Emotion in Organizations: 
Communication, commodification, expression of feelings at work

COM 691 – Fall 2014 – Thursday 3-5:45 p.m. – SLN 78635

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Office hours (Stauffer 424): Tues 1:30-2 p.m.; Thur 1:30-3 p.m. & by appointment

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Course Description

This graduate seminar explores the different ways emotion is socially and discursively constructed through communication and interaction, and how emotional expressions, performances, control, abuse/bullying, compassion, emotional intelligence, stress, and burnout are manifest in everyday organizational life. Emotion norms are perpetuated and naturalized through employee talk and organizational structures. Furthermore, employees engage in emotional activity through micro-practices including emotional labor, social support, compassion, and empathy. And, of course, employees cope with affective events (constructed by discourse) through face to face and mediated interaction, storytelling, venting, joking, and advice giving.

Topics will include theoretical considerations, case study analyses, and ontological activities of “being” emotionally intelligent. Through class discussions, activities, readings and assignments, students will appreciate how emotion issues—both organizational norms about them and employees’ ways of dealing with them—are central to the study and experience of organizational communication.

This class is a graduate seminar, and as such, students will spend significant time reading and analyzing advanced texts, generating discussion based upon these texts, providing peer feedback, practicing the topics in their own organizational life, and developing original research. As an instructor I will alternately act as background provider, listener, moderator, devil’s advocate, questioner, and sounding board for student reflections, practice, and research.

Course Resources

Password-protected Ted Talks and readings on Blackboard (see schedule for citations).

Focus, comprehension, recall of ideas, and information processing increase when we hand-write notes and read from physical paper. As such, I encourage you to make notes by hand rather than via a computer keyboard. For information: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/03/science/whats-lost-as-handwriting-fades.html,

1 Anyone is welcome to duplicate or reuse portions of this syllabus with source notation and an email fyi to instructor.
Assignments (out of 500 pts total):

1. Practicing Being Emotionally Intelligent (up to 50 pts) – Most pedagogical activities are epistemological and technical in nature, in the form of asking you to read, understand, explain, and apply. This assignment, in contrast to the epistemological approach, takes an ontological-phenomenological transformative—or OPPT-in—approach where you are asked to practice BEING one or more concepts related to emotional intelligence.

a. Consider the following ways of being: empathetic, compassionate, free of stress or burnout, able to notice and manage one’s own anger, or able to effectively be with, manage, or deflect others’ toxic emotion.

b. Journal about a space in your life where you have experienced a breakdown related to one or more of these ways of being. Breakdowns are when you interact in a way that does not create your desired relational or task outcome.

i. Which conceptual areas (from “a” above) are related to the situation?
ii. Describe the situation interactionally and communicatively—what was said and not said? What were your break-downs? Make sure to focus on your own behavior, rather than pointing to others’ breakdowns. Standing in a place of responsibility provides powerful access to recreate differently a similar future situation.
iii. Considering these breakdowns and what you have learned about competent practice of the topic(s) you chose from “a” (above), how specifically could you create a breakthrough in your communication and interaction in the future?

c. Engage in sharing and practice with a class partner.

i. Share what you wrote in “b”.
ii. Together with your partner, brainstorm additional ways of being emotionally intelligent through your communication and interaction.
iii. Practice that way of being in terms of a situation similar to what you described in “B.” Role play with your class partner, actually using communication and interaction. Don’t sum up. Practice it. Possibly, have a third party videotape you practicing it.

d. Over the course of the next week, practice this new way of being in THREE or more real-time situations. Our ways of being show up in language and interaction.

e. Reflect on and write about how these new ways of being and interacting unfolded.

i. What worked? What didn’t? Provide thick description and dialogue (don’t sum up)
ii. What did you learn about yourself and your way of being through this exercise?
iii. Did the exercise uncover any blind spots in your typical ways of being (e.g., things that you didn’t realize about yourself until you did this exercise)?
iv. What are your next steps for moving forward? Be specific.

f. Write a 2,500-3000 word essay about this entire process. Note, this assignment is not evaluated on the extent to which you succeed in being emotionally intelligent. Rather, it is evaluated by your thoughtful reflection, peer engagement, authenticity, and evidenced sincere courage, vulnerability, and work at practicing new ways of being as informed through our readings in the first couple weeks of class.
2. **Dynamic Discussion-Leading (up to 50 pts).** Each student will lead discussion for a subset of the assigned readings. Doing so provides an opportunity to practice concept-integration and presentation skills. Dates for discussion leading will be chosen within the first two weeks of class. Discussion leading includes the following activities:

   a. Touch base a week in advance to discuss the time range of discussion-leading.
   b. Prepare 3-5 discussion questions for us to think about and respond to electronically via blackboard and verbally in class. Please also identify and provide a usable link to one related online resource (e.g., a TED talk, youtube video, or RSA animation). Consider soliciting ideas from class members. *Post these to blackboard at least five days in advance so other students can consider these issues as they read the articles.*
   c. Be the course expert on the day’s readings. This means you know a bit about the author, can review the primary findings, have an informed opinion about the strengths and limitations of the piece, know how the piece connects to other course readings, and what it suggests in terms of appropriate or fruitful future research. Also, you should be able to refer 3+ additional resources for that day (one of them should be the mediated resource like a TED talk or news special noted above). *Please add these additional resources to the discussion leading forum for your week by the day you lead class.*
   d. In class, cover key terms and theories (turning to the instructor for more information when appropriate), present / integrate the main concepts in an interactive, lively manner, create discussion and dialogue, integrate 10-15 minutes of related mediated resource—making use of assigned readings, discussion questions, additional resources, and application to course projects. You are invited to share outlines or notes from your discussion-leading with the instructors and course participants as a generosity to the collective (you can do this via the discussion board). Doing so will not affect your grade.

Grading will rest upon thoughtfulness and timeliness of discussion questions and additional resources, command of topic, liveliness, professionalism, and organization.

3. **Passionate Participation, Attendance, and Note-taking (up to 80 pts).**

   Students should complete assigned readings and make notes about weekly discussion questions before class so they can participate in an enthusiastic and informed manner. *Furthermore, each week, students should make notes and be prepared to discuss how the readings impact, intersect, extend, or complicate their semester project.* Notes about participation will be recorded for each student after every course session.

   Students can earn points toward participation through posting electronic responses to discussion questions or other issues related to readings on Blackboard, attendance and focused attention for the full class period, evidenced preparation in class, thoughtful and appropriate verbal participation (more does not always = better), listening alertly and taking notes, concentrating on course material rather than distractions, and providing enthusiastic support to class members (fostering collective focus on the course material).

   If you must miss a single class, you can update or create a Wikipedia page associated with a course topic. You are responsible for learning and following through with the technicalities in updating the page. Please propose topic first.
4. **Emonet community involvement (up to 20 pts)** – One way to learn about research is to become part of an online list-serve community. The first few days of class, students should send an email to Neal Ashkanasy (http://www.emotionsnet.org/emonet-list-server/) requesting to become a member of “Emonet”—the primary listserv community of emotion and organizing scholars. The link to the site is http://www.emotionsnet.org/. By August 28th, copy-paste your confirmation email in Blackboard assignment turn-in (5 pts).

   **Sometime before October 30th**, post at least one original thread to Emonet and/or respond substantively to one of the threads. Please copy-paste this into assignment turn-in and additionally post this—as well as any related follow-ups—to our Blackboard discussion thread named “Emonet contributions” (15 pts).

5. **Stirring Semester Research Paper Project & Presentation (up to 200 pts).**

   The culminating course project is a 20-to-25-page paper or ~6000 words (APA style) on an issue related to emotion and communication in organizations. Students should make use of the course readings and supplement them with additional research. Format possibilities include original research studies, comprehensive critical literature reviews (e.g., check out examples in Communication Yearbook), advanced case analyses, or theory-grounded papers that include in-depth ontological analysis of emotional being and/or training modules. A number of past student papers are now publications, and you should take a look at these (listed in week 15) for inspiration!

   If there is a unique type of project you would like to complete—or if you would like to work with another—please feel free to approach me. If you work in a pair, you can begin turning in dual-authored work with the first draft (bb5). Co-authored work will receive the same grade and should be slightly more expansive in terms of scope/length (e.g., 25-30 pages or ~7000 words).

   In one of our final classes, you’ll give a 10-15 minute oral presentation of your final paper (25 of the listed points). This is an opportunity to give a conference-quality presentation, complete with visual aids as appropriate.

6. **Research Paper Building Blocks (up to 100 pts).** The research project is segmented into seven “building block” assignments that lead toward your final paper. Please type and post them to blackboard, bring either a hard copy or electronic copy to class, and be prepared to share with peers. Details of each assignment appear below, examples appear on blackboard, and further details may be discussed in class.

   **1. Three potential topics** - **5 pts:** Humans often “satisfice,” going with the first workable decision we stumble upon, rather than creating multiple possibilities. In the quest to create the most creative, inspiring, and powerful semester projects possible, describe three or more potential project ideas. For each, come up with an overall research question or research problem that your project will tackle. For inspiration, consider syllabus readings, past student papers, organizational dilemmas you’ve faced, unanswered questions in the literature, hot topics, or issues that confuse and/or energize you. Briefly discuss the rationale, audience, and purpose of each idea.

   **2. Abstract** - **5 pts:** Usually people write the abstract after they are finished with a paper. In this class, you’ll practice with one early on. Examine models of course reading abstracts, and write something that’s about 400-500 words. Writing this first provides a road map. Your abstract will change over the semester—this is a place to start.
3. **Conceptual “cocktail party”-15 pts:** Choose 3-4 scholars who you would like to be in conversation with in your research. These folks, or scholars who do similar work, are likely to be reading/responding to/critiquing your research. Collect at least two books or articles related to your research from each, and provide the citation and brief explanation as to how you hope to enter into conversation with these scholars and their work. Ultimately, in your final paper, you should be citing these scholars in the first few paragraphs. I also encourage you to make an introduction via email, acknowledge how you’ve found their work inspiring/useful/valuable, and discuss how you are making use of/appreciating their research.

4. **Article format models – 15 pts:** Find three published articles that, format-wise, “do” the same thing that you want to do in your own paper. For example, if you are conducting a focus-group study in which you meld two theoretical points of view, find other articles that do the same (the model need not be on the same topic). Consider publication venues appropriate for your own work. For each of “model”, include the APA citation, and then create a one-page outline of what is done in the article and the amount of space used to do it in. For example:
   a. rationalizes the use of theory ABC as a new way of making sense of XYZ behavior (1.5 pages)
   b. bridges the two different theoretical approaches through a logical transition (2 sentences, middle of p. 4).
   c. methodology – 3 pages (pp. 11-13).

Use the model essays’ headers as a rough guide for the outline’s level of detail. However, feel free to go more detailed (e.g., you may want to note the way the author made a beautiful logical transition between two theories or substantiated the use of a certain sampling or analysis strategy). Use these article model outlines as raw material as you determine the organizational framework of your own research paper.

5. **Brief & Instructor Meeting– 15 pts:** Schedule a 20-minute meeting with Dr. Tracy between 10/24 and 11/4 & write a 2-3 page brief—in full sentences—that includes:
   a. Intended Audience and presentation/publication outlet – include a statement of this audience’s potential interest in or concern with this project
   b. Overall Purpose; no more than 1-3 sentences
   c. Overall Rationale [make sure this links to your intended audience]
   d. Outline of lit review – Do this in the form of three to five statements that say, “whereas...[name what is already known], this project is exploring/ asking/ investigating...[articulate specific goals of project].” Include key references.
   e. One sentence statement of method, if applicable
   f. Key findings or arguments (3-4 full sentences). These may be tentative right now.
   g. Overall project contributions (theoretical, practical, heuristic)—say how this project contributes to key conversations within or concerns of your intended audience

6. **First Draft – 30 pts:** Write the first full draft of the semester paper.

7. **First Draft Peer Feedback – 15 pts:** Provide feedback and suggestions on one of your colleagues’ papers. Use “track changes” as well as provide a one-to-two page overview/summary of your comments. Use this as an opportunity to practice skills in reviewing scholarly papers. Consider criteria of: a) clarity of purpose; b) credibility and completeness of literature; c) value of contribution—theoretical and/or practical; d) value of contribution to emotion and organizing sub-disciplinary area; e) readability (format, style, organization). Also set appt. with Lou Clark (see schedule).
Course Policies

Assignments, Due Dates, & Incompletes: Assignments, unless listed otherwise, are due before or at the beginning of class. A late written assignment will be penalized up to 10% for each day it is late. Due to time constraints, discussion-leading will only receive credit when completed on the day scheduled. All assignments must be completed to pass the course. No assignments (except for final paper) will be accepted after Wednesday, December 10. Incompletes are available to students who: 1) have finished more than half the coursework, 2) experience serious illness or personal emergency, and 3) negotiate the incomplete before December 10. It is in students’ best interest to be in touch earlier rather than later if they are having difficulty keeping up in the class.

Unique Academic Needs: Students with academic needs that require special course considerations can be accommodated. Students should document their needs with the University’s Disability Resources Center and see me no later than the second week of class to discuss options.

Plagiarism/Academic Dishonesty: Although several graduate papers may overlap in conceptual focus, students’ 691 research projects should be original work devised for this class. If students plan on using or overlapping with material prepared for a different course, please consult with me regarding appropriateness. ASU’s academic integrity and plagiarism policies are applicable to this course. Please see https://provost.asu.edu/index.php?q=academicintegrity. Students are responsible for knowing APA style for citing outside sources.

Grading: Letter grades are figured as to the following guidelines (out of 500 pts).

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<th>Outstanding – above expectations</th>
<th>Good – above average</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Un satisfactory</th>
<th>Failing</th>
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<td>A+ 485–500 pts</td>
<td>B+ 435–449 pts</td>
<td>C+ 385–399 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>A- 450–464 pts</td>
<td>B- 400 414 pts</td>
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<td>XE - academic dishonesty</td>
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Schedule – all are Thursdays 3-5:45 p.m. except for one Saturday, Sept 6th
—Subject to change via an announcement in class or discussion board

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<th>Class-Day</th>
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| 1-8/21    | **EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE – THE GERMINAL WORK**  
Due: Bring notes from “Being Emotionally Intelligent” Assignment parts A & B and preparation to share with a partner (part C). |
| 2-8/28    | **COMMUNICATING EMOTION AT WORK – OVERVIEW – SPECIAL GUEST – VINCE WALDRON**  
Due: By class, engage in “Being Emotionally Intelligent” assignment part D, and be prepared to reflect with a partner on part E. Continue to work through the assignment over the next two weeks.  
Due: Emonet List-serv confirmation email into Assignment Turn In. |
| 3-9/04    | **A GRAND TOUR OF EMOTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS**  
Due: BB1 – three potential topics |
| 4-9/06    | **THEORETICAL & PARADIGMATIC FOUNDATIONS**  

**Note:** This is Saturday (Make-up for NCA)
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9-10/09  **THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY: WORKPLACE BULLYING AND POSITIVE EMOTION IN ORGANIZATIONS – SPECIAL GUEST, PAMELA LUTGEN-SANDVIK**


**Due:** *BB 4 – Article Format Models*

10-10/16  **HUMOR, CYNICISM, & AMBIVALENCE IN ORGANIZATIONS**


11-10/23  **COMPASSION, LOSS, & HOPE – SPECIAL GUEST, TIMOTHY HUFFMAN**


**Due:** *BB 5 – Brief & Schedule Meeting with Dr. Tracy for a time between 10/24 and 11/4*
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*Due: By today, provide a substantive response to or begin a substantive thread on Emonet—and copy-paste it into emonet contributions* |
*Due: BB 6 - First Draft* |
*Due: BB 7 - Peer Feedback*  
Set up a twenty minute meeting with Lou Clark to review rough draft, get her feedback, and peer feedback before 11/27 |
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<td>15 - 12/4</td>
<td>STUDENT FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS</td>
<td>Informal discussion on articles, above; Question / Answer about final papers, wrap-up BB 7 Due: Final Papers – on or before Monday, Dec. 8th, 5 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Period 12/11</td>
<td>FINISH STUDENT FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS</td>
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ALPHABETICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY for reference


Harlos & Pinder (Fineman text #14). Emotion and injustice in the workplace.


