

FYSM 1611A
Ick! Understanding the Politics of Disgust
Thursdays, 08:35 - 11:25
Please confirm location on Carleton Central.

1. General information

Instructor: Dr. Eric Van Rythoven

Office Hours: By Zoom appointment on Tuesdays between 10:00am – 12:00pm

Email: ericvanrythoven@cmail.carleton.ca

Contact Policy: Email is the best way to contact me. I will normally reply within 24-48 hours, weekends excluded. Please include the course code in the subject line of the email. For longer questions I recommend scheduling a Zoom appointment. All email must be through an official Carleton University email account.

2. Course description

From food that turns our stomachs, to the sordid scandals of political leaders, to images of extreme violence on social media, we routinely encounter the revolting. This course explores the many different roles of disgust in politics. Students will learn a variety of different perspectives on disgust—including from psychology, history, philosophy, and sociology—and examine its role in key issues such as democracy, violence, and technology. In taking this course, students will learn about disgust's enduring importance to political life, as well as its many dangers.

3. Course Format

In person.

4. Learning outcomes

By the end of this course, students will:

- Understand key concepts in the politics of disgust including norms, identity, stigma, contamination, and contagion.
- Develop and strengthen key academic abilities including critical reading skills, academic writing and citing scholarly texts.
- Comprehend the changing nature of disgust and its role in historical and contemporary debates.
- Effectively communicate their ideas clearly through in-class discussion and small group work.

5. Texts

All required readings are available on Brightspace and Perusall free of charge.

6. Evaluation at a glance

<u>Evaluation</u>	<u>Timeline</u>	<u>Value</u>
Attendance and Participation	Ongoing (starting week 2)	15%
Perusall Comments	Ongoing (starting week 2)	10%
Quiz #1	October 1 st	10%
Quiz #2	October 22 nd	15%
Quiz #3	November 19 th	20%
Final Essay	December 10 th	30%

7. Evaluation in detail

Attendance and Participation (15%)

Students are expected to attend and participate in all sessions. Effective participation depends on coming prepared to discuss the assigned readings, as well as engaging in all classroom activities.

Attendance and participation will be graded every class beginning on week 2.

Perusall Comments (10%)

Beginning on week 2, students will submit two comments based on the assigned readings for every class through the social annotation platform Perusall.

The instructor will go over how to sign up and use Perusall on the first day of class. Comments must be submitted by **8pm of the day before class**. Detailed instructions and a grading rubric can be found on Brightspace.

Quizzes (10%, 15%, 20%)

Students will write short in-class quizzes demonstrating their understanding of the texts and classroom discussion. Quizzes will take place on October 1st, October 22nd, and November 19th. Questions can include multiple choice, short answers, as well as short essay questions.

Final Essay (35%)

Students will write a 2,000-word essay focused on analyzing a contemporary or historical episode of disgust in politics. The paper must follow proper essay style and structure, and must use a recognized referencing style (which must be consistent throughout). The essay should draw on **both** sources listed in the course outline as well as independent research. The instructor will provide a list of suggested research topics, but students are encouraged to come up with a topic that aligns with their interests. If you do choose a topic outside the approved list, please ensure that it is cleared with the instructor. Essays are due on the final day of the course (December 10th by 11:59pm).

Detailed instructions and a grading rubric can be found on Brightspace. We will discuss the essay more as the course progresses.

Late Policy

Assignments are due on the dates specified in the course outline. Late Perusall Comments will not be accepted. Late papers will be subject to a penalty of 2% a day including weekends. Assignments will not be accepted any later than two weeks after the scheduled due date.

Extension Policy

Extensions will only be granted in cases of special circumstances, (e.g. illness, bereavement). If you anticipate a problem with one of the above deadlines, you need to approach the instructor as soon as you can in advance of the assignment. Appeals for extensions that come after the due date will generally not be considered.

AI Policy

All written work produced for this course must not be produced by generative AI tools such as Chat GPT. The instructor may decide to make the grade for an assignment dependent on an oral discussion with the student to confirm their knowledge of the material and sources. If the instructor has evidence for the use of AI tools, an academic integrity investigation will be initiated as per Carleton's Academic Integrity Policy.

8. Course schedule

Class 1 – September 10th | Introduction: What's Disgusting?

No readings.

Class 2 – September 17th | The History of Disgust and the Civilizing Process

Miller, W. I. (1997). *The anatomy of disgust*. Harvard University Press, pp. 1-23, 143-161, 170-178.

Class 3 – September 24th | Disgust and the Law

Nussbaum, M. C. (2010). *From disgust to humanity: Sexual orientation and constitutional law*. Oxford University Press, pp. 1-30.

Lee, C. (2012). Masculinity on trial: Gay panic in the criminal courtroom. *Southwestern Law Review*, 42(4), 817-832.

Class 4 – October 1st | The Psychology of Disgust

Quiz #1

Rozin, P., Haidt, J., & McCauley, C. (2009). *Disgust: The body and soul emotion in the 21st century*. American Psychological Association, pp. 9-29.

Feldman Barret, L. (2017). *You aren't at the mercy of your emotions -- your brain creates them*. Ted Talks,
[https://www.ted.com/talks/lisa_feldman_barrett_you_aren_t_at_the_mercy_of_your_emotions_your_b
rain_creates_them](https://www.ted.com/talks/lisa_feldman_barrett_you_aren_t_at_the_mercy_of_your_emotions_your_brain_creates_them).

Class 5 – October 8th | The Black Welfare Queen: Disgust and Race

Hancock, A. M. (2004). *The politics of disgust: The public identity of the welfare queen*. NYU Press, pp. 1-69.

Class 6 – October 15th | Dirty Work

Hughes, E. C. (1962). Good people and dirty work. *Social problems*, 10(1), 3-11.

Class 7 – October 22nd | Stigma Contagion

Quiz #2

Goffman, E. (2009). *Stigma: Notes on the management of spoiled identity*. Simon and Schuster, 1-40.

No Class – October 29th | Reading Week

Class 8 – November 5th | Purity Politics

Shotwell, A. (2016). *Against purity: Living ethically in compromised times*. University of Minnesota Press, 1-19.

Allsop, J. (2026). Graham Platner's Point of No Return. *The New Yorker*.

Class 9 – November 12th | Disgust and Extreme Violence

Bowden, M. (2004). The Lessons of Abu Ghraib. *The Atlantic*.

Munch-Juriscic, D. M. (2023). *Perpetrator disgust: The moral limits of gut feelings*. Oxford University Press, pp. 1-20.

Class 10 – November 19th | Disgust and Foreign Others

Quiz #3

Niezen, R. (2025). 'Aliens' and 'animals' – language of hate used by Trump and others can be part of a violent design. *The Conversation*.

Pantti, M. (2016). "Despicable, disgusting, repulsive!!!" Public emotions and moralities in online discussions about violence towards refugees. *Javnost-The Public*, 23(4), 363-381.

Class 11 – November 26th | Disgust and Technology

Rozin, P. (2013). Technological stigma: Some perspectives from the study of contagion. In *Risk, Media and Stigma* (pp. 31-40). Routledge.

Read, M. (2024). Drowning in Slop: A thriving underground economy is clogging the internet with AI garbage—and it's only going to get worse. *New York Magazine*.

Class 12 – December 3rd | In-class Movie: *Parasite*

No reading

Class 13 – December 10th | Does Democracy Need Disgust?

Final Essay Due

Miller, W. I. (1997). *The anatomy of disgust*. Harvard University Press, pp. 206-234.

Kahan, D. M. (1999). The progressive appropriation of disgust. In *The passions of law* (pp. 63-79). New York University Press

Political Science Course Outline Appendix

REQUESTS FOR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Student Mental Health

As a university student, you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you. Here is a list that may be helpful:

Emergency Resources (on and off campus):

<https://carleton.ca/safety/resources/>

Carleton Resources:

Mental Health and Wellbeing:

<https://carleton.ca/wellness/>

Health & Counselling Services: <https://carleton.ca/health/>

Paul Menton Centre: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>

Academic Advising Centre (AAC):

<https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/>

Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS):

<https://carleton.ca/csas/>

Equity & Inclusivity Communities:

<https://carleton.ca/equity/>

Off Campus Resources:

Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region: (613) 238-3311 or
TEXT: 343-306-5550, <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>

Mental Health Crisis Service: (613) 722-6914, 1-866-996-0991, <http://www.crisisline.ca/>

Good2Talk: 1-866-925-5454, <https://good2talk.ca/>

The Walk-In Counselling Clinic:

<https://walkincounselling.com>

Academic consideration for medical or other

extenuating circumstances: Students must contact the instructor(s) of their absence or inability to complete the academic deliverable within the predetermined timeframe due to medical or other extenuating circumstances. For a range of medical or other extenuating circumstances, students may use the online self-declaration form and where appropriate, the use of medical documentation. This policy regards the accommodation of extenuating circumstances for both short-term and long-term periods and extends to all students enrolled at Carleton University. Students should also consult the [Course Outline Information on Academic Accommodations](#) for more information. Detailed information about the procedure for requesting academic consideration can be found [here](#).

Pregnancy: Contact your Instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For accommodation regarding a formally-scheduled final exam, please contact Equity and Inclusive Communities (EIC) at equity@carleton.ca or by calling (613) 520-5622 to speak to an Equity Advisor.

Religious obligation: Contact your Instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details [click here](#).

Academic Accommodations for Students with

Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, please request your accommodations for this course through the [Ventus Student Portal](#) at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*). Requests made within two weeks will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. For final exams, the deadlines to request accommodations are published in the [University Academic Calendars](#). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally scheduled exam (if applicable).

Survivors of Sexual Violence: As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and its survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: <https://carleton.ca/equity/sexual-assault-support-services>.

Accommodation for Student Activities: Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation will be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Write to me with any requests for

academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist.

PETITIONS TO DEFER

Students unable to write a final examination because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control may apply within **three working days** to the Registrar's Office for permission to write a deferred examination. The request must be fully supported by the appropriate documentation. Only deferral petitions submitted to the Registrar's Office will be considered. [See Undergraduate Calendar, Article 4.3](#)

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s). Permissibility of submitting substantially the same piece of work more than once for academic credit. If group or collaborative work is expected or allowed, provide a clear and specific description of how and to what extent you consider collaboration to be acceptable or appropriate, especially in the completion of written assignments.

WITHDRAWAL WITHOUT ACADEMIC PENALTY

Please reference the [Academic Calendar](#) for each term's official withdrawal dates

OFFICIAL FINAL EXAMINATION PERIOD

Please reference the [Academic Calendar](#) for each terms Official Exam Period (may include evenings & Saturdays or Sundays)

For more information on the important dates and deadlines of the academic year, consult the [Carleton Calendar](#).

GRADING SYSTEM

The grading system is described in the Undergraduate Calendar section [5.4](#). Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is an essential element of a productive and successful career as a student. Students are required to familiarize themselves with the university's [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

PLAGIARISM

The University Senate defines plagiarism as "*presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one's own.*" This can include:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else, including the unauthorized use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT);
- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another's data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in "*substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.*"

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course's instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of "F" for the course.

RESOURCES (613-520-2600, phone ext.)

Department of Political Science (2777)	B640
Loeb	
Registrar's Office (3500)	300 Tory
Centre for Student Academic Success (3822)	4 th floor
Library	
Academic Advising Centre (7850)	302 Tory
Paul Menton Centre (6608)	501
Nideyinàn	
Career Services (6611)	401 Tory