

**MASTER OF ARTS IN LIBERAL STUDIES  
DUKE UNIVERSITY**

**FALL 2009 COURSES**

**LS 270.27**

**EMOTION, MORALITY, AND HUMAN NATURE**

**Dan McShea**

**Mondays, 6:15-8:45 pm**

Fear, love, anger, pride, regret, envy – the emotions seem to play a big role in our lives, as well as in the lives of certain other animal species. But what are the emotions? Are they guides to behavior? Are they judgments, or perhaps biases of judgment? Or maybe they are epiphenomenal – mere side effects of other mental processes, essentially irrelevant to proper mental function. The course explores what the emotions are, what they are for, and how they evolved. We begin with readings of some classic treatments of behavior and emotion in certain animal species, including gulls and chimpanzees. We then consider emotions in humans, reading selections from important works in psychology, neurobiology, literature, politics, and ethics. A central issue throughout will be the role of the emotions in behavior and judgment, especially moral judgment.

*Dan McShea holds a primary appointment in Biology and a secondary appointment in Philosophy and is a member of Duke's Center for the Philosophy of Biology. His major papers are in the field of paleobiology, with a focus on large-scale trends in the history of life. He serves on the editorial board of Biology and Philosophy.*

**LS 280.72**

**THE UNCONVENTIONAL MEMOIR**

**Margaret Sartor**

**Tuesdays, 6:15-8:45 pm**

The memoir is an increasingly diverse and evolving genre. This course is for students who want to write non-fiction personal stories and explore forms outside the conventional autobiographical narrative while also reaching for the highest standards of literary achievement.

While working on their own memoir projects, students will examine and discuss the ways in which other writers and artists have used essays, books, graphic novels, and photobooks to tell personal stories. In this course, we will discuss not only *how* we tell personal stories, but also *why* putting down the details of an experience give it meaning. As a class, we will explore questions of voice, point-of-view, narrative truth, and the author's responsibility. Students are expected to look hard at the ways in which they define themselves, at the iconography and the underlying personal, social and cultural influences that have shaped their identity.

The goal of the course is two-fold: Over the course of the semester, students will write stories out of their own history, attempting to tell those stories in ways that are both personally meaningful and able to communicate to a larger audience. While working on their own stories, students will read books, plays and essays that will help them address how the larger issues and challenges of this genre relate to their own endeavor.

Class meetings will involve a group discussion of the reading assigned for that week or a class critique of student work. Each week, at least two students will be asked to formulate questions in advance to begin the class discussion. Some weeks, the instructor will make visual presentations of photographic books. These will complement the reading and the specific topics under consideration that week.

*Margaret Sartor is a writer, editor and photographer. Her most recent book, Miss American Pie: A Diary of Love, Secrets, and Growing Up in the 1970s is a memoir of adolescence based on the diaries she kept as a girl. As an editor, Sartor has published three books, including What Was True: The Photographs and Notebooks of William Gedney. Her photographs have been widely published in books and periodicals. They are included in the permanent collections of The Museum of Fine Arts in Houston, the Ogden Museum of Southern Art and the North Carolina Museum of Art, as well as other museum and private collections. Sartor has curated exhibitions at the International Center for Photography in New York, The Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.*

**LS 280.73**

**THE GLORY OF THE *QUATTROCENTO***

**Thomas Brothers**

**Wednesdays, 6:15-8:45 pm**

You can lose yourself in the magnificent *Duomo* of Florence, completed by the great fifteenth-century architect, Filippo Brunelleschi. You can also lose yourself in a painting by Piero della Francesca, or in Guillaume Dufay's brilliant music for the Catholic liturgy, pieces like the *Missa Se la face ay pale*—lose yourself in the sense of tasting a vast and brilliant world that leaves the petty concerns of day-to-day life behind. Fifteenth-century Italy enjoyed a strong tradition of art designed with this in mind. Composers, painters and architects used the full range of intellectual and emotional power available to them to create a transcendent world, and they did so through the patronage of powerful people who expected something in return. That is how the themes of art, spirituality, intellect and politics intersect, and that is how some of the greatest artistic achievements ever known were created. Much of it is still around for us to enjoy and understand today.

Emphasis will be on Florence and then Rome. Fifteenth century Florence provides, in addition to Brunelleschi's buildings and a motet composed by Dufay for the consecration of the *Duomo*, the great tradition of painting and drawing that runs from Masaccio to Michelangelo. Our main architectural site in Rome will be the Sistine Chapel, with its splendid paintings and music, the latter including music composed by the great Josquin Desprez. Thinking about the intersection of religion and politics will lead us through a series of popes and secular rulers, and at the end of the century we return to Florence and the anti-papal protests of Savonarola—who also inspired a piece by Josquin, one written far away from the papacy and under the patronage of the sympathetic Duke of Ferrara. Each student is encouraged to select another city in Italy to work on for a term project, with the goal of seeing how themes from Florence and Rome played out there.

*Thomas Brothers is Professor of Music at Duke, where he has taught for eighteen years. He regularly teaches in two areas—late medieval/renaissance and African American music. His publications include Chromatic Beauty in the Late Medieval Chanson, Louis Armstrong's New Orleans, and Louis Armstrong: In His Own Words.*

**LS 270.54**  
**THE DARWINIAN REVOLUTION**  
**Jonathan Shaw**  
**Wednesdays, 6:15–8:45 pm**

Darwin's book, *On the Origin of Species*, shook the world. What really was the "Darwinian revolution?" As we shall see, the idea of evolution was not new with Darwin. Rather, Darwin's really original contribution was in proposing a naturalistic (as opposed to a supernatural) mechanism for evolution (natural selection). This course will consist of three general parts: the history of evolutionary ideas up to and through the decades immediately following publication of Darwin's theory, evolutionary biology in the twentieth century (including the evidence for evolution as biological "fact"), and the social consequences and applications of evolution.

The first section of the course will focus on pre-Darwinian views of the universe and life on earth. We will compare the so-called "argument from design" as typified by Paley's *Natural Theology* as well as early evolutionary theories, to ideas put forth by Darwin, both in terms of their scientific precepts and their social and philosophical implications. The class will read Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859), along with additional readings that will help develop an appreciation for Darwin as a person and how his ideas apply to a broad range of familiar contemporary issues.

In the second section of the course we will examine some of the evidence for evolution that has accumulated since Darwin published *The Origin* 150 years ago. We will read a short book about modern research on "Darwin's finches" in the Galapagos Islands that illustrates well the power of natural selection in shaping the characteristics of plants and animals. We will also read a book entitled *Making of the Fittest*, which describes how modern research in molecular biology (presented in an absolutely accessible manner by the author) provides some of the strongest evidence to-date for how life's diversity has evolved through time. We will critically examine the various types of evidence for evolution and its mechanisms, and consider the nature of scientific discovery. Are fossils the only source of evidence about biological history? Are historical theories, such as the evolutionary history of particular groups of organisms, "testable?" What is the theoretical basis and the methodology for constructing phylogenetic trees? We will also examine the twentieth century resurgence of "creationism," hearing from writers on both sides of the controversy.

The last general section of the course will address consequences of evolution including so-called "social Darwinism" and the eugenics movement during the first half of the twentieth century, sociobiology, and applications of evolution and phylogenetics in medicine and agriculture. Most of our reading will be from a variety of articles that will be supplied to the class and placed on reserve.

A term paper dealing with a topic related to evolution will be due in the last class meeting. Students will be asked to lead class discussions during the semester. No scientific background is assumed for this course, simply an interest in learning more about science, evolution, and/or the relationship between evolutionary biology and societal, philosophical and religious issues.

*Jonathan Shaw is a Professor in the Department of Biology. He received his Ph.D. in 1983 from the University of Michigan. Dr. Shaw's research is on the systematics, population genetics, and evolution of bryophytes. Some of his research interests have included the taxonomy and classification of particular groups of mosses, developmental anatomy, and genetic relationships among populations of very rare species. A current focus in the lab is the evolution of peatmosses (Sphagnum) and Dr. Shaw's field work tends to be in polar and high altitude environments. He has published some 145 scientific papers and has edited two books, one on the evolution of tolerance in plants to toxic metals in the environment, and one on the biology of bryophytes. Dr. Shaw taught for eight years at a liberal arts college (Ithaca College) before coming to Duke in 1996.*

**LS 270.25**

**WHAT'S FOR DINNER: CULTURE AND AGRICULTURE**

**Kathy Rudy**

**Thursdays, 6:15-8:45 pm**

This course argues that "agriculture," "nature," and "consumption" are all pressing themes. As such, we will explore various dimensions of the cultural and political ecology/economy of producing, processing, circulating, preparing, and consuming sustenance. Recently, there has been an increasing awareness of the "where" of our food supply with growing concerns of food safety, food security, and food sovereignty, as well as a growing awareness of the far-reaching social, ecological, economic, and political implications of a global food system. The concepts of "food miles," "foodshed" and "food desert" have entered mainstream lexicon, while "local" and "organic" have risen to such prominence they risk becoming mere, neoliberalized brands themselves. Within the academy, however, these topics remain relatively under-studied, particularly given their theoretical vagueness—and their significance for human survival. Concepts of cultural and political ecology come to life via the subject of food(s).

Topics for discussion will include: Food and Labor, Food and Inequality, Food and Trade, Edible Consumption, The Geo-politics of Food Aid, Feminism and Food, Food and Globalization, Subsistence as Resistance, Standardization via Foods, Food and Identity, Slow Food and the Class Critique, Food and 'Development,' Urbanization and Food, The Geography of Food Safety, Unaffordable Food, Food Tourism, Food and Traditional Ecological Knowledge, Neoliberalized Nutrition, Food Sovereignty, and Food Security.

*Kathy Rudy is Associate Professor of Ethics and Women's Studies. The author of Beyond Pro-Life and Pro-Choice: Moral Diversity in the Abortion Debate and Sex and the Church: Gender, Homosexuality, and the Transformation of Christian Ethics, she has published articles on abortion and reproduction, sexual ethics, feminist ethics, bioethics, and feminist theory.*

**LS 260.02**

**THE SELF IN THE WORLD (core course: new student requirement)**

**Dr. Kent Wicker and Dr. Donna Zapf**

**Tuesdays, 6:00-8:45 pm**

How have people within Western culture made sense of themselves, their experience, and their place in the world of others? What new insights can we gain on those identities and meanings through the disciplinary methodologies of history, the sciences, the arts, or the humanities? How are those concepts influenced by values and contexts—whether of family, region, religion, class, race, or gender—that we inherit from our culture?

In this introductory course for the MALS degree, we will read provocative texts ranging from the seventeenth century to the present, in order to discuss aspects of the modern self and what we take for granted when we think of individual identity, subjectivity, authenticity, and autonomy. Our exploration of human identity and the relationship of self to others will be informed by the perspectives of various academic disciplines. Our goal is to explore how scholars think, read, and write, with particular attention to: 1) the critical analysis so vital to graduate level work, and 2) the reading and writing skills necessary for interdisciplinary study.

Class work will include readings, discussion, short papers, and one long research project.