

Theocrit 506A: Theorizing Emotion

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Office hours: Wednesdays 2-3.30pm and Thursdays 2-3.30pm.

Emotions affect theory. From Lauren Berlant's "feel tank" at the University of Chicago to reading groups such as Sneja Gunew's "Decolonizing Affect" group in Vancouver, theorizing affect and "feeling in theory," as Rei Terada puts it, has become increasingly important not only for thinking about aesthetics and poststructuralism, but also for interrogating postcolonial, queer and diasporic subjectivities. This course will examine a range of "affect theories" and the ways in which these theories help us to understand the processes of subject formation. We will take up Terada's questioning of emotion after the "death of the subject" and examine the possibilities for feeling in theory. We will grapple with Gilroy's concept of "diasporic intimacy;" Sedgwick's discussion of emotion, performance and pedagogy; the power of mourning in Derrida and Butler; and Ngai's argument that there can be a materialist analysis of feeling. Throughout this course, we will investigate emotion as intervening against that which has previously been dismissed as *too* subjective. Unlike affect, emotion requires subjects. Theorizing emotion tackles the seemingly indulgent excesses of the personal and the intimate. The surfeit of the subjective can recuperate theoretical inquiry from the impoverishment of its detachments. Embracing the theoretical possibilities of disgust, paranoia, love, and melancholia, we will attend to these messy intersections of emotion and theory.

Required texts

All readings will be made available for photocopying prior to class. There are no required texts for this course.

Evaluation

Term paper	40%
Presentation	35%
Participation	25%

Reading Schedule

September

12 Introduction

19 Darwin, selections from *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*
Terada, selections from *Feeling in Theory*

26 Terada continued
Derrida, selections from *The Post Card*

October

3 Massumi, selections from *Parables for the Virtual*

10 Brennan, selections from *The Transmission of Affect*

17 Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia"
Abraham and Torok, selections from *The Shell and the Kernel*

24 Gilroy, selection from *Postcolonial Melancholia*
Butler, selection from *Precarious Life*

31 Tomkins, selections from *Shame and Its Sisters*
Povinelli, "The State of Shame: Australian Multiculturalism and the Crisis of Indigenous Citizenship"

November

7 Klein, selections from *Love, Guilt and Other Works*
Jankelevitch, selection from *Forgiveness*

14 Ngai, selections from *Ugly Feelings*

21 Berlant, "Introduction," *Compassion*
Edelman, "Compassion's Compulsion"
Hoad, "Cosmetic Surgeons of the Social"

28 Nancy, "Shattered Love"
Sedgwick, "A Dialogue on Love"
Berlant, from *Intimacy*

December

5 Terada, further selections from *Feeling in Theory*