

Love Online: Emotion in Digital Culture

IML 499

Professor Elizabeth Ramsey

Course Description

IML 499: Love Online: Emotion in Digital Culture is an interdisciplinary and project-based course that will examine emotions in relation technology, digital culture and the human experience. The course will examine multiple disciplinary understandings (neuroscience, psychology, cultural studies, media studies, history, and computer science to name a few) of emotion and consider how each offers insight and critique of society, digital culture and personal experience.

Students will also explore tracking emotional well-being with apps and wearables to experience developments in body-borne computing and issues in the quantified self movement in order to design their own ideas for emotion-tracking apps and wearables. The course will also question the role of emotions and technology in relation to social change, consider how emotions can signify and subvert power structures, and ask what role new technologies, emotions and digital culture can play in making the world a better place. Students will be asked weekly to design ideas and prototypes for technologies around emotion in relation to different course topics and will develop a final project of their choice in consultation with the professor. No prior experience with wearables or apps is required.

Course Projects

In-class Design Exercises / 10%
Emotion Tracking App and Wearable Review / 10%
Weekly Reflection Write-ups / 20%
Midterm Project / 30%
Final Project / 30%

Required Reading

- Assorted readings on course wiki
- Dylan Evans, *Emotion: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Excerpts from Rafael A. Calvo, *Positive Computing*, MIT Press, 2014. (Available as electronic resource on USC Homer)
- Excerpts from Rosalind Picard, *Affective Computing*, MIT Press, 1997. (Available as electronic resource on USC Homer)

Required Technology

- Spire device and app (device provided by MA+P; app can be downloaded free on mobile device)

Policies

Academic Conduct and Plagiarism

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Section 11, [Behavior Violating University Standards](#). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on [scientific misconduct](#).

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the [Office of Equity and Diversity](#) or to the [Department of Public Safety](#). This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. [The Center for Women and Men](#) provides 24/7 confidential support, and the [sexual assault resource center](#) webpage describes reporting options and other resources.

Support Systems

A number of USC’s schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the [American Language Institute](#), which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. The [Office of Disability Services and Programs](#) provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, [USC Emergency Information](#) will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

Disruptive Student Behavior

Behavior that persistently or grossly interferes with classroom activities is considered disruptive behavior and may be subject to disciplinary action. Such behavior inhibits other students' ability to learn and an instructor's ability to teach. A student responsible for disruptive behavior may be required to leave class pending discussion and resolution of the problem and may be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action.

PLEASE NOTE:

FOOD AND DRINKS (OTHER THAN WATER) ARE NOT PERMITTED IN ANY INSTRUCTIONAL SPACES IN THE CINEMATIC ARTS COMPLEX

Fair Use and Citation Practices

Fair use is a legal principle that defines certain limitations on the exclusive rights of copyright holders. Media Arts + Practice seeks to apply a reasonable working definition of fair use that will enable students and instructors to develop multimedia projects without seeking authorization for non-commercial, educational uses. Four factors that should be considered when determining whether a use is fair: (1) the purpose and character of use, (2) the nature of the copyrighted work, (3) the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole, and (4) the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work. In general, we regard the reproduction of copyrighted works for the purposes of analysis or critique in this class to be covered by the principle of fair use.

All projects will need to include academically appropriate citations in the form of a Works Cited section, which covers all sources, in order to receive a passing grade. The Works Cited is

either included in the project or as a separate document, as appropriate to your project. There are several different citation styles and practices; please ask your professor(s) what style manual s/he would prefer.

Sample Weekly Topic Schedule

Week 1: Introduction

Week 2: Emotions—How do we understand them?

Week 3: Affective Computing

Week 4: Emotion Cultural Studies, Emotion History and Technology

Week 5 : Emotions, Wearables, Embodied Knowledge and the Quantified Self

Week 6: Emotions, Wearables and the Quantified Society

Week 7: Emotion Management, Labor and Technology

Week 8: Midterm and Workshop

Week 9: Outlaw Emotions, Technology and Social Change

Week 10: Case Study--Empathy Online

Week 11: Case Study--Love Online

Week 12: Workshop

Week 13: Workshop

Week 14: Prototype

Week 15: Prototype

Finals Week