

Humanities 195j
Spring 2005
Mon. 2:45-4:15 (sometimes longer)
and by Institute calendar
Humanities 105

Professor Liss
Humanities 214, x73541
Office Hrs: Mon. 11-12
Thurs. 2:30-3:30

Humanities Institute Junior Fellows Seminar

In the Spring semester of 2005, the program will focus on Empathy. What does it mean to feel (or think) as another? When we consider the structure and obligations of social relationships, ourselves and others, justice and equality, reason, emotion, and values in politics and in social relationships, this is a topic of considerable interest. It is also, strikingly, a topic of various disciplines, sometimes, although not always, crossing the boundaries of those disciplines. Our work during the semester will be to pursue those intersections and blurring of disciplinary boundaries by bringing together scholars in such fields as neuroscience, philosophy, psychology, literary criticism, history, anthropology, art history, media studies, legal studies, and musicology. One of the challenges of the semester will be to explore how—and why—“empathy” is a shared focal point in these otherwise very different enterprises. Why is it of such interest? What does it tell us about our human selves and about our relationships to others?

Course requirements:

All Fellows will participate in a seminar that accompanies the lecture series. We will read texts recommended or written by the speakers in preparation for their visits. Fellows are expected to attend the weekly seminar and all other Institute events. Fellows will have opportunities to meet individually with the speakers.

Each student is expected to fulfill the following requirements throughout the semester:

- Read all of the assigned readings and come to class prepared to discuss them.
- Write weekly, two-page reading responses (due at the beginning of class).
- Make an oral presentation on one week's assignment to initiate and focus discussion. This presentation includes summarizing the argument or major concerns, presenting what is at stake (why does this work matter?), and posing questions for discussion. Because the readings focus directly on particular authors/speakers, you may find it useful to read about them and their work beyond the assignment. In order for these presentations to be productive and helpful, you should be as clear as possible about what you think the author's main concerns are and about your own analysis or reaction to them. You can assume that everyone else has done the assigned reading, so you won't need to summarize it. Depending on the enrollment, these presentations may be done in groups.
- Write a response paper about each of the Institute events; these may include an interview with one of the speakers.
- Write a fifteen-page research paper on a topic of your choice related to the topics we discuss this semester. You must discuss your topic with me beforehand as noted in the schedule below. Students will present their work to the class at the end of the semester. Students may pursue a project in another format, equivalent in scope and rigor to a research paper, e.g. a video or art project based on the materials for the semester.
- About one half of the final grade will be based on the research paper or final project. The remainder will be based on participation (including discussion, reading responses, attendance and participation in events).

Schedule of meetings and readings:

We will meet regularly on Mondays to prepare for the Institute events. Although the class is scheduled for the 2:45-5:30 time slot, to compensate for the out-of-class commitment for this course, class will usually conclude at about 4:15. Sometimes, however, we will need the entire period. This is indicated in the syllabus schedule.

Students are required to attend Institute events. Most talks are on Thursdays either at 4:15 or at 7:00 p.m. (There is one lecture on a Monday, February 28 at 4:15 p.m.). On the Friday morning following the Thursday lectures, we will meet separately with the speakers in a seminar. Most likely, the seminar will begin at 11:30 a.m., last for 1 to 1 ½ hours, and be followed by lunch. The luncheon talk series takes place at Noon in the Hampton Room. Details are included in the syllabus.

The readings are assigned based on what the speakers made available as of the first day of class. Changes or additions may be necessary. Copies of the selections are available from Claire Bridge in the Humanities Institute office.

The following books are available at Huntley Bookstore:

Dorothy Otnow Lewis, Guilty By Reason of Insanity
William Reddy, The Navigation of Feeling

Jan. 20 (Thursday): Introduction to the class and to the program: Why empathy? What is it?

“Empathy,” Oxford English Dictionary

“Empathy,” Dictionary of the History of Ideas

Nancy Sherman, “Being In Sync”

Anahad O’Connor, “Brain Senses the Pain of Someone Else’s ‘Ouch!’”

William Reddy, The Navigation of Feeling, preface, ch. 1, 2

Jan. 24: Jean Decety, “A Social Cognitive Neuroscience Model of Human Empathy” and “Shared Representations between Self and Other: A Social Cognitive Neuroscience View”

Jan. 27: Benjamin Vilhauer, CMC, “Empathy and Remorse,” Noon, Hampton Room

Jan. 31: Evan Thompson, “Empathy and Human Experience”

Feb. 7: Dorothy Otnow Lewis, Guilty by Reason of Insanity

Feb. 10: Claudia Strauss, Pitzer, “Is Empathy Gendered and If So, Why? A Perspective from Feminist Psychological Anthropology,” Noon, Hampton Room

Feb. 14: Berys Gaut, “Identification and Emotion in Narrative Film”

Marion Guck, “Music Loving, or the Relationship to the Piece”

Feb. 17: Empathy and Consciousness, 4:15 p.m. and 7:00 p.m., “Old Music” Building (OMB)

Feb. 21: Alison Landsberg, Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture, ch. 1

[we will screen *The Pianist* and *Schindler’s List* outside of class]

Feb. 28: Stephen Darwall, “Respect and the Second Person Standpoint”

Professor Darwall will come to class

Stephen Darwall, “Empathy, Respect, and the Second-Person Standpoint,” 4:15 p.m. OMB

Mar. 2: Jennifer Goltz, Scripps, “Finding the Piece: How a Performer Prepares,” Noon, Hampton Room

Mar. 3: Empathy and the Arts I, 4:15 p.m. and 7:00 p.m., OMB

Mar. 7: William Reddy, The Navigation of Feeling, Preface, Ch. 1-3, 5, 6

Stephen Greenblatt “Improvisation and Power”

George Lakoff, Moral Politics, selections, “The Hidden State of the Union,” “Our Moral Values”

Final project proposals due in class

Mar. 14: Break

Mar. 21: class will last until about 5:15 p.m.

Norma Feshbach, “Studies in Empathic Behavior in Children”; “Learning to Care: Classroom Activities for Social & Affective Development”; “Parent Empathy: A Key Element in the Mother-Child Relationship”; “Modifying Aggression and Social Prejudice”; “Empathy in Education: An Elixir but no Panacea”

Virginia Held, “The Ethics of Care” and “The Caring Person”

Final project outlines due in class

Mar. 28: class will last until about 5:15 p.m.

Colin Allen, “Cognitive Relatives and Moral Relations,” “Is anyone a cognitive ethologist?” and “Animal Pain.”

Kenneth Reinhard, “Freud, My Neighbor”

Jacques Lacan, “Love of One’s Neighbor”

Emmanuel Levinas, “Dialogue: Self-Consciousness and Proximity of the Neighbor”

Mar. 31/April 1: Empathy and Others (see schedule for times), OMB

April 4: class will last until about 5:15 p.m.

Juliet Koss, “Bauhaus Theater of Human Dolls”

Robert Vischer, “On the Optical Sense of Form”

Kurt Forster, “Their Master's Voice”

Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe, “The Walt Disney Concert Hall and its Mobile Subject”

April 7: Empathy and the Arts II, 7:00 p.m., OMB

April 8: Field trip to Disney Concert Hall, details TBA

April 11: No class:

April 15: Rough drafts due

April 18: Presentations

April 25: Presentations

May 2: Presentations

May 5 (reading day): Presentations, if necessary

May 10: Final projects due by Noon