture and Ideas I: 
Introduction to Philosophy
A Cross-Cultural History of Shame, Fear, and Happiness

Course Description:

Are emotions innate and universal? Is the love we feel today the very same emotion humans felt thousands of years ago? In this two-quarter sequence we will address these questions by conducting a cross-cultural examination of emotion. It may surprise you to discover that philosophers, psychologists, and neuro-scientists still puzzle over the nature of emotion. We will investigate how different cultures have understood emotion and concentrate on exploring the ways in which different contemporary and historical cultures have understood the relationship between emotion and moral value. In the first quarter of the sequence we will study the emotions of shame and guilt, happiness, and fear. Although we will refer to emotions using Western terms we will note important (sometimes 'untranslatable') differences between cultural understandings of specific emotions. In the second quarter of the sequence we will analyze cross-cultural understandings of love, disgust, and anger/retribution. Students are expected to gain an appreciation of the ways in which different civilizations have understood what emotions are and how emotions have been used to enforce and create moral norms. Our aim is to ultimately better understand our own emotions and moral norms as a result of this exploration.

Requirements:

1) An in-class midterm exam that covers basic philosophical and psychological concepts pertaining to the study of emotion along with an essay applying the empirical/philosophical literature on shame/guilt to Rushdie's novel [25%]

2) A second in-class midterm essay exam contrasting Aristotelian eudaimonism against Millian and Confucian conceptions of Happiness and the good life [25%]

3) A final paper synthesizing research on questions involving whether the emotions investigated throughout the quarter are best understood as universal and/or the relationship between emotions and norms [25%]

4) Three short 'application papers' in which students describe a contemporary event (using a specific source: news story, article, forum discussion, etc) and explain how material from the course applies to it [15% total, 5% each]

5) Consistent attendance and participation [10%]

Late Assignments

Late assignments will not be accepted without prior notification to and an okay from me. This means giving me at least 24 hours notice that you will not be able to turn in a paper on time. You will be given each assignment far in advance of its due date so be prepared to explain why you couldn't complete an
assignment within the allotted time frame.

If a paper will be turned in late it is subject to a penalty (out of fairness to students that turn their papers in on time) unless evidence of significant illness or other hardship is presented. Please see me if you have any questions regarding the policy over late papers.

Office Hours
I will hold office hours every week and am available by appointment also. Please don't hesitate to ask for other meeting times if you can't make my posted office hours.

Disabilities Accommodation:
To request academic accommodations for a disability, students must contact Disability Resources in Benson Center, (408) 554-4111 or TTY (408)554-5445. Students must register with Disability Resources and provide appropriate documentation to that office prior to receiving accommodations.

Academic Integrity:
The University is committed to academic excellence and integrity. Students are expected to do their own work and to cite any sources they use. A student who is guilty of a dishonest act in an examination, paper, or other work required for a course, or who assists others in such an act, may, at the discretion of the instructor, receive a grade of “F” for the course. In addition, a student found guilty of a dishonest act may be subject to sanctions, up to and including dismissal from the University, as a result of the student judicial process as described in the Student Handbook. A student who violates copyright laws, including those covering the copying of software programs, or who knowingly alters official academic records from this or any other institution is subject to similar disciplinary action.

Readings:
Below is a tentative list of our scheduled readings. Most of our readings will be available on Camino, novels will be available at the campus bookstore and are also widely available online (Amazon, Barnes and Noble, Abebooks, etc).

Week 1:

M  Introductions / Basic Concepts
   HW: Read “The Pink Guide to Taking Philosophy Classes” pages 1-10

W  Reading Philosophy: A discussion and group exercise
   HW: Read “A Guide to Reading Research Articles (for non-researchers)”

F  Reading Scientific Articles; Conducting Research Using the Library
   HW: Begin reading Shame by Salmon Rushdie

Week 2

M  Philosophical and Psychological Theories of Emotion;
   HW: Finish Shame

W  Discussion of Rushdie's Shame

F  Classes Canceled
HW: *Shame and Necessity* by Bernard Williams, Chapter 3 “Recognising Responsibility”

**Week 3**

| M | Classes Canceled - Martin Luther King Jr. Observance |
| W | Shame, Guilt, and Culture: Williams on the Link Between Shame and Guilt |
|   | HW: *Shame and Necessity*, Chapter 4 “Shame and Autonomy” |
|   | ***Midterm Study Guide Handed Out*** |
| F | Shame Cultures, Guilt Cultures and Autonomy |
|   | HW: Rüdiger Bittner “Is It Reasonable to Regret Things One Did?” |

**Week 4**

| M | The Moral Function of Guilt and Agent Regret |
|   | “Cultural Models of Shame and Guilt” by Ying Wong and Jeanne Tsai |
| W | Cross-Cultural Analyses of Shame, What Is A Shame Culture? |
|   | Deadline for first 'Application Paper' |
| F | MIDTERM EXAMINATION |

**Week 5**

| M | Kairo (film) Japan 2001 directed by Kiyoshi Kurosawa |
| W | Kairo (film) Japan 2001 directed by Kiyoshi Kurosawa (cont) |
|   | HW: “The Technologies of Isolation: Apocalypse and Self in Kurosawa Kiyoshi’s Kairo” by Steve Jones |
| F | Discussion of Kairo and the Nature of Horror, Fear, and Surprise |
|   | HW: *The Philosophy of Horror: Or, Paradoxes of the Heart* by Noel Carroll, excerpt from Chapter 1 “The Nature of Horror” pages 12-24 |

**Week 6**

| M | The (Moral) Objects of Fear and the Fear of Non-conformity |
|   | HW: Epicurus and Lucretious on Death” |
| W | Should We Fear Death? Epicurus and Lucretious |
|   | HW: “Moral Panics: Culture, Politics, and Social Construction” by Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda |
|   | ***Midterm Study Guide Handed Out*** |

**Week 7**

| M | Classes Canceled – President's Day Observance |
W  *The Seventh Seal* (film) Sweden 1957 directed by Ingmar Bergman
HW:

F  *The Seventh Seal* (film) Sweden 1957 directed by Ingmar Bergman (cont)
**Deadline for second 'Application Paper'

Week 8

M  MIDTERM EXAMINATION
HW: *Happiness: A History* by Darrin McMahon, Chapter 1 “The Highest Good”

W  Classical Greece, Eudaimonism, and Happiness

F  Moral Luck, Happiness, Mental States
HW: *Happiness: A History* by Darrin McMahon, 'Solving the Riddle of History'

Week 9

M  Happiness as Marxist Critique
HW: *Nichomachean Ethics* by Aristotle, excerpts from Book I “Happiness” and Book II “Virtues of Character”

W  Aristotle, Virtue, and Happiness
HW: Mill “Utilitarianism”

F  Happiness, Subjective Mental States or Objective?
HW: “Lottery winners and Accident Victims: Is Happiness Relative?” by Brickman, Coates, and Janoff-Bulman

Week 10

M  Empirical Research on Happiness: Discussion and Criticism
HW: “What Do Happiness Studies Study?” by James Griffin

W  A Contemporary Philosophy of Happiness
HW: “Understanding Happiness: A look into the Chinese folk Psychology” by Luo Lu

F  Cross-Cultural Comparisons in Happiness
HW: Work on Final Paper
**Deadline for third 'Application Paper'**
ASSESSMENT PLAN FOR WINTER QUARTER

The forms of assessment in this course will be: (1) ongoing evaluation of in-class participation and in-class assignments, (2) essay exams, (3) and final papers.

These assessment tools will match up to the learning objectives as follows:

• Recall details relevant to the course theme and historical context of the texts, ideas, issues, and/or events studied: the essay exams and papers will all require students to make effective reference to philosophical and psychological theories of emotion and to identify important sources of agreement and disagreement between these competing views.

• Identify significant elements of the cultures examined: the essay exams, papers, and in-class discussion will require students to identify and reflect on the ways in which cultures offer differing analyses of the emotional lives of their members.

• Recognize the complexity of the cultures examined: the essay exams, papers, and in-class discussion will require students to pay attention to the complexity of the cultures whose theories and institutions they are analyzing, in particular students will be expected to understand the ways in which cultures shape and change their understanding of our affective lives in light of sociological or technological changes as seen, for example, in our analysis of the changing objects of fear in Japanese and Western culture.

• Analyze and/or interpret significant texts, ideas, issues and/or events in their historical contexts, using from both philosophical, psychological, and neuro-scientific perspectives: at least one of the essay exams or papers, as well as class discussion generally, will specifically require students to philosophically analyze and interpret cross-cultural practices and institutions. In many cases this will involve synthesizing philosophical and psychological research in order to apply it to cultural artifacts (novels) students will also be reading. For example, we will examine the changing understanding of ‘the good life’ as ‘the happy life’ from the Classical Greeks to Contemporary Western culture.

• Reflect on and examine both shared and diverse human experiences so that they recognize the similarities and differences across cultures as well as historical periods. They will comprehend the relevance of the past to their understanding of the present while coming to understand the perspective of their own cultural assumptions and values: the essay exams, papers, class discussion, and discussion groups will require students to consider the cultural similarities and differences reflected across cultures (especially the issues listed above).

• Essay exams and papers are designed to invite students to demonstrate that they understand the issues discussed above, show that they can explain them, that they can employ them in writing, and, in the ideal cases, that they can begin thinking about them philosophically with a bit of insight and originality.