

Weaving Words, Sculpting Sentiments: Manipulating Emotions in Public Spaces of the Ancient Mediterranean

The graduate students of the Department of Classics at the CUNY Graduate Center are pleased to announce the **call for papers** for our 16th annual Graduate Student Conference. The conference will be held in person and via Zoom on **Friday, April 5th, 2024** at the Graduate Center (365 Fifth Ave, New York, NY). This year's Keynote Speaker will be Prof. David Konstan (NYU).

Emotions play a large role in even basic decision-making, as recent research continues to demonstrate. Fear, sadness, pride, guilt, shame, awe, joy, and disgust all inform our decisions and influence our participation in social movements. Emotional responses can arise from our relationships with other people, impacted by their own decisions that affect us, but also from our relationship with institutions. For various reasons, these institutions often manipulate emotional responses across the entire public through rhetoric, iconography, space, religion, or architecture.

In this conference, we would like to explore the interplay in antiquity between the manipulation of emotions through public displays (written, spoken, material, or visual mediums) and the collective or individual responses to these manipulations.

- What are the modes of emotional control imposed upon the public?
- What degree of success did these methods of control see, or to what degree was resistance to emotional manipulation present?
- Were there emotional responses that were more commonly evoked in people collectively, and in what contexts do these appear?

Possible topics include but are not at all limited to:

- Speech as a form of emotional persuasion and/or manipulation in ancient epic
- Appeals to renew empathy and religious duty in prophetic and other religious texts
- Weaponization of shame and outrage in epideictic, deliberative, and forensic rhetoric
- Collective processing of the trauma of war and plague in Greek theater
- Public responses to iconography and architectural space in Roman Republican and Imperial Fora, including pride, fear, and awe
- Fear and disgust in mythic depictions of monsters and the unknown
- Rebuilding, reimagining, and continued use of public spaces into the modern era in efforts to manipulate or erase collective memory
- Philosophical approaches to emotion and emotional manipulation in the civic realm
- Any other literary, visual, or historical engagement with emotions in public space

We invite papers from a variety of disciplines beyond Classics, such as Comparative Literature, History, Philosophy, Art History, Political Science, Gender Studies, Psychology, Near Eastern studies, and others. We welcome and encourage submissions from individuals of all underrepresented backgrounds.

Please send anonymous abstracts of up to 300 words, along with an optional bibliography, for a 20-minute presentation to cunyclassicsconference@gmail.com in PDF format, no later than January 19, 2024. Please send personal details, such as full name and affiliation, in the body text of your email. Notifications to all applicants will be given by mid-February 2024. Questions may be sent to the co-organizers, Nan Coffey, Kevin Nobel, and Jen Ranck at the same email address.

We look forward to an engaging and diverse exploration of the topic.