







Master of Arts Interdisciplinary Studies (MAIS) 615

The Business of Emotions (Revision 5)

Status:	Replaced with new revision, see the course listing  for the current revision 
Delivery mode:	Individualized study 
Credits:	3
Area of study:	Arts
Prerequisites:	Successful completion of a graduate-level course.
Precluded:	None
Faculty:	Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences 

Overview

MAIS 615: The Business of Emotions is an interdisciplinary study of emotions, focusing on their role in workplaces and marketplaces. An *emotion* can be defined as “any agitation or disturbance of mind, feeling, passion; any vehement or excited mental state” (*Oxford English Dictionary*).

We all have emotions, and we know of their importance in our lives, yet it transpires that

the nature, causes, and consequences of the emotions are among the least understood aspects of human experience. It is easier to express emotions than to describe them and harder, again, to analyze them. Despite their apparent familiarity, emotions are an extremely subtle and complex topic, one that has been neglected by many social scientists and philosophers. (Ben-Ze'ev, 2000, *The subtlety of emotions*, p. xiii)

We are far less able to analyze and understand feelings than we are to differentiate between complex abstract systems of thought. There are several reasons for this lack of understanding of emotions:

- First, emotions are usually seen as less important than cognitions or rationality. In part, this is due to the Enlightenment's passion for reason, but it is also due to the politics of gender, which has associated men with reason and women with emotion, and which has seen reason as superior to emotion.
- Second, emotions are remarkably difficult to study “in the field.” You cannot see them or touch them, they usually appear in clusters rather than individually, and they metamorphose—for example, fear grows into anger, love warps into jealousy.
- Third, because emotions pervade both the body and the mind, their study necessitates an interdisciplinary approach combining natural and human sciences, which is difficult to accomplish.
- Fourth, our responses to stimuli are complex. Once we label a response as an emotion, we are committing to all the conscious and unconscious expectations, biases, challenges, and limitations of that label. How we label a response to a stimulus considerably changes our experiences and consequently our lives. This is not something we consider in our day-to-day lives.
- Finally, though we do not believe that inhaling oxygen makes us expert chemists, there is a tendency for lay people to think that their own experience of emotion makes them experts on their own nature. This is not the case.

In this course, we discuss the nature, causes, and impacts of emotions on our lives. The course focuses on the “business” of emotions because it is in the production and marketing of commodities and services that some interesting—and ominous—things are happening in relation to emotions.

Outline

MAIS 615 is divided into seven units:

- Unit 1: The Trouble with Emotions
- Unit 2: What are Emotions?
- Unit 3: Affect Theory and Emotions: Critical Lens on Affect Theory
- Unit 4: Emotions and Emotional Labour
- Unit 5: Buying Emotions (Emotional Branding)
- Unit 6: Emotions and Bodies
- Unit 7: Pain and Pleasure: How Emotions Enter the Soul and Societies



Learning outcomes

After completing MAIS 615, you will be able to:

1. Describe the characteristics of the core emotions (e.g., anger, fear, love, hate).
2. Identify the existence and dynamics of emotions in the world around you.
3. Explain what is meant by a “cluster” of emotions.
4. Define *emotion*, and identify the basic components common to all emotions.
5. Explain why emotions are “subtle.”
6. Discuss “feelings,” “luck,” basic and secondary emotions, emotional intelligence, emotional intensity, and emotional deception.
7. Explain how affect and emotion are connected, and explain the basic premise of affect theory.
8. Evaluate how a critical lens on affect theory explores the labelling of affects and the consequences of this action.

9. Explain the commodification of human experience.
10. Critically evaluate Hochschild's *The Managed Heart*.
11. Identify and discuss examples of emotional labour.
12. Explain emotional branding and its influence on consumers.
13. Discuss how emotional bonds can be formed with brands.
14. Describe the impact of material abundance on social relationships and value systems.
15. Critically evaluate how the limbic brain mediates between the internal bodily environment and the external social environment.
16. Critically evaluate Damasio's explanation of the relationship between reason and emotion.
17. Critically evaluate how pleasure and pain enter the "soul" and the significance of this discovery.
18. Examine the emotions connected to redemption.

Evaluation

To receive **credit**  for MAIS 615, you must complete and submit all of the assignments, and participate fully in online course discussions. You must achieve a minimum grade of **C- (60 percent)**  for the course.

Any student who receives a grade of F in one course, or a grade of C in more than one course, may be required to withdraw from the program. Please note that it is your responsibility to maintain your program status.


You will be evaluated on your understanding of the concepts presented in the course and on your ability to apply those concepts. Your final grade in the course will be based on the marks achieved for the following activities.

Activity	Weight
Assignment 1: Emotions and Affect	25%
Assignment 2: Selling and Buying Emotions	25%
Assignment 3: Emotions, Bodies, Societies	25%





Activity	Weight
Assignment 4: Summary of Online Discussions	25%
Total	100%

Materials

Ben-Ze'ev, A. (2000). *The subtlety of emotions*. MIT Press.  (eBook)

Hochschild, A. R. (2012). *The managed heart: Commercialization of human feeling* (Updated edition). University of California Press.  (eBook)

Important links

- › [Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies](#) 
- › [Focus Areas](#) 
- › [Courses](#) 
- › [Fees and Funding](#) 

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery methods may vary from their individualized study counterparts.

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