



HOFSTRA
UNIVERSITY

Hofstra University
Hofstra College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Department of Psychology

Course: PSY 27: Positive Psychology	Semester: Fall 2009
Instructor: Jeffrey J. Froh, Psy.D.	Hours: 3.0
Office Hrs: Monday: 1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. Wednesday: 2:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Day/Time: Monday & Wednesday: 2:55 p.m. – 4:20 p.m.
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If you send me an email, please write **PSY 27** in the subject box. This tells me that the email is from a Hofstra student in **PSY 27**. I'll then give your email priority over the many others that I receive daily. All official communication sent to you via email will be through your Hofstra email address. You're responsible for information sent via your official Hofstra email address. CHECK YOUR HOFSTRA EMAIL ADDRESS DAILY.

Course Description:

Prior to World War II, psychology had three main missions: make the lives of all people fulfilling; identify and enhance human excellence; and treat pathology. Nonetheless, since the 1950's psychology has largely focused on decreasing maladaptive emotions and behaviors. Although treating illness is important, positive psychologists believe helping people flourish is equally important. The goal of positive psychology is to identify and enhance the human strengths and virtues that make life worth living and allow individuals and communities to thrive.

This course will provide an introduction to positive psychology. It's designed to explore the development and promotion of happiness across the lifespan. Attention will primarily be given to happiness, character strengths and virtues, and materialism. The format of the course is lecture, experiential, and interactive.

Psychology B.A. Program Goals and Learning Objectives

Learning Goal 1: Base of Knowledge: Students will learn and retain a broad base of knowledge in the various domains of Psychology in order to prepare for graduate schools in various disciplines of psychology or education and for a wide variety of postgraduate career opportunities, including but not limited to jobs in education, industry, human health services, and professional schools.

Learning Objective 1a: Students will demonstrate through papers, reports, examinations, theses and other written means, systematic knowledge in foundational areas such as History of Psychology, Biological Bases of Behavior, Human Development, Social Psychology, Learning, and Cognitive Psychology.

Learning Objective 1b: Students will demonstrate through papers, reports, examinations, theses and other written means, systematic knowledge in the applied areas, such as Clinical Psychology, Industrial-Organizational Psychology, and Psychology as it relates to Legal Settings.

Hofstra College General Education Goals and Learning Objectives

Goal 1. Students will demonstrate the ability to think critically and creatively.

1.a Clearly and accurately summarize and evaluate the facts, presumptions, viewpoints, values, and arguments presented in a text or creative work.

1.b. Conceive and defend alternative hypotheses and viewpoints; offer and explain reasons for provisionally rejecting or accepting them.

Goal 2. Students will apply analytical reasoning across academic disciplines.

2a. Read with comprehension, and critically interpret written work in discipline-specific contexts.

2f. Apply the methods of social science to ethically investigate and analyze human social behavior.

Goal 3. Students will demonstrate proficiency in written communication.

3a. Compose grammatical sentences.

3c. Compose a sequence of paragraphs that develop a point.

3d. Summarize, quote, and respond to reliable texts to support and develop claims; apply relevant standards for citation.

3f. Respond to writing assignments using appropriate style, structure, and voice.

Goal 6. Students will demonstrate information literacy.

6a. Conduct research using the variety of information sources available to them.

6b. Demonstrate the ability to evaluate the relevance and utility of different sources.

6c. Integrate sources effectively and ethically through proper citation.

Required Readings:

1. Diener, E., & Biswas-Diener, R. (2008). *Happiness: Unlocking the mysteries of psychological wealth*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

2. Lyubomirsky, S. (2008). *The how of happiness: A scientific approach to getting the life you want*. New York: Penguin Press.

3. Kasser, T. (2002). *The high price of materialism*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Diener and Biswas-Diener (2008), Lyubomirsky (2008), and Kasser (2002) are the main texts. See the course outline for additional required readings (and supplemental readings). Required readings are on e-reserve; supplemental readings aren't.

We'll discuss a lot of material from these books in class. But it's impossible, and pedagogically foolish, to try to cram everything into a semester. Therefore, please see these books as resources to expand your knowledge *beyond* our class discussions. If you read something that we don't discuss in class, don't see you reading it as a waste of time. You learned something. And definitely don't think that this suggests I'm "blowing off" the readings or enjoy student's spending money unnecessarily on books. I'm as calculated as they get, and I'm doing it for your education. Trust me!

Note: If you want to succeed as a psychology major, whether that's landing your dream job after graduation or getting into graduate school, you should read the following book:

Silvia, P. J., Delaney, P. F., & Marcovitch, S. (2009). *What psychology majors could (and should) be doing: An informal guide to research experience and professional skills*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Course Requirements:**I. Exams (60%)**

There will be **two exams** throughout the semester, one being the final exam, which is non-cumulative. All exams will be multiple-choice. Each exam is worth 30% of your final grade. About half of the material will come from the class lectures, and the rest will come directly from the required readings. You **must** read

the required readings if you aim to get a good grade and become happier (presumably the ultimate goal of taking a positive psychology course).

If you're absent for an exam, you must have contacted me *prior* to or *on* the date of the exam in order to be eligible to take a make-up exam. This doesn't guarantee that I'll grant you the opportunity to take the make-up exam, but it increases your chances. If you fail to contact me, your grade will be zero.

II. Happiness Assignments and Reaction Papers (40%)

Students are required to complete happiness assignments throughout the semester and write a reaction paper for each one. Assignments will be based on the current topic under discussion. All assignments are noted in the course outline below. Here's the grading policy:

√+ = 10 points

√ = 8 points

√- = 6 points

If I get the hint that you were lazy when completing the assignment, your grade will be a zero. Becoming sustainably happier is tough! The harder you work, the happier you'll become. Please, please, please use this class as an opportunity for growth and long-term well-being. It's beyond a grade: it's about maximizing your potential and flourishing!

Guidelines for the Reaction Papers

Each paper must be about 2-3 pages (obviously excluding the title page and references!), double-spaced, 12-point font, and 1" margins on all sides. Including references is *optional*. If your paper fails to meet the page requirement, your grade will be zero.

Good writing is succinct. Get to the point! After you think your paper is complete, aim to reduce it by another third. Follow Strunk and White's (2000) dictum to *omit needless words*.

You must complete 5 out of the 8 assignments. ***One of the assignments, completing a "positivity portfolio" (to be discussed in class), will count as two assignments. So if you do this one, you'll only have to complete 3 more.***

Here are some general things to ponder as you structure your reaction papers:

1. Describe what you did and, if appropriate, with whom.
2. To what degree did you get anything out of the intervention? Describe any of the emotional, relational, and spiritual benefits you experienced.
3. What did you learn? What were the big discoveries?
4. To what degree did the exercise "fit" you? What might you have done differently for the exercise to fit you better?
5. How does the benefits you experienced, or lack thereof, relate to the research discussed in class and the readings? Ensure that you emphasize this. Be reflective!

Except for the "Identify and Use Your Strengths" assignment given during Week 1, **you may create your own happiness assignment for the concept we're discussing at the time.** As we'll discuss, people become happier from interventions that they like, that "fit" them. Creating a happiness intervention could be fun. But it could also be tough. If you're up for a challenge, go for it! Please note, however, that I won't

give you a $\sqrt{+}$ for trying. It must be an intervention that's logical for the specific concept and could feasibly make you happier. Trying to increase your simplicity by thinking about how much you love *American Idol* once a week will result in a paper grade of zero. I'm always thinking about new happiness interventions and would love to get new ideas from you. So put on your thinking cap and tap into your creativity. I dare you. But do this only if you're willing to do the work.

Submitting the papers after the due date is unacceptable, and your grade will be zero; exceptions are limited to what I deem emergencies. Showing up to class without the paper and emailing it to me after class is unacceptable—your grade will be zero. If an emergency arises and you are unable to make class, you may email me the paper as proof that you wrote it. But if you do, it must be in my email inbox *before* class starts on the date that it's due. If not, your grade will be zero. Please give me a hard copy of your paper; I won't print it out. Thanks!

III. **What to Expect from me (100% of the time)**

I have tremendous expectations for you. High standards, in my view, lead to excellent performance and an enhanced academic experience for you and me. Please know, however, that as a teacher and mentor, I have equally tremendous standards for myself. Thus, you can expect that: (a) I'll be accessible and available to you (e.g., I check email regularly Monday – Friday and encourage face-to-face scheduled meetings), (b) I'll be punctual and prepared for classes and meetings, (c) I'll respect you and treat you as a professional, and (d) above all, I'll do my best to ensure that you have an excellent learning experience that is valuable.

I'm happy to meet with you as often as needed. I want you to enjoy this class and learn a ton. Email correspondence is a tool and shouldn't, in my opinion, replace good 'ole fashioned face time. Please help me keep the *human touch* alive and meet with me in person. **As you'll learn in class, relationships are the sine qua non for happiness!**

IV. **Requirements, Deadlines, and Dates of Exams**

RP = Reaction Paper

RP 1: Identify and Use Your Strengths	9/9
RP 2: Fun vs. Philanthropy	9/16
RP 3: Hedonic Adaptation	10/5
Exam I	10/7
RP 4: Flow & Savoring	10/21
RP 5: Gratitude	11/4
RP 6: Love	11/18
RP 7: Materialism and Voluntary Simplicity	12/7
RP 8: Positivity Portfolios	12/9
Exam II: Final Exam	12/16

V. **Grading Policy**

For a grade of **A**, a student needs to accumulate an average of 95%-100%.
For a grade of **A-**, a student needs to accumulate an average of 90%-94%.

For a grade of **B+**, a student needs to accumulate an average of 87%-89%.
For a grade of **B**, a student needs to accumulate an average of 84%-86%.
For a grade of **B-**, a student needs to accumulate an average of 80%-83%.

For a grade of **C+**, a student needs to accumulate an average of 77%-79%.
 For a grade of **C**, a student needs to accumulate an average of 74%-76%.
 For a grade of **C-**, a student needs to accumulate an average of 70%-73%.

For a grade of **D+**, a student needs to accumulate an average of 67%-69%.
 For a grade of **D**, a student needs to accumulate an average of 64%-66%.

For a grade of **F**, a student needs to accumulate an average of 0%-63%.

VI. Attendance Policy

There are four keys to success: 1. Do everything you say, 2. Finish everything you start, 3. Say please and thank you, and 4. Be prompt. I take attendance at the beginning of every class. Please be prompt! You're responsible for information discussed and additional assignments given in class. If absent, please get this information from another student—not me. If you have any questions, however, after speaking with this student I'm happy to help.

Per the Undergraduate Academic Affairs Committee:

Attending classes is likely to improve academic performance as well as to enhance the quality of learning experience. Being in the classroom offers opportunities to gain detailed faculty responses to your questions, to hear a wider range of perspectives, to develop public speaking and interpersonal skills, to network with your peers, and to engage in group exercises carefully designed to promote a deeper understanding of the subject matter. Moreover, establishing positive habits while in the university setting, such as regular attendance, can carry over into your behavior upon graduation and contribute to you having a successful career. The university recognizes the importance of instilling behaviors in you that will promote long-term personal and professional success.

VII. Email Policy

I asked Brandy to TA this course because she was a star student last semester. She knows her stuff! Therefore, if you have a question about class—lectures, readings, or assignments—please ask Brandy first. (Her email is: brandy1@pride.hofstra.edu) If you're still confused, feel free to email me.

VIII. Academic Honesty

Plagiarism is a serious ethical and professional infraction. Hofstra's policy on academic honesty reads: "The academic community assumes that work of any kind [...] is done, entirely, and without assistance, by and only for the individual(s) whose name(s) it bears." Please refer to the "Procedure for Handling Violations of Academic Honesty by Undergraduate Students at Hofstra University" to be found at http://www.hofstra.edu/PDF/Senate_FPS_11.pdf, for details about what constitutes plagiarism, and Hofstra's procedures for handling violations.

IX. Students with Disabilities

If you have any concerns regarding a physical, psychological and/or learning disability that may have an impact upon your performance in this course, appropriate accommodations can be made on an individualized, as-needed basis after the needs, circumstances and documentation have been evaluated by the appropriate office on campus.

The Office of Services for Students with Disabilities is located in 212 Memorial Hall. Telephone: 516-463-7074. Please see the Hofstra Guide to Pride, or see their site: <http://www.hofstra.edu/StudentAffairs/stdtis/index.html> .

All disability-related information will be kept confidential.

X. Course Outline

Note: Much of this outline is from Dr. Sonja Lyubomirsky's sample course syllabus for those interested in using her book for teaching.

WEEK 1 (9/2) | *Introduction to Positive Psychology*

- Happiness Assignment due in 1 week.

Required Readings

Lyubomirsky Foreword

Seligman, M. E. P., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000). Positive psychology: An introduction. *American Psychologist*, 55, 5-14.

Supplemental Readings

Peterson Chapter 1

McMahon, D. M. (2008). The pursuit of happiness in history. In M. Eid & R. J. Larsen (Eds.), *The science of subjective well-being* (pp. 80-93). New York: Guilford Press.

Sheldon, K. M., & King, L. (2001). Why positive psychology is necessary. *American Psychologist*, 56, 216-217.

Peterson, C., Park, N., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2005). Assessment of character strengths. In G. P. Koocher, J. C. Norcross, & S. S. Hill III (Eds.), *Psychologists' desk reference* (2nd ed., pp. 93-98). New York: Oxford University Press.

Franklin, B. (1956). *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*. New York: Harper. **SKIM 1ST HALF, BUT READ 3RD QUARTER CAREFULLY, ON VIRTUES AND MORAL PERFECTION. ANY VERSION IS FINE.**

Class Discussion

What is positive psychology?

How has happiness been thought about and written about throughout history?

Class Exercise

Students review the short descriptions of the 24 signature strengths. Focus on what you believe to be your top five strengths by giving careful consideration to the *entire description*, not just the word used to label the trait. Think of a time when you obviously used one of these strengths. Please introduce yourself to the class by telling a brief story (about 1 minute) about a time when you used one of these strengths. The time may be about a task you accomplished or a time at work, in nature, on vacation, with family and/or friends, by yourself, etc. Be specific in your descriptions.

Happiness Assignment

Complete the VIA Classification Survey (the long version) by clicking on the link below. Before completing it, predict your top 5 strengths. Was your prediction correct? Why or why not? Explain your gut reaction when you saw your results. **What new insights did you gain from this? How will this information affect you? Attach a copy of your results from this assessment. www.authentic happiness.org

WEEKS 1 (9/4) & 2 (9/9) | What Is Happiness?****9/7—NO CLASS: Labor Day******- Happiness Assignment due in 1 week.****Required Readings**

Diener and Biswas-Diener (2008) Chapters 1 and 2

Lyubomirsky Chapter 1

****Kashdan, T.B., **Biswas-Diener, R., & King, L.A. (2008). Reconsidering happiness: The costs of distinguishing between hedonics and eudaimonia. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 3, 219-233.****** - equal contribution****Supplemental Readings**Ryff, C. D. (1989). Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meanings of psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57, 1069-1081.Keyes, C. L. M. (2007). Promoting and protecting mental health as flourishing: A complementary strategy for improving national mental health. *American Psychologist*, 62, 95-108.Peterson, C., Park, N., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2005). Orientations to happiness and life satisfaction: The full life versus the empty life. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 6, 25-41.Peterson, C., Park, N., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2005). Assessment of character strengths. In G. P. Koocher, J. C. Norcross, & S. S. Hill III (Eds.), *Psychologists' desk reference* (2nd ed., pp. 93-98). New York: Oxford University Press.Diener, E., Oishi, S., & Lucas, R. E. (in press). Subjective well-being: The science of happiness and life satisfaction. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology* (2nd edition). New York: Oxford University Press.Diener, E., Suh, E. M., Lucas, R. E., & Smith, H. L. (1999). Subjective well-being: Three decades of progress. *Psychological Bulletin*, 125, 276-302.Myers, D. G. (2000). The funds, friends, and faith of happy people. *American Psychologist*, 55, 56-67.Lyubomirsky, S. (2001). Why are some people happier than others?: The role of cognitive and motivational processes in well-being. *American Psychologist*, 56, 239-249.**Class Discussion**

Introduction to happiness: What is it and how is it measured?

Why are some people happier than others?

****Wrap up this section with the DVD interview with Ed Diener and his wife.******Class Exercise**

Students complete measures of happiness and life satisfaction.

Happiness AssignmentThe pleasant life involves the pleasures of positive affect and personal well-being. Map out your ideal day, then live and savor it. *ALSO*, act like a philanthropist and do something helpful. For both the ideal

day and philanthropic activity you must actually do something for both of them. I'm not asking for you to write about this hypothetically. **Literally, go live an ideal day and go do something philanthropic.** Which activity made you happier in both magnitude *and* duration? Why? Does it depend on how you define happiness? Explain. Which act would Jeremy Bentham (19th century philosopher and early advocate of utilitarianism) more likely endorse? Why? Do you agree? I think this is an especially valuable exercise and that you'll derive great benefit.

WEEK 3 (9/14 & 9/16) | Why Be Happy?

Required Readings

Lyubomirsky Chapter 1 (continued)

Diener and Biswas-Diener (2008) Chapters 3 and 5

Keyes, C. L. M. (2005). Mental illness and/or mental health? Investigating axioms of the complete state model of health. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 73*, 539-548.

Supplemental Readings

Diener, E., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2002). Very happy people. *Psychological Science, 13*, 81-84.

Danner, D. D., Snowdon, D. A., & Friesen, W. V. (2001). Positive emotions in early life and longevity: Findings from the nun study. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 80*, 804-813.

Lyubomirsky, S., King, L. A., & Diener, E. (2005). The benefits of frequent positive affect: Does happiness lead to success? *Psychological Bulletin, 131*, 803-855.

Harker, L., & Keltner, D. (2001). Expressions of positive emotions in women's college yearbook pictures and their relationship to personality and life outcomes across adulthood. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 80*, 112-124.

Judge, T. A., & Higgins, C. A. (1998). Affective disposition and the letter of reference. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 75*, 207-221.

Staw, B. M., Sutton, R. I., & Pelled, L. H. (1994). Employee positive emotion and favorable outcomes at the workplace. *Organization Science, 5*, 51-71.

Class Discussion

Is happiness a good thing or does it simply feel good?

Class Exercise

Students tell a story about their happiest day and describe what they did or were motivated to do that day.

WEEKS 4 (9/21 & 9/23), 5 (9/30), & 6 (10/5) | Is It Possible to Increase Happiness and If So, How?

****9/28—NO CLASS: Classes not in session****

- Happiness Assignment due in 3 weeks.

Required Readings

Diener and Biswas-Diener (2008) Chapter 9

Lyubomirsky Chapters 2, 3, and 10

Lucas, R. E. (2005). Time does not heal all wounds: A longitudinal study of reaction and adaptation to divorce. *Psychological Science*, *16*(12), 945-950.

Supplemental Readings

Diener, E., Lucas, R. E., & Scollon, C. N. (2006). Beyond the hedonic treadmill: Revising the adaptation theory of well-being. *American Psychologist*, *61*, 305-314.

Lykken, D., & Tellegen, A. (1996). Happiness is a stochastic phenomenon. *Psychological Science*, *7*, 186-189.

Kahneman, D., Krueger, A. B., Schkade, D., Schwarz, N., & Stone, A. A. (2006). Would you be happier if you were richer? A focusing illusion. *Science*, *312*, 1908-1910.

Lyubomirsky, S., Sheldon, K. M., & Schkade, D. (2005). Pursuing happiness: The architecture of sustainable change. *Review of General Psychology*, *9*, 111-131.

Fredrickson, B. L. (2008). Promoting positive affect. In M. Eid & R. J. Larsen (Eds.), *The science of subjective well-being* (pp. 449-468). New York: Guilford Press.

Seligman, M. E., Steen, T. A., Park, N., & Peterson, C. (2005). Positive psychology progress: Empirical validation of interventions. *American Psychologist*, *60*, 410-421.

Lucas, R. E., Clark, A. E., Georgellis, Y., & Diener, E. (2003). Reexamining adaptation and the set point model of happiness: Reactions to changes in marital status. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *84*, 527-539.

Brickman, P., Coates, D., & Janoff-Bulman, R. (1978). Lottery winners and accident victims: Is happiness relative? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *36*, 917-927.

Riis, J., Loewenstein, G., Baron, J., Jepson, C., Fagerlin, A., & Ubel, P. A. (2005). Ignorance of hedonic adaptation to hemodialysis: A study using ecological momentary assessment. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, *134*, 3-9.

Caspi, A., Sugden, K., Moffitt, T. E., Taylor, A., Craig, I. W., Harrington, H. L., McClay, J., Mill, J., Martin, J., Braithwaite, A., & Poulton, R. (2003). Influence of life stress on depression: Moderation by a polymorphism in the 5-HTT gene. *Science*, *301*, 386-389.

Urry, H. L., Nitschke, J. B., Dolski, I., Jackson, D. C., Dalton, K. M., Mueller, C. J., Rosenkranz, M. A., Ryff, C. D., Singer, B. H., & Davidson, R. J. (2004). Making a life worth living: Neural correlates of well-being. *Psychological Science*, *15*, 367-372.

Mroczek, D. K., & Spiro, A., III. (2005). Change in life satisfaction during adulthood: Findings from the Veterans Affairs Normative Aging Study. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *88*, 189-202.

Sheldon, K. M., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2006). How to increase and sustain positive emotion: The effects of expressing gratitude and visualizing best possible selves. *Journal of Positive Psychology*, *1*, 73-82.

Sheldon, K. M., & Houser-Marko, L. (2001). Self-concordance, goal-attainment, and the pursuit of happiness: Can there be an upward spiral? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *80*, 152-165.

Lyubomirsky, S., Dickerhoof, R., Boehm, J. K., & Sheldon, K. M. (2008). *How and why do positive activities work to boost well-being?: An experimental longitudinal investigation of regularly practicing optimism and gratitude*. Manuscript under review.

Class Discussion

What are the most important determinants of happiness?

What is the happiness set point?

How does hedonic adaptation present a barrier to achieving happiness?

Is it possible to sustainably increase happiness?

****Wrap-up this section with the 20/20 video: *Happiness*****

Happiness Assignment

Think of a time when you adapted to an experience, object, etc. that you dreamt about for eons and swore it would give you eternal pleasure/satisfaction. Now that you have an understanding of the hedonic treadmill, what would you have done differently?

WEEKS 6 (10/7), 7 (10/14), & 8 (10/19) | *Positive Emotions and Living in the Present*

****10/12—NO CLASS****

EXAM I

- *Happiness Assignment due in 2 weeks.*

Required Readings

Lyubomirsky Chapter 7

Nakamura, J., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (in press). Flow theory and research. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology* (2nd edition). New York: Oxford University Press.

Fredrickson, B. L., & Joiner, T. (2002). Positive emotions trigger upward spirals toward emotional well-being. *Psychological Science*, *13*, 172-175.

Supplemental Readings

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1999). If we are so rich, why aren't we happy? *American Psychologist*, *54*, 821-827.

Fredrickson, B. L., & Cohn, M. A. (2008). Positive emotions. In Lewis, X., Haviland, X., & Barrett, L. F. (Eds.), *Handbook of emotions* (3rd edition). New York: Guilford Press.

Fredrickson, B. L., Tugade, M. M., Waugh, C. E., & Larkin, G. R. (2003). What good are positive emotions in crises?: A prospective study of resilience and emotions following the terrorist attacks on the United States in September 11, 2001. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *84*, 365-376.

King, L. A., Hicks, J. A., Krull, J. L., & Del Gaiso, A. K. (2006). Positive affect and the experience of meaning in life. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *90*, 179-196.

Van Boven, L. (2005). Experientialism, materialism, and the pursuit of happiness. *Review of General Psychology*, *9*, 132-142.

Wrzesniewski, A., & Dutton, J. E. (2001). Crafting a job: Revisioning employees as active crafters of their work. *Academy of Management Review*, *26*, 179-201.

Bryant, F. B., Smart, C. M., & King, S. P. (2005). Using the past to enhance the present: Boosting happiness through positive reminiscence. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 6, 227-260.

Brown, K. W., & Ryan, R. M. (2003). The benefits of being present: Mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84, 822-848.

Class Discussion

Introduction to emotions and their measurement
Introduction to the broaden-and-build model
Introduction to flow

Class Exercise

Students complete and discuss measures of positive emotions.

Happiness Assignment

Spend 2 weeks practicing one or more of the flow exercises (Lyubomirsky, 2008, pp. 184-189) and write a response paper about your experience.

OR

Spend 2 weeks practicing one or more of the savoring exercises (Lyubomirsky, 2008, pp. 193-202) and write a response paper about your experience.

WEEKS 8 (10/21), 9 (10/26 & 10/28), & 10 (11/2) | Gratitude

- Happiness Assignment due in 2 weeks.

Required Readings

Lyubomirsky Chapter 4

Emmons, R. A., & McCullough, M. E. (2003). Counting blessings versus burdens: An experimental investigation of gratitude and subjective well-being in daily life. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84, 377-389.

Supplemental Readings

McCullough, M. E., Emmons, R. A., & Tsang, J. (2002). The grateful disposition: A conceptual and empirical topography. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 82, 112-127.

Emmons, R. A. (2007). *Thanks!: How the new science of gratitude can make you happier*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. ****I strongly encourage you to read this. It's an insightful and fun page-turner written by one of the gratitude pioneers.****

Emmons, R. A. (2008). Gratitude, subjective well-being, and the brain. In M. Eid & R. J. Larsen (Eds.), *The science of subjective well-being* (pp. 469-489). New York: Guilford Press.

Froh, J. J., Sefick, W. J., & Emmons, R. A. (2008). Counting blessings in early adolescents: An experimental study of gratitude and subjective well-being. *Journal of School Psychology*, 46, 213-233.

Froh, J. J., Kashdan, T. B., Ozimkowski, K. M., & Miller, N. (conditionally accepted). Who benefits the most from a gratitude intervention in children and adolescents? Examining positive affect as a moderator. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*.

Bartlett, M. Y., & DeSteno, D. (2006). Gratitude and prosocial behavior: Helping when it costs you. *Psychological Science*, 17(4), 319-325.

Emmons, R. A. (2004). The psychology of gratitude: An introduction. In R. A. Emmons & M. E. McCullough (Eds.), *The psychology of gratitude* (pp. 3 – 18). New York: Oxford University Press.

McCullough, M. E., Kilpatrick, S. D., Emmons, R. A., & Larson, D. B. (2001). Is gratitude a moral affect? *Psychological Bulletin*, 127, 249-266.

Trivers, R. L. (1971). The evolution of reciprocal altruism. *Quarterly Review of Biology*, 46, 35-57. **PP. 45-54.**

Class Discussion

Introduction to gratitude

Class Exercise

Students complete and discuss measures of gratitude.

Watch video clip suggested by *Positive Psychology At The Movies (?)*

Happiness Assignment

Set the right tone when you watch a movie: Say a brief prayer of thanksgiving or meditate on gratitude before and after you watch a movie. Be thankful for the privilege granted to you to be able to view and appreciate the film—experiencing the talent, countless hours of work, and incredible teamwork that took place in the production of the film. Try your best to appreciate this and not take it for granted. Look upon the film with grateful eyes.

OR

Count your blessings: Make this exercise part of your evening and morning ritual, a ritual of gratitude. Fall asleep each night thinking about the things for which you are grateful (Count blessings, not sheep!). Savor the memory of the person, event, or experience for which you are grateful. What have you gained? What haven't you lost? What have you learned? Who helped you? What made your day easier? How are others worse off than you? Include your blessings with your reflection paper.

OR

Grateful thinking: Notice all of the gifts in your life, all of the times someone does something kind for you. Process the gift exchange through grateful lenses. (Remember, a gift can be tangible [e.g., CD, food, clothes, ride to the store] and intangible [i.e., active listening, expression of love and support, friendship].) *Intent:* To what extent did the person give you the gift intentionally? *Cost:* How much did it cost (time, energy, attention, money, etc.) the person? *Benefit:* How much do you benefit from the gift? The more you notice and appreciate the intent, cost, and benefit of a gift exchange, the more that you'll experience gratitude?

OR

Gratitude visit: Write a gratitude letter to someone who has been especially kind to you and has not been properly thanked. This may be someone you're close to (e.g., family), someone from your past (e.g., a teacher from years ago), or someone you barely know but are grateful to all the same (e.g., a neighbor for always waving). Deliver it to him or her in person, and read it to them if you'd like. Submit a copy of this letter to me with your reflection paper.

OR

Remember the bad: This is one of Emmons's evidenced-based strategies for building gratitude that he discusses in his book *Thanks!* (2007). Acknowledge gratitude for the bad things that have happened.

Everyone has gone through some level of pain, difficulty, and suffering, and your pain has likely made you stronger and more resilient. Reflect on your past. What are some areas in which you can be grateful? How can these be viewed as blessings instead of curses? We cannot erase our memories of the bad; instead, the solution is to embrace, appreciate, and accept our past. From this acceptance, gratitude can unfold.

OR

Set up reminders: Place adhesive notes (post-its) throughout the spaces in which you live (e.g., car, work, home). (I use my screensaver.) Whenever you see one of these notes, deliberately shift your mindset to one of gratefulness—gratitude for whatever you're doing, wherever you are, and whomever you're with. Although seemingly contrived, as you cultivate this habit, you will find that gratefulness will become automatic, and this character strength will grow.

WEEKS 10 (11/4) & 11 (11/9 & 11/11) | *Love & Relationships*

- Happiness Assignment due in 1 week.

Required Readings

Diener and Biswas-Diener (2008) Chapter 4

Lyubomirsky Chapter 5

Supplemental Readings

Gable, S. L., Reis, H. T., Asher, E. R. & Impett, E. A. (2004). What do you do when things go right? The intrapersonal and interpersonal benefits of sharing positive events. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 87, 228-245.

Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 117, 497-529.

Gottman, J. M., & Silver, N. (1999). *The seven principles for making marriage work*. New York: Three Rivers Press.

Murray, S. L., Holmes, J. G., & Griffin, D. W. (1996). The self-fulfilling nature of positive illusions in romantic relationships: Love is not blind, but prescient. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 71, 1155-1180.

Class Discussion

Introduction to love, attachment, and close relationships

Class Exercise

Students complete and discuss measures of attachment, passionate love, and companionate love.

****Watch 20/20 video: *Love, Lust, & Marriage*****

****Watch video clip suggested by *Positive Psychology At The Movies* (**)**

Happiness Assignment

Have your partner/friend take the VIA survey (they may take the brief version if they wish). Plan a “strengths date” allowing each other to plan half of the time spent together using your top 5 signature strengths.

OR

Following Gottman's advice, spend an extra 5 hours this week with your partner and reflect on the difference between this week and your "typical" week (prior to having this knowledge). Get feedback from your partner. How has your relationship changed? Do you feel closer? Happier with "what you have?" More satisfied? Did you see the effects of improving your relationship (your "base/foundation") in other areas of your life (e.g., more focused/productive at work, more energetic)?

OR

Choose a person with whom you are close and keep track of how you respond whenever he or she relays some good news. Resolve to respond to every piece of good news in an active and constructive way. Keep track of what you do, and make sure the number of active-constructive responses outweighs other responses by at least 3:1.

OR

Emphasize validation in your relationships: In your relationship or marriage, are your positive interactions five times as often as negative ones, as Gottman emphasizes? If so, congrats. If not, make it happen!

OR

Live a life that emphasizes commitment: Commitment creates a sense of safety and makes intimacy possible. Commit yourself to your partner and friends. Make a conscious decision to take risks, to be vulnerable in disclosing yourself to them, to be honest, to avoid hurting them, and to prioritize these relationships. Ornish (1998) calls this "focused intentionality."

WEEKS 12 (11/16 & 11/18), 13 (11/23), 14 (11/30 & 12/2), & 15 (12/7 & 12/9) |

Materialism & Voluntary Simplicity

****11/25—NO CLASS: Thanksgiving ****

HAPPY THANKSGIVING! REMEMBER TO GIVE THANKS. GIFTS ABOUND!

My Favorite Book Quote

G.K. Chesterton (1908): Orthodoxy

"Children are grateful when Santa Claus puts in their stockings gifts of toys or sweets. Could I not be grateful to Santa Claus when he put in my stockings the gift of two miraculous legs? We thank people for birthday presents of cigars and slippers. Can I thank no one for the birthday present of birth?" (p. 60)

- Happiness Assignment due in 3 weeks.

Required Readings

Diener and Biswas-Diener (2008) Chapter 6

Kasser, T. (2002). *The high price of materialism*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. **Yes, the whole book!**

+Elgin, D. (1993). *Voluntary simplicity: Toward a life that is outwardly simple, inwardly rich*. New York: Harper.

+ = I strongly encourage this book for those interested in the classic writing on voluntary simplicity. I'm not making it mandatory because I understand that you must also read Kasser's book, and I don't want to overwhelm you. But if you're interested in reducing the physical and emotional clutter in your life so that you have more time, energy, and attention to fulfill your needs of autonomy, competency, and relatedness—read this book!

Supplemental Readings

Kasser, T., & Ryan, R. M. (1993). A dark side of the American dream: Correlates of financial success as a central life aspiration. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *65*, 410-422.

Kasser, T. (2004). The good life or the goods life? Positive psychology and personal well-being in the culture of consumption. In P.A. Linley & S. Joseph (Eds.), *Positive psychology in practice* (pp. 55-67). New York: Wiley.

Kasser, T. (2006). Materialism and its alternatives. In M. Csikszentmihalyi & I. Csikszentmihalyi (Eds.), *A life worth living: Contributions to positive psychology* (pp. 200-214). New York: Oxford University Press.

Kasser, T., & Brown, K. W. (2003). On time, happiness, and ecological footprints. In J. DeGraaf (Ed.), *Take back your time!: Fighting overwork and time poverty in America* (pp. 107-112). San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Kashdan, T.B., & Breen, W.E. (2007). Materialism and diminished well-being: Experiential avoidance as a mediating mechanism. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, *26*, 521-539.

Kasser, T., & Kanner, A. D. (Eds.) (2004). *Psychology and consumer culture: The struggle for a good life in a materialistic world*. Washington: American Psychological Association.

Class Exercise

Students complete and discuss measures of materialism.

Watch HBO special: *Kids + Money*

Class Discussion

What's the relation between money and happiness?

What are the benefits of simplicity, frugality, intrinsic motivation, and using leisure time wisely?

Happiness Assignment

Spend money on *ONLY* the bare essentials (e.g., food and rent), use *ONLY* the bare essentials (e.g., walk somewhere instead of driving your car), and carve out several hours of quality free time—by tearing yourself away from the television, Facebook, your iPhone, etc.—and use it to pursue hobbies, interests, read, spend time with friends, go for walks, visit a museum, etc. What was it like simplifying your life? What was it like “taking back your time?” How, if any, did your view of materialistic values change?

Week16 | Final (EXAM II): Wednesday, 12/16, 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

I reserve the right to modify the syllabus during the semester as the course progresses and external events dictate. Any and all changes made will be communicated either via your official Hofstra email address or in class.