Emotions in History

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Emotion researchers face a scandal: We have no agreed upon definition for the term — emotion — that defines our field. We therefore do not know what events count as examples of emotion and what events theories of emotion must explain.” So writes James Russell (Emotion Review 4 [2012]). By good fortune, there survive from ancient Greece and Rome careful definitions of the emotions and descriptions of emotions in action. We will examine in this seminar some classical theories of emotion, to determine whether and to what extent they may help us to understand why emotions seem to resist definition, and how the very concept may have changed over time.