

MIT OpenCourseWare
<http://ocw.mit.edu>

9.68 Affect: Biological, Psychological, and Social Aspects of "Feelings"
Spring 2009

For information about citing these materials or our Terms of Use, visit: <http://ocw.mit.edu/terms>.

Class Meeting 1

February 3

Themes: "Getting Acquainted"
 Introduction and Overview: Why Study "Feelings?"
 Conduct and Administration of Subject (see above).

HANDOUTS:

- 1 Syllabus
- 2 Preliminary Information Form and Benchmark Questionnaire
- 3 Timesheet
- 4 Study Group roster form
- 5 "Working Groups"

At door: Distribution of Preliminary Information forms and Benchmark Questionnaires. Students complete and turn in Info Form and then start working (for 10 min. max.) on completion of Benchmark Questionnaires. Benchmark Questionnaires collected and prepared for later random redistribution.

We need to do some initial stock-taking.

WE COMPLETE "BENCHMARK" FORMS AND EXCHANGE SOME PRELIMINARY INFORMATION

Who is here? What are our backgrounds? Where are we coming from?
 Who is addressing whom?
 On what subject?
 What are our expectations (hopes/fears) at the point of entry?
 On which default assumptions are we approaching the present situation?
 Where are we heading or hoping to go?
 What are our objectives? Aspirations? Dreams? Desires? Future goals?
 How do we envisage our personal/social (e.g. academic and professional) trajectories and destinations?
 What are we hoping/expecting to get out of this class (gradewise and otherwise)?
 What are we ready, willing and able to put into it, quality time-wise and otherwise?

RATIONALE:

"How do you feel?" "Affect at the point of entry"
 Who is addressing whom? A Definition of the situation.
 Introduction and Overview: what is "affect"?"
 Limitations of awareness, language and communication
 Epistemologies and Methodologies: How "paradigms" define the nature, scope and limits of what presently passes among us for trustworthy ways of knowing

Introduction and Overview: Why Study "Feelings?"
Conduct and Administration of Subject:
What's new (and what's the same) this term?

Why study "feelings?"

The instructors introduce themselves, ask: "Why study "feelings?" and briefly summarize what lies ahead, invite questions and comments and then call for a

SHORT BREAK

to enable people to leave who are not yet ready, willing and able to commit themselves to carrying the stipulated workload as "serious students."

To those leaving, we return the forms they have turned in.

"GETTING ACQUAINTED"

To those remaining, the instructors pledge a good faith effort to do what we can to make 9.68/09 into the best possible learning experience for everyone concerned.

"Who are we? Where are we coming from? Where are we heading? Why this class?"

Look closely at the picture on the next page. What do you see? Does your experience of encountering it have an affective dimension? Does your perception of it change over time?

In endeavoring to comprehend the image immediately below, as in all sorts of other matters, due attention must be paid to affective aspects of experience. Quality time/effort must be spent. Are any noteworthy relations involving humanity and nature discernible? What do you think you are looking at? How do you "feel about it?"

This image demonstrates (among other things) that the serious study of any subject requires time and effort; patience and fortitude. Learning is a process. Attention must be paid. Perceptions, attitudes and actions can change, but not without an ongoing commitment of quality time and effort can we ever hope to make credible, trustworthy and useful sense of the world and its contents – including ourselves and each other.

RAISON D'ETRE; DESIDERATA

Preview Syllabus

Instructors further introduce themselves and discuss what lies ahead.

STUDY GROUP FORMATION

Conduct lottery randomizing assignment of Individuals to study groups.

Form groups in different areas of the room. Group members meet, greet, introduce each other. Compare/contrast Benchmark responses. Study Groups circulate and complete roster forms, negotiating place and time for weekly 2hr study group meetings.

Distribute: Timesheets
"Working Groups"

SOME ISSUES TO CONSIDER AT YOUR FIRST STUDY GROUP MEETING:

- (1) Did everyone make it on time and w/o mishap?
- (2) Evaluate the suitability of your surroundings. Are you in an environment conducive to the conduct of a "study group meeting"?
- (3) If not, is there a better alternative available?
- (4) If so, try to get comfortable; say "hello!" politely and "how are you?" This (by the luck of the draw) is your study group and will remain so for the rest of the term. Prepare to listen to each other. Be open to possibly having to revise/update assumptions in accordance with new information;
- (5) How do you want –hope, expect –the class/study group to develop?
- (6) How educationally valuable to you will it be?
- (7) As you introduce yourselves, think about the terms in which you and your peers "normally" define/identify yourselves in MIT undergraduate academic contexts such as this one?
- (8) Try to identify some of the explicit and implicit loyalties (both "visible" and "invisible") in the study group and the class as a whole.
- (9) Compare/contrast your "first impressions of this class".
- (10) We are all constantly and invariably and inescapably engaged in endeavoring to manage the impressions that we make on other people. How are these commonplace efforts at "impression management" influencing your interactions with each other.
- (11) What is your view of the "other study groups?"
- (12) Why is the class being defined as "collaborative" and being thus organized into "study groups?"
- (13) Are these arrangements intended to be cooperative or competitive?
- (14) Are there any "serious" students in this group? In the class? What do we mean by "serious" in this context?
- (15) Share (insofar as you honestly can) your own "feelings about the class thus far" with one another.
- (16) Discuss "Preparation for next class"