Ethics and the Emotions

Philosophy 109B, Fall 2015
Tuesdays and Fridays, 9:30am-10:50am
Instructor: Berislav Marušić
E-mail: marusic@brandeis.edu
Office: Mandel Center for the Humanities 109
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 3pm-5pm, and by appointment

Course Description
In this course we will consider the nature of emotion and the importance of the emotions for our understanding of moral judgment. The course is divided into two parts. In the first part, we will consider foundational questions about emotions and their relation to moral judgment: What are emotions? How are they related to our brains? How do they interact with our judgments and beliefs? And what role do they play for ethics in general? In the second part, we will focus on some important emotions and consider how they shape our moral outlook and our relations to others—the emotions of love, regret and forgiveness.

Readings
Foundational Questions about the Emotions:
Richard Wollheim, On the Emotions
Selim Berker, “The Normative Insignificance of Neuroscience”
Tamar Schapiro, “The Nature of Inclination”
Peter Strawson, “Freedom and Resentment”

Love, Regret, Forgiveness:
David Velleman, “Love as a Moral Emotion”
Niko Kolodny, “Love as Valuing a Relationship”
R. Jay Wallace, The View from Here
Pamela Hieronymi, “Articulating an Uncompromising Account of Forgiveness”
Cheshire Calhoun, “Changing One’s Heart”

Requirements
• Short paper, 3-4 pages (20%).
• Final Exam (20%).
• Final paper, 10-12 pages (40%).
• Participation (20%).

Course attendance is required. To pass the course, students must complete all written assignments. Late papers will be penalized one third of a letter grade per day. Students must request extensions by e-mail at least one day in advance of the due date of the assignment.

Participation is essential to learning philosophy. Contribution in class and in the online discussion forum on LATTE will be considered. Attendance is included in the participation grade.
**Learning Goals**
General goals are to learn how to carefully read important contemporary texts, to extract and evaluate philosophical arguments from them, and to critically engage with, and build upon these arguments. The particular goals are to get an overview of the nature of emotion and its role in moral judgment, and to get a conceptual understanding of love, regret and forgiveness.

For more information, see the Philosophy Department’s learning goals at:
http://www.brandeis.edu/departments/philosophy/undergrad/learninggoals.html

**Academic Dishonesty**
Academic Dishonesty will be reported to the Department of Student Development and Conduct. Students are responsible to inform themselves about what constitutes dishonesty. If in doubt, please ask me! Here are some basic principles:

- Representing others’ words as one’s own constitutes academic dishonesty. One represents others’ words as one’s own if one uses a formulation that someone else came up with without putting it in quotation marks and attributing it to the author.
- Copying and pasting formulations found on the internet, without attributing them and citing the relevant webpage, is a particularly egregious form of academic dishonesty.
- Communicating with others during an exam about anything that pertains to the subject matter of the course also constitutes academic dishonesty.

Note that it is *not* dishonest to have others read your papers and give you feedback on them. The writing and formulations, however, must be your own.

More information about what constitutes academic dishonesty can be found here:
http://www.brandeis.edu/studentaffairs/srcs/index.html

**Laptop Policy:** Please do not use laptops in class. They distract other students, you and me.

**Disability**
If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis and need to have special accommodations for this class, please see me immediately. I am very happy to make the relevant arrangements.