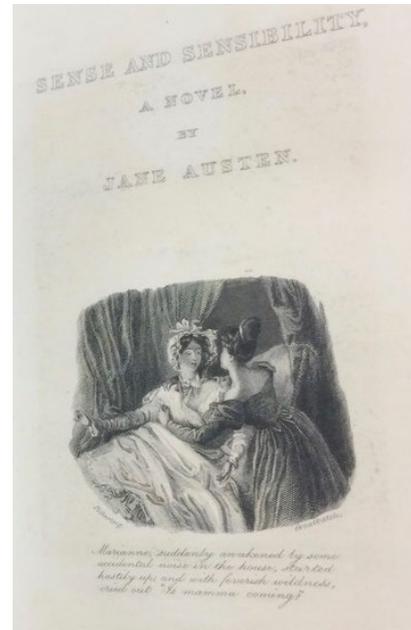
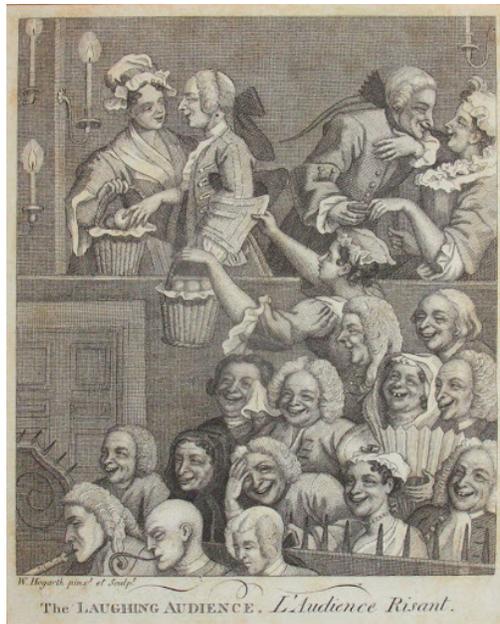


**Sense and Sensibility:
Ethics and Emotions in the 18th Century**
Ellwood Wiggins



Course Description

The Age of Reason and the Age of Sentimentality find their latter-day representatives in Elinor and Marianne, two sisters in Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* (1811). In this course, we will trace the development of the "cult of feeling" from its Enlightenment roots to Austen's wry skewering. This era saw a dramatic shift in conceptions of emotions, from the external showiness of Baroque passions to the internal expressiveness of sentimentalist feelings. Despite this shift toward interiority, emotions—even in their narrative representation—continue to be inflected through performative and theatrical categories.

We will explore the theory and practice of affect in the 18th century, reading philosophers of feeling (Moses Mendelssohn, Adam Smith, Mary Wollstonecraft, Friedrich Schiller) and purveyors of sentiment (G.E. Lessing, Laurence Sterne, Jane Austen, Mary Shelley). How are emotions constructed in art and in moral philosophy? How do feelings manifest in bodies? Can feelings be shared? If morality has its foundation in the senses, what consequences does that have for art and for life? These and related questions are no less urgent today than they were in the 18th century. We will also read important recent scholarship in affect theory and the history of the emotions.

Language: Reading in original languages is encouraged, but knowledge of German and French is not required. All readings available in translation. Discussion in English.

Syllabus

	Readings	Conference Planning
Jan. 6	Introductions, Shared Planning (<i>Die Zauberflöte</i>)	
Jan. 13	George Lillo, <i>The London Merchant</i> (1731) G.E. Lessing, <i>Miss Sara Sampson</i> (1755)	
Jan. 20	Moses Mendelssohn, <i>Briefwechsel über das Trauerspiel</i> (<i>Correspondence on Tragedy</i> , 1756-7) + Readings in Affect Theory	
Jan. 27	Adam Smith, <i>Theory of Moral Sentiments</i> (1759)	CFP workshop
Feb. 3	Laurence Sterne, <i>Sentimental Journey</i> (1765)	
Feb. 10	Mary Wollstonecraft, <i>Vindication of the Rights of Woman</i> (1792)	
Feb. 17	J.W. Goethe, selected lyric poems Friedrich Schiller, <i>Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung</i> (<i>On Naive and Sentimental Poetry</i> , 1795)	
Feb. 24	Jane Austen, <i>Sense and Sensibility</i> (1811)	Abstract Due & Panel Planning
Mar. 3	Mary Shelley, <i>Frankenstein</i> (1818)	
Mar. 10	Conference	

Texts

- Texts by Lillo, Lessing, Mendelssohn, Goethe, and Schiller (as well as any required secondary literature) will be provided in digital format over Canvas.
- You should procure the following 5 volumes. They are all available in digitized format online, but I recommend recently edited, annotated editions (e.g., Penguin, Norton, or Oxford World's Classics).
 - Adam Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*
 - Laurence Sterne, *Sentimental Journey*
 - Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*
 - Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*
 - Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (be sure your edition contains the 1818 version)
- **Secondary literature:** On the canvas course homepage, there are links to lists of influential texts in affect theory and eighteenth-century studies. For each of the individual works we read, I will suggest some scholarship on the canvas course website. In addition to completing the required readings and actively participating in class discussion, students are expected (as in any graduate-level class) to read extensively on their own. Please make use of the bibliographies in the suggested articles as well as research tools such as the MLA Bibliography.

Seminar Meetings

Normally, we will open seminar by choosing one person to pose an opening question (see “opening question” below). This question will lead to an open conversation in which everyone should participate. After a break, I will share a reading that should lead to further discussion.

Course Requirements

- **Participation** (15% of final grade): Includes mini-presentation when name is drawn. Full points awarded by default.
 - **Opening Question:** Come to class ready to pose an opening question: a problem based on the text, something you found confusing, vexing, or surprising concerning a central issue. Focus on at most 3 sentences, and speak for about 5 minutes. After your presentation, the class will freely discuss the question.
- **Abstract** (10% of final grade): c. 250-300 words. Submit a proposal to our cfp!
 - A good abstract will designate the scholarly discourse to which you are making a contribution, and be both a clear précis of your argument and a tantalizing teaser for your paper. I welcome you to schedule a meeting with me to discuss your ideas for a conference paper and/or to strategize about how to translate them into a successful abstract. Due Feb 17.
- **Conference Talk & Response** (75% of final grade):
 - An **oral presentation** (c.15 minutes) that articulates a problem posed by the text(s) and explores this question through an engaged reading. A good paper will *develop* an idea over the course of a well-organized essay. Introduce the stakes and motivation for your question, build an argument through cogent yet creative analysis, and clearly show what progress has been made in a conclusion. Keep in mind your listening audience.
 - Each student will also **serve as a respondent** to a colleague’s paper. This will be great practice (in a friendly, non-threatening environment) for your professional development as an academic!