Symbolic Systems 210

Learning Facial Emotions: Art and Psychology

Winter Quarter, 2009-2010
Stanford University, 3 units

Instructors:
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Office: Drama Dept, Roble Gym, Rm 13

Guest Artist:
Michael Azgour, Figure Drawing, mazgour@stanford.edu

Class meets: Wednesday, 7-9pm, Wallenberg Hall, Room 160-124
Course prerequisites. Psych1 or consent
Class size: limited to 15 due to acting and art drawing studio component

Course Description

The focus of this seminar course is an exploration of the differences between an art and psychology approach to learning the universal facial emotions. Attention is given to the tasks of learning to express, recognize, feel, and respond to facial emotions. Dimensions of analysis include neuroscience, learning, and human-computer interaction. There is an emphasis on learning to recognize facial emotions in the presence of cognitive deficits such as autism.

A psychology approach to learning to recognize facial emotions is learning by being told the facial features that define the emotion, being shown examples of particular emotions, and being given feedback on performance. Paul Ekman's Micro Expression Training Tool (METT) and Subtle Expression Training Tool (SETT) learning methods are excellent paradigmatic examples of this approach, and will be used in the course.

An artistic approach to learning facial emotions involves methods used in art drawing and actor training. In art drawing, a live model is drawn in a studio setting. We will specialize facial drawing to those facial features associated with the seven basic emotions. Actor training focuses on those acting skills that assist the individual in understanding and recognizing facial emotional expressions of others. This includes exercises in observation, storytelling, emotional memory and empathy. Prior art and drama experience is not required.

The general topic of this course has not been previously studied, thus offering the opportunity to engage in original research.
1. Class Particulars

Office Hours

David Wilkins, Margaret Jacks Hall, Bldg 460, Rm 40E
Wednesdays 3-5pm and by appointment.
Kay Kostopolous, Drama Department, Roble Gym, Rm 13
By appointment.

Cognate Status

In addition to satisfying requirements for a major in Symbolic Systems, this course has
cognate status in Psychology and Communications. It can be used to satisfy requirements
of a major in these departments.

Coursework

This course will use Coursework, W10-SYMSYS-210-01. Readings are posted on the
site. Homework and critiques are submitted using the drop box feature.

Course Readings

The readings are usually journal articles, available in PDF form on Coursework.
All readings are made available at least two weeks in advance.

Course Art Kit

The following art supplies are in the art kit that has been prepared for this class:
Strathmore Sketch Pad 400 series, 9"x12", 100 sheets, 60 lb; Clipboard 9"x12"
Alphacolor Charkole black 3 pack; 2b 4b 6b charcoal pencils; Derwent graphite pencil
.5mm mechanical pencil; Pentel sign pen; China marker; Stick graphite 4b
Tombo brush pen black; Factis extra soft eraser ES20; Design kneaded rubber eraser
1224, Kum pencil sharpener with two holes to catch shavings; Pencil box.

A SymSys Art Kit that contains all of the above art items is available from Accent Arts,
located at 392 California Ave, (650) 424-1044, 10-7pm. Ask for the SymSys Art Kit.
List Price $52.02  Kit Price $32.09 plus tax.

Homework and Critiques

The lecture-related homework is a one-page critique of the readings for the week. A
critique provides a summary of strengths, weaknesses, and observations of the reading.
Any lab-related homework will be announced in conjunction with the labs.
Critiques of the readings are turned in the day before the class in which they are covered at noontime. Normally, this is Tuesday at noontime. Please use the drop box feature of coursework to submit homework and critiques.

**Term Projects**

Everyone will be given the opportunity to define their own term project. A initial description of your planned term project is due the second week of the class. It should include your term project idea and at three references. If full text versions of your references are available, they should be placed in your coursework drop box.


In one type of term project, you can formulate a hypothesis, explain why the hypothesis is of interest, describe related research, describe how the hypothesis can be experimentally tested, and conjecture the experimental results. In another type of term project you can design or program an interactive learning system that relates to learning facial emotions.

**Actor Training Labs**

In the acting portion of the class, we will be looking at a variety of acting skills that assist the individual in understanding and recognizing facial expressions as related to the feelings and emotions of others. We will do a warm up for physical relaxation, breathing, centering, grounding, and "being present in the moment" to enhance our ability to observe others, and be observed. We will then perform acting exercises in observation, storytelling, emotional memory and empathy. We will also explore "The Method of Physical Action" from the 19th century acting teacher, Constantin Stanislavski, who believed that physical actions inspire truthful emotion.

**Art Drawing Labs**

An art drawing approach to learning facial emotions involves methods used in traditional drawing. Students will first be introduced to basic drawing techniques using charcoal pencil. They will then be instructed to observe the facial features of a model, examine the subtle expressions, and draw them in a representational manner. We will discuss the positions of the feature points of the face as they relate to the seven basic emotions. Assignments will consist of short studies that attempt to convey the subtle expressions of the model’s facial features in a drawing.
Library Reserve

Relevant materials will be on reserve at the Meir library reserve desk. This includes the METT/SETT training CD that will be available for two-hour checkout.

Literature Searches

With respect to the psychology literature, the main source relevant to the course is psychINFO, accessible at http://library.stanford.edu/sulapp/databases/index.jsp. Select psychology, and then select psychINFO. Another good source is www.pubMED.net. A major keyword is Facial Emotion Recognition.

Grading

60% Term Paper and Presentation, 25% Homework, 15% Lecture and Lab participation

Homework Readings

Week 3:


Week 3 Supplementary:


Week 5:


Week 5 Supplementary:


Week 7.

Readings for week 7 to be determined by week 5 and will relate to the topics of most relevance to the evolving interests of the students.

Class Syllabus on Following Page....
## Class Syllabus

**Symbsys 210, Winter 2010**  
**Learning Facial Emotions: Art and Psychology**

### 2. Class Schedule

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Readings, Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>No Class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 1/6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Lecture: Overview of Learning Facial Emotions</td>
<td>Buy art supplies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 1/13</td>
<td>Psych Lab: METT Microexpressions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Lecture: The Universal Emotions</td>
<td>Critiques due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 1/20</td>
<td>Art Lab: Art Drawing Training Without Model</td>
<td>Literature Search due</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Art Lab: Actor Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 1/27</td>
<td>Art Lab: Art Drawing Training with Model</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Lecture: FER and Autism-Neuroscience</td>
<td>Critiques due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 2/3</td>
<td>Lecture: FER and Human-Computer Interaction</td>
<td>Draft Presentation</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Midterm Student Presentations</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
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<td>Wed 2/10</td>
<td>5 minute present, 2-3 min class feedback</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Lecture: Topic TBD</td>
<td>Critique due</td>
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<td>Wed 2/17</td>
<td>Psych Lab: SETT Subtle Expressions</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Art Lab: Actor Training</td>
<td>Draft Presentations</td>
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<td>Wed 2/24</td>
<td>Art Lab: Art Drawing Training with Model</td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
<td>Final Student Presentations</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
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<td>Wed 3/3</td>
<td>5 minute present, 2-3 min class feedback</td>
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<td>Week 10</td>
<td>Lecture: Summary and Conclusions</td>
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<td>Wed 3/10</td>
<td>Psych Lab: Measuring METT Improvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam Week</td>
<td>Final research term papers due at 10pm</td>
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<td>Mon 3/16</td>
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