

PSYCHOLOGY 3131 – Human Emotion
Professor June Gruber
Extra Credit Assignment: Experts in Emotion (EIE) Series



Assignment Overview: *Online Interviews with Emotion Experts.* Each lecture in class will include a ~15-minute “Experts in Emotion Interview” containing a videotaped conversation with Professor Gruber and an expert scholar in emotion from the field freely available for viewing or download on YouTube (http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLh9mgdi4rNew731mjIZn43G_Y5otqKzJA). For extra credit, you have the option to submit a 1-page, single-spaced, 12-pt Times New Roman font, reaction to watching the online interview that accompanies the specific class lecture, discussing and critically analyzing the major themes discussed in each video. Answers will be assigned one of the following three grades: ‘1’ (full credit), ‘1/2’ (half-credit), or ‘0’ (no credit). You can assume your response has been successfully received and graded a ‘1’ unless you hear otherwise via email. Responses are due no later than **11:00am MT** before the subsequent lecture (i.e., videos watched in class Tuesday have extra credit responses due by 11:00am MT Thursday that week; videos watched in class Thursday have extra credit responses due by 11:00am MT the following Tuesday). No late extra credit responses are accepted.

Response Instructions: For the interview you watch, write up a **1-pg single-spaced reaction** to the video. Make sure to touch on each of the four major components of the video: 1) how they became interested in their research, 2) new discoveries, 3) future directions, 4) advice to new scholars. Next, reflect on the major themes discussed in the video. You can relate this to course lectures and readings, as relevant. Also, you may pose questions that this interview raised for you. See page 2 for a sample response.

Submission Instructions: You will submit to psych3131.emotion@gmail.com with:

- (1) Full name
- (2) Paste entire response in email body
- (3) Attach document to email with responses as well (.doc or .docx format):
- (4) You **MUST** include the following subject line in the email:

LASTNAME_EIE_LastNameExpert.doc
Example: **GRUBER_EIE_LaFrance.doc**

Note: do not include above instructions in your response. Only include 1-page single spaced response. See example below

Sample Written Response - Expert Interview: Marianne LaFrance

1) How Dr. LaFrance Became Interested in Research. In this interview, Dr. LaFrance discussed the topic of whether men and women are emotionally different. LaFrance attributes her initial interest in the emotion field to her mother, who told her to pay attention to *how* people say things (with their facial expressions, eye contact, and gesture), perhaps even more so than the things they actually do say, to decipher what's *really* being communicated. Although LaFrance acknowledges that there is a popularly held, profound belief that men and women are *essentially* different, she highlights that most of what makes us males and females is actually acquired and learned—something in which we become experts. She points out that although women may empirically self-report as more emotional and be more expressive than men, online coding and physiological measures reveal that gender differences actually tend to dissipate. In explanation, LaFrance cites that part of masculinity is to dampen things, toning them down, and being stoic.

2) New Discoveries. LaFrance has made groundbreaking findings on the smile—a universal human phenomenon across culture, geography, and even time. She states that there are certainly contextual, social, and cultural factors when it comes to rules for when to smile. Studies have found that women reliably smile more than men and the largest sex differences occur between the ages of 17 and 23, after which differences tend to fade away. This trend can ostensibly be explained by evolution: when mating is most critical and salient, the sexes should be the most different (so there will be no confusion); other perspectives have argued that at this time social pressure is at its maximum for people to indicate their masculinity vs. femininity, which can easily be manifested through smiling (or lack thereof). LaFrance goes on to explain that smiling, in addition to indicating underlying positive affect, can serve many social functions: an all-purpose mask allowing people to mask negative affect, regain their composure, hold people off, and deflect excessive attention; establishing a social connection; standing in as an apology; and signaling cooperation or allegiance. There is some (controversial) empirical data that low-powered people tend to smile more, while high-powered people smile less. The rationale is that the former smile more because they *have* to: they need to please and don't want to offend or make people think ill of them; in contrast, the latter only smile when they *feel* like smiling because they don't *have* to be pleasant, they already have standing and status.

3) Future Directions. As for future directions for the field of emotion, LaFrance cites exploration of cultural differences (e.g. is emotion universal?), which emotions are located in our brains, and what *is* emotion (on both the macro- and micro-level), questioning the very core and essence of emotion.

4) Advice to New Scholars. She advises new scholars to “start with an emotion that mystifies you,” something that “makes you sad or angry,” and “behavior you notice in yourself” (e.g. blushing). She urges the harnessing of cultural and geographic diversity, and the general investigation of questions and topics that one just needs to know more about.

5) Reflection. I agree with LaFrance's assertion that gender is certainly a learned phenomenon and that sex itself, though profoundly believed to be something in which men and women *essentially* differ, is actually quite arbitrary when it comes down to it. LaFrance's comments on gender differences in terms of expression versus physiological manifestation certainly echo Professor Gruber's lecture, as well as findings by Kring & Gordon (1998). The findings on sex differences being the most pronounced from the ages of 17 to 23 are certainly very compelling and even something I can personally attest to. Finally, LaFrance's explanation of the human smile as a “swiss army knife”—serving a plethora of social functions and even conveying something like social power—is truly eye-opening (and maybe a little terrifying!).