The theme of reason and the passions is one of the oldest in the history of Western literature and ethical and political thought. It has provided a highly variable means of problematising the conduct of the intellect and the self in a wide variety of circumstances. Drawing on work in literary history and the history of thought, this seminar series will investigate various forms of the passion-reason couple: how it was constructed, by whom, in what kinds of contexts, and for what kinds of purposes.

March 10: Prof. Richard Strier
University of Chicago and Loyed Davis Visiting Professor in Shakespeare Studies, School of EMSAH, UQ
‘Lyric and Bondage’

March 24: Prof. Stephen Gaukroger
University of Sydney
‘Sensibility and Metaphysics: Hume and Herder’

April 7: Prof. Ian Donaldson
University of Melbourne
‘Changing Religion in Early Modern England: Ben Jonson, Father Thomas Wright, and the Role of the Passions’

April 21: Prof. Conal Condren
University of Queensland
‘Passion, Monstrosity, and Reason in the Scriblierian Satire of Philosophy’

May 12: Prof. Peter Harrison
Oxford University
‘Mastering Beastial Passions: Self-Dominion and Dominion over Nature in Early Modern Thought’

May 26: Prof. Valerie Traub
University of Michigan and S.W. Brooks Visiting Fellow in English, School of EMSAH, UQ
‘Shakespeare’s Sex’