

PHIL 285: Pleasure and Pain
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Course Description:

“The exercise of the muscular frame is the source of some of our chief enjoyments. This activity is followed by weariness and a desire for rest; and although unattended with any describable pleasure of local sensation, there is diffused through every part of the frame a feeling almost voluptuous.” Charles Bell (1833)

The milk has spoiled. It has a foul, sour odor, with an even worse taste. Even its pale greenish color is deeply unpleasant. Our experience of the spoiled milk is suffused with a negative, awful character. Thankfully, not all of our experiences are like this. Indeed, many of our experiences are quite pleasant. A cold glass of lemonade on a hot day, for instance, can be immensely pleasing and enjoyable. Many, perhaps most, of our conscious experiences possess some pleasant or unpleasant character. This felt positive or negative component of an experience is often called its *affect* (sometimes also called its *valence*, *salience*, or *hedonic tone*). Affect plays an immediate and powerful role in our conscious lives: it provides a rich felt awareness of the potential goods and harms in our environment, and adds value and meaning to our experiential lives. Affect so understood is distinct from the other aspects of conscious awareness: it is not simply an awareness of things around us, nor is it just an emotional or subjective reaction in us. Instead, our affective lives seem to present things to us in a certain way, bridging the gap between information processing and evaluative appraisal.

This seminar will look at recent philosophical theories of affective experience, with a slight focus on classic and recent work on pain.

Required Texts: *Pain: New Essays on its Nature and the Methodology of its Study*. (2005). Edited by Murat Aydede (MIT Press). Other papers through electronic reserves.

Course Requirements: There will be one (15-20) page paper, and either one or two in-class presentations (depending on numbers).

Format: We will discuss two or three papers/chapters each week, for approximately one hour each. Each paper will be preceded by a student presentation of no more than 20 minutes, leaving the remainder of the time for discussion.

Reading Schedule (subject to revision): (an * indicates an optional but recommended reading)

Week 1: Introduction and background

Introduction, course mechanics, outline

Week 2: Historical views of pleasure

Ryle, G. (1954). "Pleasure", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Supp. Vol. 28, pp. 135–146.

Gallie, W.B. (1954), "Pleasure", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Supp. Vol. 28, pp. 147–164.

*Penelhum, T. (1957), "The Logic of Pleasure," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 17, pp. 488–503.

*Quinn, W.S. (1968). "Pleasure — Disposition or Episode?" , *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 28, pp. 578–86.

*Myers, Gerald E. (1957). "Ryle on Pleasure," *Journal of Philosophy* 54: 7: 181–188.

Week 3: Recent work on pleasure

Heathwood, C. (2006). "The reduction of sensory pleasure to desire." *Philosophical Studies*, 133(1): 23–44.

Bramble, B. (2011). "The Distinctive Feeling Theory of Pleasure." *Philosophical Studies*.

Smuts, A. (2011). "The feels good theory of pleasure." *Philosophical Studies*, 155(2), 241–265.

*Schroeder, T. (2006). "An Unexpected Pleasure." *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 36(5), 255–272.

Week 4: Early work on Pain

Pitcher, G. (1970). "Pain Perception," *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 79, No. 3, pp. 368-393.

Pitcher, G. (1970). "The Awfulness of Pain," *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 67, No. 14, pp. 481-492

*Dennett, (1978) "Why you Can't make a Computer that Feels Pain" *Synthese* 38: 415-449.

*Melzack, R., & Wall, D. (1983). "Gate control theory of pain." In *The Challenge of Pain*, 26–96.

Week 5: The Problem of Pain

Dretske, "The Epistemology of Pain" (Aydede, Ch. 2)

Hill, "Ow! The paradox of Pain" (Aydede, Ch. 3)

*Price, D. (1992). The affective-motivational dimension of pain A two-stage model. *APS Journal*.

*Auvray, M., Myin, E., & Spence, C. (2010). "The sensory-discriminative and affective-motivational aspects of pain." *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews*, 34(2), 214–223.

Week 6: Representationalism about pain

Tye, "Another Look at Representationalism about Pain" (Aydede, Ch. 4)

Responses by Aydede, Block, and Maund

Tye, "In Defense of Representationalism: Reply to Critics" (Aydede, Ch. 9)

Week 7: Representationalism 2

Tye and Cutter, (2011) "Tracking Representationalism and the Painfulness of Pains" *Phil Issues* 21: 90-109.

Fulkerson and Aydede, (Ms) "Affect: Representationalism's Headache"

*Moreland Perkins, "An indirectly Realist, Representational Account of Pain(ed) Perception" (Aydede, Ch. 11)

Week 8: Psychofunctionalist accounts

Austen Clark, "Painfulness is not a Quale" (Aydede, Ch. 10)

Fulkerson and Aydede, (Ms) "Affective Qualities"

*Berridge and Kringelback (2011). "Building a Neuroscience of Pleasure and Well-being"

*O'Sullivan, B., & Schroer, R. (2012). "Painful Reasons: Representationalism as a Theory of Pain." *The Philosophical Quarterly*.

Week 9: Imperative views of pain

Klein, Colin (2009). "An Imperative Theory of Pain" *Journal of Philosophy* 104: 517-532.

Hall, R. (2008). "If it Itches, Scratch!" *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 86: 525-535.

*Bain, D. (2011). "The Imperative View of Pain," *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 18: 164-185.

Week 10: Mixed accounts

Aydede, M. (2000). "An Analysis of Pleasure vis-a-vis Pain," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 61: 537-570.

Helm, B. (2002). "Felt Evaluations: A Theory of Pleasure and Pain" *American Philosophical Quarterly* 39: 13-30.