

# SO264-15 Powerful Feelings: Emotion as Social and Political

**22/23**

**Department**

Sociology

**Level**

Undergraduate Level 2

**Module leader**

Hannah Jones

**Credit value**

15

**Module duration**

10 weeks

**Assessment**

100% coursework

**Study location**

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

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## Description

### Introductory description

What makes you feel good or bad, and why? How do you convince other people to do what you want them to? What is happening when you feel disgusted by a situation, or empowered to take action, or blissfully secure, or anxious about the future?

Emotion - feelings - are integral to our everyday life and functioning as human beings - and they are inherently social. We often think of emotions as personal, internal and individual, but as sociologists we should also notice that emotions are produced and given meaning through interactions with other people and with institutions. This module will help students to identify how emotion and feeling appears in social life - both in public and in private - and to analyse how feelings relate to individual action and the functioning of social structures. The module will look at theorisations of particular kinds of emotion in social, political, geographical and historical context, with an emphasis on a sociological approach influenced by cultural studies.

### Module aims

To introduce students to sociological theorisations of emotion

To develop students' understandings of political processes that are both embodied and structural

To enable students to identify and assess how social processes are mediated through feeling and meaning

## Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

1. From Rational Choice Theory to the Affective Turn: where is the social in the sociology of emotions?
2. Anger I: hate and destruction
3. Anger II: resource and resistance
4. Hope I: possibility and connection
5. Hope II: disappointment and postponement  
Reading week
6. Fear: retreat and shame
7. Love I: guilt and control
8. Love II: care and solidarity
9. Understanding emotion politically and socially

## Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of sociological theorisations of emotions
- Apply sociological theorisations of emotion and power to empirical examples drawn from political and cultural life
- Communicate understanding of the role of emotions in political processes in a sociologically informed way
- Identify links between personal experiences of feeling and the social context which shapes and is shaped by them

## Indicative reading list

Ahmed, Sara (2004) *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press

Archer, M and Tritter, J (eds) (2000) *Rational choice theory: resisting colonization*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Barbalet, J (1998) *Emotion, Social Theory and Social Structure: A Macrosociological Approach*, Cambridge: CUP.

Barthes, R (1982) *Camera Lucida*, London: Vintage.

Berger, J (1972) *Ways of Seeing*, London: Penguin.

Berlant, L (2011) *Cruel Optimism*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Boler, M (1999) *Feeling Power: Emotions and Education*, New York: Routledge.

Davidson, J, Bondi, L and Smith, M (eds) (2005) *Emotional Geographies*, Aldershot: Ashgate.

hooks, b (2001) *Salvation: Black People and Love*, New York: William Morrow.

Lorde, A (2007) *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*, Berkeley: Crossing Press.

Massumi, B (2015) *Politics of Affect*, Cambridge: Polity.

Nash, J C (2011) "Practicing Love: Black Feminism, Love-Politics, and Post-Intersectionality,

Meridians, 11(2):1-24.

Nussbaum, M (2002) Upheavals of thought: the intelligence of emotions, Cambridge: CUP.

Nussbaum (2013) Political emotions: why love matters for justice, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Sirriyeh, A (2018) The politics of compassion: immigration and asylum policy, Bristol: BUP.

Skeggs, B (2014) "Values beyond value? Is anything beyond the logic of capital?" British Journal of Sociology, 65(1):1-20.

Sontag, S (2004) Regarding the pain of others, London: Penguin.

The Care Collective (2020) The Care Manifesto: the politics of interdependence. London: Verso.

Thrift, N (2004) "Intensities of feeling: towards a spatial politics of affect", Geografisker Annaler Series B Human Geography, 86(1):57-78.

Tyler, I (2021) Stigma: The machinery of inequality, London: Zed.

## Interdisciplinary

Draws on texts from sociology, cultural studies, politics, geography

## Subject specific skills

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of sociological theorisations of emotions

Apply sociological theorisations of emotion and power to empirical examples from political and cultural life

Communicate understanding of the role of emotions in political processes in a sociologically informed way

Identify links between personal experiences of feeling and the social context which shapes and is shaped by them

## Transferable skills

Analysis of complex theoretical texts

Application of complex ideas to everyday situations

Communication in written and spoken formats

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## Study

### Study time

| Type          | Required                  |
|---------------|---------------------------|
| Lectures      | 9 sessions of 1 hour (6%) |
| Seminars      | 9 sessions of 1 hour (6%) |
| Private study | 52 hours (35%)            |
| Assessment    | 80 hours (53%)            |
| Total         | 150 hours                 |

## Private study description

Reading  
Note-taking  
Analysis and reflection  
Preparation of seminar tasks, both individually and in groups  
Identifying sources for further reading  
Essay planning  
Writing essay

## Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

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## Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

### Assessment group A

|                 | <b>Weighting</b> | <b>Study time</b> |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Summative Essay | 100%             | 80 hours          |

### Feedback on assessment

Written feedback

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## Availability

### Courses

This module is Core optional for:

- Year 3 of ULAA-ML33 Undergraduate Law and Sociology

This module is Optional for:

- USOA-L301 BA in Sociology
  - Year 2 of L301 Sociology
  - Year 2 of L301 Sociology
  - Year 2 of L301 Sociology
- Year 2 of USOA-L314 Undergraduate Sociology and Criminology

This module is Option list A for:

- ULAA-ML34 BA in Law and Sociology (Qualifying Degree)
  - Year 3 of ML34 Law and Sociology (Qualifying Degree)
  - Year 4 of ML34 Law and Sociology (Qualifying Degree)
- Year 4 of ULAA-ML33 Undergraduate Law and Sociology

This module is Option list B for:

- Year 2 of UHIA-VL15 Undergraduate History and Sociology (with a term in Venice)
- Year 2 of UPOA-ML13 Undergraduate Politics and Sociology

This module is Option list D for:

- Year 2 of UHIA-VL13 Undergraduate History and Sociology
- Year 2 of UHIA-VL15 Undergraduate History and Sociology (with a term in Venice)