**Positive Psychology: The Science of Happiness**
L33 367 · Spring 2019
10:00 – 11:30 AM Tuesdays & Thursdays · Simon 1

**Instructor:** Tim Bono, Ph.D.  
**E-mail:** tjbono@wustl.edu  
**Office Hours:** Tues & Thurs 11:30AM–12:30PM  
**Office Location:** Psychology 315A

**Assistant to the Instructor:** Allison Moreau  
**Email:** amoreau@wustl.edu  
**Office Hours:** By appointment  
**Office Location:** Psychology 451C

**Course Description:** Historically, the field of psychology has placed a lot of attention on what’s wrong with people and what we can do to treat disorders of the mind. More recently, the field has broadened its scope to give more attention to the positive side of human nature and the most effective ways to pursue the good life. This course focuses on this latter development by examining scientific research centered on the nature of happiness and psychological well-being. Topics include the nature and measurement of happiness, the biological basis of positive emotions, an overview of positive trait theories, self-esteem, gratitude, mindset, the mind-body connection, physical activity, emotional intelligence, resilience, prosocial behavior, decision-making, willpower, mindfulness meditation, and the characteristics of successful relationships.

**Reading Assignments:** Most reading assignments are available at [http://ares.wustl.edu/ares](http://ares.wustl.edu/ares), listed alphabetically. Others are available in the “Modules” link on Canvas (under the Reading Assignments section). All reading assignments are outlined in the course schedule, starting on page 4 of this syllabus.

**Optional Text:** *When Likes Aren’t Enough: A Crash Course in the Science of Happiness* (Bono, T. 2018, Grand Central Publishing). This book offers greater insight into the course topics, along with the stories of how other WashU students have put research from Positive Psychology into practice in their own lives. The course schedule identifies the chapters that correspond with each lecture.

**Course website:** Please visit [https://mycanvas.wustl.edu/](https://mycanvas.wustl.edu/) to access lecture slides (“Modules” link), exam scores (“Grades” link), and thought paper assignments (“Assignments” link).

**Participation:** Your experience in this course will be enhanced to the extent that you are willing to engage with the material and apply it to your own life. During class I encourage you to share relevant personal anecdotes, raise questions, and pose topics for discussion. Time and flexibility are built in for us to probe further into the material we find most interesting.

**Special Accommodations and Student Educational Services:** Students who need special learning accommodations because of disability should register with Cornerstone as soon as possible. You may contact them at 314-935-5970 or visit their office on the South 40.

**Class Etiquette:** To create an environment conducive for learning, please show respect for your classmates and for me by arriving on time and staying for the entire class, waiting until class is completely over before putting belongings away or zipping your backpack, not engaging in side conversations with your neighbor during class, and keeping cell phones and other devices on silent.

**Bagels with Bono:** In an effort to get to know as many students as I can in this course, I will randomly draw names of students from the course roster each week to have bagels with me on campus (my treat). There is no set agenda for our discussion—we can talk about anything you’d like, including material covered in class, activities you are involved with at WU, things you want to know about me, etc.
**EXAMS**

Exams will consist of 45 multiple choice questions drawn from lecture and reading material. The first three exams are non-cumulative and will be held in class on the following days:

- Tuesday, February 12
- Tuesday, March 26
- Thursday, April 25

An optional, fully cumulative final exam will be held on Tuesday, May 7, from 6:10-7:30 PM. The final exam score may replace your lowest score of the prior three, and is therefore an option for anyone who had to miss an exam during the semester or for anyone who wishes to improve their overall grade in the course. Only your highest three exam scores count toward your final grade, so if you are satisfied with your performance on the three midterms, taking the final is not necessary. Further, taking the final cannot lower your overall grade if you have taken all three midterms.

**Policy on make-up exams**

There are no make-up examinations in this course except in the case of truly extenuating circumstances. Such exceptions will be considered only at the request a university official or healthcare provider.

**Grade disputes**

Grade disputes must be made in writing within one week after the grades are posted and include

- a) the test item you are questioning; and
- b) the reading pages or lecture material that form the rationale for your appeal.

**THOUGHT PAPERS**

Each week you will be given a thought paper topic that relates to previous or upcoming course material. These papers are intended to be a fun way to reflect on the material and think about its real-world applications. In general, you will be able to choose one of two options for your response:

- **Option #1:** Respond to the specific thought paper topic for that week (posted on Canvas).
- **Option #2:** Write about anything else that has been covered so far in class or in the reading that you find personally relevant.

- For whichever option you choose, thought papers should be based on your personal opinions and experiences. *Do not simply summarize the reading assignments.* Tell stories from your own life or about people you know. Also, please write about things that you are comfortable with others seeing. I will occasionally select quotes and share them (anonymously) with the class.

- Each paper should be 250-500 words and submitted through a link that will be available on Canvas each Thursday evening (under “Assignments”). **The submission deadline is the following Thursday by 5:00 PM.** Submissions emailed directly to me or the TAs will not be accepted.

- All thought papers are worth one point each and graded pass-fail: if it is evident you put appropriate thought and effort into it you will receive the credit. Throughout the semester there are 13 altogether, but only 12 are recorded to provide a buffer in case you should forget to do one or if you submit one that is below a quality threshold. If you complete all 13 satisfactorily, the last one will count as extra credit.
**RESEARCH CREDIT**
You are required to earn six units of research credit through some combination of

a) *Psychology Experiments*, through which you may earn one credit per hour of experiments. All must be completed by *April 26*—see page 6 for instructions on how to sign up; and/or

b) “*Positive Psychology in the Media*” Assignments, through which you may earn one credit per 250-word paper you write relating a media reference to a topic covered in the course. These are due to the TA in hard copy by the beginning of class on *April 23*—see page 7 for more details.

**EXTRA CREDIT**
You may submit up to two additional “Positive Psychology in the Media” assignments, each worth one point, for extra credit. These also are due by the beginning of class on *April 23*.

Further, as noted on p. 2, if you complete all 13 thought papers throughout the semester, the 13th paper may count as one additional extra credit point.

**BREAKDOWN OF GRADE:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points Possible</th>
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<tr>
<td>Highest 3 exam scores (each worth 45 points)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thought papers</td>
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<td>Research credit</td>
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<td>Extra credit</td>
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**Grade cutoffs are based on the following formula:**

\[
\text{(Exam 1 + Exam 2 + Exam 3 + Thought Papers + Research Credit + Extra Credit) / 153}
\]

- A 92.5%
- A- 89.5%
- B+ 86.5%
- B 82.5%
- B- 79.5%
- C+ 76.5%
- C 72.5%
- C- 69.5%
- D+ 66.5%
- D 62.5%
- D- 59.5%
- F < 59.5%

Please note that the grading scale includes the only rounding that will occur. An 89.4999 is still a B+.

Those taking this course *Pass/Fail* must earn a D or better (i.e., a score of at least 62.5%) to pass.

Anyone who is auditing the course should meet with the course instructor to discuss the parameters for earning a successful audit.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**
Academic integrity is expected of all students at Washington University. The work you do in this course should be your own. Violations of Academic Integrity include but are not limited to copying answers on an exam, plagiarizing an assignment, or discussing exam questions with others who could take this class in the future. Please refer to the following website for the full policy:

[http://www.wustl.edu/policies/undergraduate-academic-integrity.html](http://www.wustl.edu/policies/undergraduate-academic-integrity.html)

I am responsible for reporting all cases of suspected academic dishonesty to the Dean’s office. The consequences are severe. Please ask about this at any time if further clarification would be helpful.

**Honor Code.** All students will be asked to read and sign the class honor code on each exam:

*I pledge on my honor that I have neither received nor given unauthorized aid on this exam, nor will I discuss the questions on this exam with anyone who could take this course in the future.*
**SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS**

All ARES readings are available at [http://ares.wustl.edu/ares](http://ares.wustl.edu/ares)

Canvas links are available in the “Modules” section of [http://mycanvas.wustl.edu/](http://mycanvas.wustl.edu/)

WLAE refers to the optional text, *When Likes Aren’t Enough: A Crash Course in the Science of Happiness*

Please note: The course schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tues, Jan 15</td>
<td><strong>Introduction to the Course</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td><em>WLAE (Optional) Ch. 1: The Holy Grail of Young Adulthood (pp. 1-10)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs, Jan 17</td>
<td><strong>History and Methods of Positive Psychology</strong></td>
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<td><em>ARES: Positive Psychology Ch. 2 The Meaning and Measure of Happiness (pp. 14-36)</em></td>
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<td>Tues, Jan 22 &amp; Thurs, Jan 24</td>
<td><strong>Positive Emotions</strong></td>
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<td><em>ARES: The Science of Happiness Ch. 1: The Secret of Smiling (pp. 3-21)</em></td>
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<td><em>ARES: The Science of Happiness Ch. 2: Positive Feelings as a Compass (pp. 22-30)</em></td>
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<td><em>WLAE (Optional) Ch. 1: The Holy Grail of Young Adulthood (pp. 10-24)</em></td>
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<td>Tues, Jan 29 &amp; Thurs, Jan 31</td>
<td><strong>Biological Foundations of Happiness</strong></td>
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<td><em>ARES: The Science of Happiness Ch. 3: The Happiness System (pp. 31-47)</em></td>
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<td><em>ARES: The Science of Happiness Ch. 4: The Malleable Brain (pp. 48-69)</em></td>
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<td><em>Canvas “Modules” link: Searching the Brain for Happiness</em></td>
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<td>Tues, Feb 5 &amp; Thurs, Feb 7</td>
<td><strong>Positive Traits</strong></td>
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<td><em>ARES: Positive Psychology: The Science of Happiness and Human Strengths Ch. 2: Positive Traits (pp. 48-59)</em></td>
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<td><em>WLAE (Optional) Ch. 8: The Time Paradox (pp. 178 – 184)</em></td>
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<td>Tues, Feb 12</td>
<td><strong>EXAM 1: Covers all lecture material and reading assignments from Jan 17 - Feb 7</strong></td>
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<td>Thurs, Feb 14 &amp; Tues, Feb 19</td>
<td><strong>Hedonic Adaptation: Why Money Does Not Buy Happiness</strong></td>
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<td><em>ARES: Gross National Happiness Ch. 5: Does Money Buy Happiness? (pp. 111-132)</em></td>
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<td><em>ARES: Oxford Handbook of Stress, Health, and Coping Ch. 11: Hedonic Adaptation to Positive and Negative Experiences (pp. 200-220)</em></td>
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<td><em>WLAE (Optional) Ch. 2: The Common Denominator of Happiness</em></td>
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<td>Thurs, Feb 21 &amp; Tues, Feb 26</td>
<td><strong>Treats, Experiences, and Memories: When Money Does Buy Happiness</strong></td>
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<td><em>ARES: If money doesn’t make you happy, then you probably aren’t spending it right by Dunn, Gilbert, &amp; Wilson</em></td>
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<td><em>WLAE (Optional) Ch. 10: Social Connection (pp. 210-217)</em></td>
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<td>Thurs, Feb 28</td>
<td><strong>Prosocial Behavior</strong></td>
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<td><em>ARES: Gross National Happiness Ch. 8: The Secret to Buying Happiness (pp. 175-185)</em></td>
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<td><em>WLAE (Optional) Ch. 10: Social Connection (pp. 222-230)</em></td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Lecture Topic</td>
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<td>Tues, Mar 5</td>
<td><strong>Flow: Losing all Track of Time</strong> (Guest Lecture by Dr. Jill Stratton)</td>
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| Thurs, Mar 7         | **Perfectionism (At WashU?! No...!)**                                       | *ARES: The Six Pillars of Self-Esteem* Ch. 1: Self-Esteem: The Immune System of Consciousness (pp. 3-25)  
*Canvas “Modules” link: How Not to Talk to Your Kids: the inverse power of praise  
*WLAE (Optional) Ch. 6: Failing Better (pp. 121-144)* |
| Tues, Mar 12 & Thurs, Mar 14 | **SPRING BREAK**                                                             |                                                                                     |
| Tues, Mar 19 & Thurs, Mar 21 | **Mindfulness Meditation (a.k.a. Attention Training)**                       | *Canvas “Pages” link: The Art of Now: Six Steps to Living in the Moment  
*WLAE (Optional) Ch. 5: Attention Training (pp. 95-120)* |
| Tues, Mar 26         | **EXAM 2: Covers all lecture material and reading assignments from Feb 14 - March 21** |                                                                                     |
| Thurs, Mar 28 & Tues, April 2 | **Mens Sana in Corpora Sano: A Healthy Mind in a Healthy Body**              | *ARES: Positive Psychology in Practice* Ch. 9: Physical Activity: Positive Psychology in Motion (pp. 146-164)  
*Canvas “Modules” link: Your Sleep Cycle Revealed  
*WLAE (Optional) Ch. 3: A Healthy Mind in a Healthy Body (p. 47-74)* |
| Thurs, April 4 & Tues, April 9 | **Decision-Making, Willpower, and Self-Control**                            | *ARES: Positive Psychology in Practice* Ch. 6: Doing Better but Feeling Worse: The Paradox of Choice (pp. 86-104)  
*Canvas “Modules” link: The Science of Success: Here's What Really Happens When You Extend a Deadline  
*WLAE (Optional) Ch. 7: Willpower (p. 145-169)* |
| Thurs, April 11      | **Emotional Intelligence**                                                    | *ARES: Positive Psychology in Practice* Ch. 28: Emotional Intelligence in Practice (pp. 447-463)  
*WLAE (Optional) Ch. 9: Managing the Inevitable Bad Day (pp. 195-209)* |
| Tues, April 16 & Thurs, April 18 | **Positive Relationships**                                                   | *ARES: Happiness: Unlocking the Mysteries of Psychological Wealth* Ch. 4: Happiness and Social Relationships: You Can’t Do Without Them (pp. 47-67)  
*Canvas “Modules” link: What makes marriage work?  
*WLAE (Optional) Ch. 10: Social Connection (pp. 217-222)* |
| Tues, April 23       | **Tying it all together**                                                    | *WLAE (Optional) Putting it into Practice (pp. 231-237)*                             |
| Thurs, April 25      | **EXAM 3: Covers all lecture material and reading assignments from Mar 28 – April 23** |                                                                                     |
| Tues, May 7, 6:10 PM | **OPTIONAL FINAL: Covers all lecture material from Jan 17 – April 23**       |                                                                                     |
How to Participate in Experiments for Credit
in the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences

As part of this course, you may earn credit by participating in one or more experiments being offered by the Department of Psychology. Read your syllabus carefully for information on how this credit factors into your final grade. Nearly all aspects of this participation, including registration as a user, signing up for experiments, and making sure that your instructor is notified of the points you have earned, is handled by our website. The website can be accessed at https://wupsych.sona-systems.com.

New Users
Go to https://wupsych.sona-systems.com and click on “request account”. Please make sure that you use a user@wustl.edu address when registering. Once you have successfully registered, choose the course towards which you would like to apply credits for this particular semester.

Returning Users (i.e. those who have already used the Psychology Sona system)
You do not need a new account. Just login in at https://wupsych.sona-systems.com and use your existing login and password. Sona provides an opportunity to resend password if you forgot. As was the case in previous semesters, make sure you choose the course towards which you would like to apply credits for this particular semester.

Important Tips/Reminders for Earning Credit via Sona
- There is no connection between the Psychology and Business school subject pool websites. They have separate logins and there is no transferring or sharing of credit of any sort between these two systems.
- Alternatives to earning research credits: If you would rather earn your credit in ways other than doing research, every instructor provides his or her students at least two alternatives: (a) attendance at colloquia or (b) a project (often a paper), the details of which will be arranged/negotiated with your instructor. Available colloquia will be posted on the subject pool website, typically within a week of the talk. Any deadlines for completing papers or other projects are set by instructors. Students are responsible for obtaining information about, and meeting, any relevant deadlines. Any questions about alternatives should be directed toward your instructor.
- Questions about individual studies should be sent to the researcher who is conducting that study. His or her email is easily obtained by clicking on the study in question.
- Cancellation policy: If you sign up for a session, you MUST show up on time, or cancel the session ahead of time within the cancellation window. Different studies may have different cancellation windows; make sure you make note of these when you sign up. Students who accumulate more than one (1) unexcused absence run the risk of being prohibited from earning research credit for the rest of the semester.
- The last date to participate in experiments is the last day of regular class (Arts and Sciences schedule). Experiments do not run into study/finals week. DO NOT DELAY completing your hours! There may be far fewer opportunities later in the semester and if you wait too long you may not be able to earn any credit at all. If you are a new user and/or need a new password, it is strongly advised that you register within the first month of the semester to avoid last-minute complications.
- Lifetime research cap. After students have earned a total of 24 research credits via the Psychology subject pool, a credit (typically, 6 points) is applied to your account by the webmaster. Paid studies DO NOT count towards this total. THIS IS NOT DONE AUTOMATICALLY. You must contact the webmaster each semester in order to have these credits applied. Students are required to email the subject pool chair (Dr. Alan Lambert; alambert@wustl.edu) within one (1) month of the beginning of the semester in order to use this option. Students who miss this deadline run the risk of not receiving credit.
- As noted above, students who have specific questions about a study should contact the researcher running that session; emails are always listed alongside the study as posted in Sona. Other questions (apart from study-specific issues) should be directed towards Dr. Alan Lambert, the subject pool chair, at alambert@wustl.edu.
**Positive Psychology in the Media**

Positive Psychology is everywhere once you start to look for it. You can earn research credit by bringing in real-world media illustrations of any topic discussed either in class or the readings, including topics we already have covered or those that we will cover later.

Illustrations could be articles, comic strips, advertisements, pictures, or other media drawn from a newspaper, magazine, internet clip (e.g., YouTube), TV show*, song lyric*, or web site not already mentioned in class or in our readings. Entire movies or books are not acceptable, though you may feel free to submit particular clips or excerpts that are relevant. YouTube clips or news articles that merely summarize scientific findings, such as a psychologist discussing a particular phenomenon, will not be accepted. If you are in doubt about whether a particular source is acceptable, please ask.

Also, the principle being demonstrated must be contained within the illustration itself. For example, it is not acceptable to submit a clip of a movie trailer, or summary of a book, with an explanation that the movie or book overall demonstrates the concept. Rather, you would get credit for submitting a specific clip from the movie that directly (and fully, within the clip itself) illustrates this concept.

All submissions must be submitted to the TA in hard copy and include the following:

1) Your name
2) Your 6-digit WU ID
3) The source (include reference information such as volume, issue number, page numbers, or URL if applicable). Do not write on the illustration itself if it is drawn from a magazine or newspaper.
4) A 250-word thought paper describing how the illustration demonstrates a particular principle in positive psychology.

If you submit a **YouTube clip**, please include the following:

1) The channel name
2) The clip title
3) The link and/or particular key words that will allow us to find the clip easily

*If the clip is longer than two minutes, please indicate the times that are most relevant to the concept being illustrated.

To receive credit for a **TV show or song lyric** you will need to provide one of the following:

1) a link online where the show or song may be accessed for free;
2) a DVD or CD of the relevant TV segment or song; or
3) a verbatim reproduction of the relevant TV segment (equivalent of a script) or the entire song lyric.

*Additionally, you must explicitly link the lyrics or script content to the psychological concept being illustrated.

Each submission is worth one research credit, and must be submitted to the TA in hard copy (i.e., no email submissions) by April 23, which is the last lecture of the semester.