

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
Department of History  
Semester I, 1988-89

History 867

Seminar in European Cultural History

Mr. Fishman

Historians have become increasingly aware that the expression of feelings (emotions) is largely determined by social and cultural norms. Expressions of bereavement, for example, vary greatly according to time and place. Perhaps, it could be maintained that not only are the manifestations of feelings culturally determined, but even the feelings themselves. This seminar will explore the possibility of writing a history of emotions.

As a starting point, we shall read and discuss the following articles (available with other readings in a packet from Bob's Copy Shop in University Square):

Peter N. Stearns and Carol Z. Stearns, "Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards," in The American Historical Review, Vol. 90, Nr 1 (Oct., 1985), pp. 813-836.

Theodore Zeldin, "Personal History and the History of the Emotions," in Journal of Social History, Vol. 15, Nr 3 (Spring, 1982), pp. 339-347.

In addition, we shall work on a collective semester long project dealing with feelings surrounding Separation, especially focusing on leaving home. Separation scenes from a number of sources will also be available in the packet.

Each student will also research and write one case study having to do with such issues as: child bereavement, mass psychology, the emotional effects of music, survivor guilt, etc. The first task will be to find a particular manifestation of emotion historically and to develop a bibliography for dealing with it. This project might be undertaken in pairs or individually. The goal of the research will be the writing of a paper that can be presented to the seminar for discussion and criticism.