FYS 031: Positive Psychology: The Science of Happiness

Course Overview:

The purpose of this course is to understand the new trend in psychology that focuses on strengths of individuals, rather than pathology or weaknesses. This course will focus on the science of happiness and well-being. Having its roots in humanistic orientation, positive psychology movement has become a new force in psychology. Positive psychology focuses on strengths rather than weaknesses, wellbeing rather than pathology and building a fulfilled meaningful life, rather than fixing the problems. In this course we will explore historical, philosophical and theoretical roots of positive psychology, and explore concepts, research behind the concepts, and interventions. The course will explore sense of belonging, gratitude, creativity, forgiveness, compassion, flow, grit, optimism, hope, satisfaction and meaning in life and other related positive psychology concepts and their applications in mental health, rehabilitation and educational institutions and organizations.

Course Objectives:

1. Students will learn the historical and philosophical roots of Positive Psychology movement
2. Students will become familiar with research that supports the principles, strategies, and skills of Positive Psychology.
3. Student will learn to relate humanistic theories to positive psychology
4. Students will develop an understanding of happiness and well-being factors
5. Students will develop an understanding of the dimensions of happiness/subjective well-being and their application to their lives.
6. Students will explore skills to implement strengths-based, positive psychology concepts in their lives.

Required Readings:


Instructor. Bengü Ergüner - Tekinalp, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Counseling
Drake University
School of Education
3206 University Ave
Des Moines, IA 50311
Course Location: Medbury Hall 0115
Course Meeting: MW 12.30-1.45

Telephone Number: 515-271-2170
E-mail Address: Bengu.Tekinalp@drake.edu
Office: 123 School of Education
Office Hours: Monday: 9.30-12
Tuesday: 12-3
Wednesday: 9.30-12
and by appointment
Program Web Page:
http://soe.drake.edu/counseling

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Other readings will be provided via Blackboard or in class

Students must create an account and log in to: https://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/

Course Assignments:

1. **New Perspective on Happiness (40 pts.):** Now we had new readings and discussions on happiness. Revisit your initial writing on happiness and write an 800-1000 word reflection on your new perspective on happiness. You may want to answer questions such as what is happiness, what constitutes a happy life, is happy life a meaningful and/or fulfilled life, what are some of the myths of happiness, is your perspective different after the readings and discussions, if so in what ways? You are building your theory of happiness that you will revisit throughout the semester, so reflect on your perspective and definition of happiness by using new learning via readings and class activities and discussions.

2. **Experiential Activities and Reflections (10 pts. each x 6= 60pts.):** Throughout the semester you will be engaging in various activities to try happiness related variables first hand. Please follow the instructions for each activity as they are different for each one of them.

   a. **Measuring Happiness:** go to https://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/
      Click on the questionnaires tab and take the following questionnaires:
      
      Authentic Happiness Inventory
      Approaches to Happiness
      General Happiness Scale
      Fordyce Emotions Questionnaire
      Also take the Subjective Happiness Scale in the “The How of Happiness” book (starting at page 35)
      Bring your results to class for discussion. Write briefly (1-2 paragraphs) about how these results reflect your happiness and perspective of happiness. Are they true? Valid? Are you surprised with some results? If so in what ways.

   b. **VIA Strengths Results:** For this assignment you will go to www.authentichappiness.org and complete the VIA Classification Survey long version. Before taking the survey, think about your strengths as an individual (you can use the strengths listed in the readings or you can describe in your own words). Include your results with the reflection. Write a brief reflection on your results, was your prediction correct? Were you surprised? How was it for you to read and learn
about your strengths? Think of your college life at Drake, how do you think these strengths will help you? Are there ones you would like to improve?

c. Gratitude Journal: For this activity you will engage in two of the following gratitude activities for at least a week.

- Gratitude journal: write couple of specific things you are grateful about your life or day day at least 4 times a week. Be as specific as possible (grateful for my health is not specific enough)
- Write a gratitude letter to someone who has been kind, helpful, or supportive to you. Be specific in areas that you are especially thankful for, more details about the experience and more details about your feelings, the better results you will have. You have the option to share this letter with the recipient (or someone close if deceased)
- Count up to 5 blessings each day for the week.
- Everyday make an effort to thank someone for something that you might otherwise take for granted (thanking the facilities workers for keeping the campus beautiful, thanking the janitor for cleaning the hallways etc.)

Include your activity with the assignment. Brief reflection (1-2 paragraphs) on the experience, pay attention to your thoughts and feelings. What is happening to you when you have a grateful outlook? How does gratefulness contribute to your happiness, why/ why not? Think of your college life at Drake, how does being grateful person will impact your life at Drake?

d. Small acts of Kindness Journal: For this activity you will engage in various small acts of kindness throughout the week. You determine what activities you will engage in. Make it as anonymous as possible the acts may include –big – activities such as volunteering for an organization, tutoring someone, or small, simple random acts such as holding the door to someone, spending time with someone, being nice to someone who does not necessarily ‘deserve it’ at the moment, listen someone’s day, be actively and intentionally engaging in your kindness. Keep a log of your activities Write a brief reflection (1-2 paragraphs) on the experience. Think of your college life at Drake, how does having high social interest will impact your life at Drake?

e. Be Encouraging: For this activity you will be more encouraging. Keep the encouragement principals in mind and practice being a more encouraging person to yourself and others. Keep a log of your activities and submit this log with your brief reflection. How was the activity for you? Can self-encouragement be effective like encouragement from others? Think of your college life at Drake, how does being an encouraging person (self and others) and having courage will impact your life at Drake?
f. Coping: Take Coping inventory provided in class and include your results to your reflection. Write a brief reflection on your style of coping. How does your coping style relate to your strengths? Are there styles that might get in the way? Ones that might help you in your college life at Drake? Are there ones you would like to improve?

3. Multicultural Social Justice Lens to Happiness (50 pts.): This is a critical thinking and writing paper. You will write an 800-1000 word critical paper on exploring the question if positive psychology, or science of happiness is inclusive, or does it represent the lifestyle of a dominant culture? How might the happiness experiences of marginalized, oppressed groups be different? Are they different? Is there a universal way to happiness? Are there cross cultural differences to happiness? You need to reflect on the readings, and take various perspectives to the issue and reach a conclusion in your paper. This is a critical thinking assignment, so read and synthesize all the information you learned and support your arguments using the readings. You may also want to search more writings on this topic.

For this assignment you will visit the writing workshop two times during the semester. The tutors at the writing center are there to support you with your writing. At least 1 month before the assignment due, make an appointment at the writing workshop.

https://library.drake.edu/writing-workshop/

The first time you go there, have a brief writing on your own argument, your own perspective on the issue.

Using the feedback from the writing center tutor, you will develop your paper and include a synthesis of readings and use the readings to support your argument, or you will counter the position of provided readings with your own perspective (you can use extra resources).

4. Other Positive psychology topics (50 pts.): This is a group presentation activity; you will get in groups of three. You will choose a topic that we have not covered in class, choose one from the list- (or may have your own- professor’s approval is needed). Explore the topic on and present to class a) the definition, models and theories of the topic b) how it is measured c) implications to practice (how is this topic applied in various areas and how would you apply it in your life and chosen profession). Be as creative as possible in your presentation. You may want to come up with activities we can do in class, use in our lives. Be creative, engaging and bold!

Working collaboratively in groups is an essential skill in college and in your career. Although this is a group assignment you will be graded individually and your contribution to the group work will be considered.

Topics: Life Satisfaction, Resilience, Thriving (Post Traumatic Growth), Creativity, Compassion, Self Compassion, Altruism, Empathy, Meaning in Life (Meaningfulness), Self-
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Efficacy, Wisdom, Curiosity, Humility, Self Forgiveness, Spirituality, Mindfulness, Wellness, Growth mindset, Grit, Purpose in Life, Learned Optimism, Awe, Emotional Intelligence, Love

5. Happiness Project and Commitment (50 pts.): All semester you have been developing your perspective on happiness. This is a project that you will articulate your theory of happiness. Go back to your readings and your writing you have completed throughout the semester. What are some of the similarities and differences in your perspective of happiness? What did you learn or unlearn about happiness? You may also want to think about your guiding self ideal, your actual self, ideal self, counter ideal; how do these contribute or take away from your happiness? Think about the “full” versus the “empty” life. Think about your best possible self. Explain why your best possible self, your ideal future self or life would be a pleasant life, a good (engaging) life, and/or a meaningful life. Describe what growth means for you, and the ways you hope to grow into your future self. Describe the facilitating and inhibiting factors.

Using your perspective on happiness, activities you engaged in, and the How of Happiness book (use the result of person-activity fit diagnostic, and happiness activities listed in the book) create a happiness plan for yourself that you promise to complete for the rest if your life at Drake. Be descriptive, detailed and make sure your plan is attainable, something you can do. How do you think your plan will affect your well-being in general, your life and success at Drake and your future self?

New Perspective 40 pts
Experiential Activities 6x 10 60 pts
Multicultural Lens 50 pts
Other Topic Presentation 50 pts
Happiness Project 50 pts.
Total 250 pts

A 90%
B 80%
C 70%
D 60%
F < 59%
**Written Assignments:**

**ALL** written work that contains citations and/or references and that is to be turned in should conform to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. Every student would benefit from having access to this manual. It is available in most bookstores and the reference for it is:


For the basics your papers must be submitted as a word document, 12 points font, double space, Margins are 1 inch on all sides, top, bottom.

Please remember that mere submission of assignments does not necessarily constitute successful completion of them. Each piece of work submitted and/or presented will be evaluated in regard to quality factors such as cogency, clarity of presentation, adherence to APA publication and other guidelines, evidence of effort, and timeliness. All of these will be factored into your grade for each assignment.

**Statement on Plagiarism:**

It is expected that all work you turn in is your own original work. Plagiarism is defined as misrepresenting another’s ideas, phrases, discourse, or words as one’s own. Plagiarism includes both the *intentional* use of another person’s work (submitting a paper you didn’t write, copying, etc.) and *unintentional* use of outside sources that are not appropriately documented (failure to cite or properly quote sources). Plagiarism is a serious offense. Plagiarized work will not be made up and result a grade of **ZERO FOR THE CLASS**. Further, additional possible penalties will be discussed with the Dean of Students. Students should note that in cases of identified plagiarism students **will not** be given the benefit of the doubt and it will be the student’s responsibility document and demonstrate that plagiarism has not taken place. Multiple mechanisms are used to evaluate papers for plagiarism, including computer based software. If you have any questions please discuss them with me.

If you are unsure how to cite/write anything using APA format, make an appointment with me or visit me during my office hours, we can go over the basics together.

**Incompletes:**

All assignments must be completed and submitted by the assigned due date. Incompletes will not be given without consulting the instructor at least 3 weeks before the end of the semester. Assignments submitted after the due date will be reduced 5% for each day they are late.
**Accommodation Policy:**
If you have a disability and require accommodation for the on-campus portion of the class, contact the Drake University Disability Resource Center at 515.271.3100.

**Student Services:**
The Coordinator for Sexual Violence Response and Healthy Relationship Promotion’s primary role is to act as a resource for students who have been subjected to interpersonal [gender] violence including sexual assault/harassment, dating/domestic violence, gender-based discrimination, and stalking and will advocate on behalf of the student victim’s requests if services are voluntarily initiated. The coordinator can explain how to initiate a complaint within the university and through criminal/civil processes, assist with referrals to a confidential crisis advocate and/or counselor and appropriate medical or legal professionals. The coordinator must report “known” student campus assaults to the Dean of Students and/or Title IX Coordinator, but the complainant still has rights to participate or withdraw from the university process. Other services include providing crisis intervention (safety plan, crisis counseling, rights information), and assistance in academic and housing accommodations as needed. To contact the coordinator, Alysa Mozak, call 515-271-4141 or email alysa.mozak@drake.edu. The Violence Intervention Partner (V.I.P.) program through this office provides peer-based 24/7 confidential advocacy services. To access a V.I.P. advocate call or text 515-512-2972. For more information about these services visit www.drake.edu/sexual-assault/

**Attendance and Inclement Weather Policy:**
You are expected to attend all class meetings on time and participate in all assigned activities. If you anticipate missing more than 3 class periods contact the instructor at the beginning of the course.

*Inclément weather will be announced Drake automated announcement phone line. The Drake info-line telephone number is 515-271-4545.*

**Classroom Civility and Professionalism**
Classroom civility is expected. Please set your cell phone on vibrate, and don't let it ring in class. If you are on-call or may expect emergency calls please notify the instructor. Step outside for the occasional need-to-get-call (but we will go on in class without you).

You will not need your computers for in class activities, if you want to take notes, pick a pen/pencil and paper research shows it is better for your learning. If you have your laptop, tablet, phone screens reveal any use of devices beyond note taking and use of programs or sites that are irrelevant to the course will be asked to leave the classroom.

**Knowledge Base:**
University Library Access:
To access Cowles Library: Via the internet go to www.lib.drake.edu. To search for journal articles and other forms of research you should use the Research tools/online catalogs or Databases link.

If the article you are interested in is not available in a downloadable format you can retrieve a physical copy from Cowles or you can order it through Interlibrary Loan.

To access Interlibrary Loan, go to the www.lib.drake.edu website and click on the Interlibrary Loan link. You will be asked to log in using your 9-digit ID# and password. If you do not know your ID# and/or password or if you have difficulty entering the system you should contact the Help Desk at 515-271-3001

When your article arrives through Interlibrary Loan, an email will be sent to you with a link to the library login page. Log in and you will go to View/Download Received Article.

If you have any additional questions or problems concerning the library and its resources, please call 271-2113 or e-mail reference@drake.edu

Course Schedule

This schedule is subject to change throughout semester. All changes will be clearly communicated to students in advance.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings Due</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 31</td>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>Expectations, assignments Explore Blackboard</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>September 2</td>
<td>Positive meeting</td>
<td>Positive instructions Listening for strengths Explore happiness</td>
<td>Reminder: Fill out Information Literacy Pre-Test</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 7</td>
<td>Labor Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 9</td>
<td>Library Day</td>
<td>We will meet at the library</td>
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<td>September 23</td>
<td>2 conceptions of happiness</td>
<td>• Ryan &amp; Deci On happiness and Human Potentials • Peterson et.al. Full vs empty Life</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Readings and Activities</td>
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| September 28 | happiness set point                        | • Lyubomirsky How of happiness chapter 1  
• Diener, E., Lucas, R. E., & Scollon, Beyond the Hedonic Treadmill Revising the Adaptation Theory of Well-Being  
• Cummins, Li, Wooden, Stokes A Demonstration of Set-Points for Subjective Wellbeing  
• Lucas Adaptation and the Set-Point |
| October 5  | Measuring happiness myths                  | • Lyubomirsky How of happiness chapter 2  
Bring experiential activity (a) results to class  
• New Perspective Due Experiential Activity (a) Due |
| October 7  | Strengths Via Strengths Inventory          | • [http://www.viacharacter.org/www/Character-Strengths/VIA-Classification](http://www.viacharacter.org/www/Character-Strengths/VIA-Classification) check character strength descriptions  
Peterson and Seligman chapter segment will be provided  
• Experiential Activity (b) Due |
| October 12 | Positive emotion, build and broaden theory | • Fredrickson. Role of positive emotions  
• Lyubomirsky How of happiness chapter 10  
• Reminder: Determine Group Topic |
| October 14 | money and happiness Social Comparison theory | • Csikszentmihalyi If we are so rich, why aren’t we happy?  
• Dunn, Aknin Norton spending money on others |
| October 19 | Fall Break                                 |                                                                                          |
| October 21 | Gratitude                                  | • Wood, Froh Geraghty gratitude and well being  
• Emmons, McCullough Highlights from the Research Project on Gratitude and Thankfulness  
• Lyubomirsky How of happiness chapter 4 Activity #1 |
| October 26 | Optimism and Hope                          | • Carver & Scheier Optimism in *Handbook of Positive Psychology*  
Lyubomirsky How of happiness chapter 4 Activity #2  
• Experiential Activity (c) Due |
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading and Activity Requirements</th>
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<tr>
<td>October 28</td>
<td>Kindness Social interest</td>
<td>• Lyubomirsky How of happiness chapter 5 Additional reading will be provided</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 2</td>
<td>Courage and Encouragement</td>
<td>will be provided</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 9</td>
<td>Library Day</td>
<td>Experiential Activity (d) Due</td>
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<td>November 11</td>
<td>Forgiveness</td>
<td>• Lyubomirsky How of happiness chapter 6 Activity #7</td>
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<td>• McCullough, M. E., &amp; vanOyen Witvliet, C. (2002). The psychology of forgiveness in <em>Handbook of Positive Psychology</em></td>
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<td>November 16</td>
<td>Coping Flow/Savoring</td>
<td>• Lyubomirsky How of happiness chapter 6 Activity #6</td>
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<td>• Lyubomirsky How of happiness chapter 7</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Nakamura &amp; Csikszentmihalyi The Concept of Flow in <em>Handbook of Positive Psychology</em></td>
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<td>November 18</td>
<td>Purpose/Goal/Best Possible Self</td>
<td>• Locke Setting Goals for life and Happiness in <em>Handbook of Positive Psychology</em></td>
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<td>• Lyubomirsky How of happiness chapter 8</td>
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<td>November 23</td>
<td>Multiculturalism and Positive Psychology</td>
<td>• Christopher &amp; Hickinbottom Positive Psychology, Ethnocentrism, and the Disguised Ideology of Individualism</td>
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<td>• Wong Cross-Cultural Positive Psychology</td>
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<td>November 25</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Break</td>
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<td>November 30</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
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<td>December 2</td>
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<td>Multicultural Lens Due (Date TBD)</td>
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<td>December 9</td>
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<td>December 14</td>
<td>Positive Goodbyes</td>
<td>Happiness Project and Commitment Due</td>
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