

Philosophy and emotions from Montaigne to Hobbes (1580-1651)

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Classes: every **Friday**, from August 17th to September 28th, 14:00-17:00.

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Course description

As ordinary experience shows, passions and emotions act as driving forces in every aspects of our intellectual, moral and political life. Human minds are *passionate minds*. Denying traditional oppositions and splits between reason and passions, some early modern thinkers start to highlight the constructive role played by emotions in every field of human knowledge and action. This course aims to provide an overview of the ways in which four significant philosophers such as Montaigne, Descartes, Bacon, and Hobbes, (re)shape the relations between emotions and philosophy.

We will read and discuss passages of our authors following three major topics:

1. *The anthropology of passions*. We will scrutinize the physical and mental processes at the root of emotions: What are they? How do they work?
2. *The ethic of passions*. We will study the function of affects and emotions as springs of judgments and actions: What is their value for a good life? Why can they be damaging?
3. *The politics of passions*. We will consider emotions as conditions and tools for political life: How can they unit and divide us? How to harmonize individual and social passions?

Course materials

Michel de Montaigne, *Essais* (1580-1595)

René Descartes, *Les Passions de l'âme* (1649)

Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning* (1605)

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651)

As far as possible, I will distribute photocopies of the passages examined (in English). Portuguese translations of the works of Montaigne, Descartes, Bacon, and Hobbes, are available at the "Biblioteca Central".