Positive Psychology: The Science of Happiness
L33 367 · Spring 2016
Simon 1 · 11:30AM – 1:00 PM Tuesdays & Thursdays

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Office Location: Psychology 315A

Teaching Assistants:
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Jeremy Reisman, j.reisman@wustl.edu

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, mindset, the mind-body connection, physical activity, emotional intelligence, prosocial behavior, decision-making, willpower, mindfulness meditation, and the characteristics of successful relationships.

Course website: Lecture slides and exam scores will be made available on Blackboard, https://bb.wustl.edu.

Reading Assignments: Most reading assignments are available at http://ares.wustl.edu, listed alphabetically. Others are available in the “Reading Assignments” link on Blackboard. All reading assignments are outlined in the course schedule, starting on page 4 of this syllabus.

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. Time and flexibility are built in for us to probe further into the material we find most interesting. I encourage you to share relevant personal anecdotes, raise questions, and pose topics for discussion.

Special Accommodations and Student Educational Services: Students who need special learning accommodations because of disability should contact me as soon as possible. Academic resources are available at Cornerstone: The Center for Advanced Learning, located in Gregg Hall on the South 40 (314-935-5970, http://cornerstone.wustl.edu).

Class Etiquette: To create an environment conducive for learning, please show respect for your classmates and for me in the following ways:
1) Arrive on time and stay for the entire class. Late arrivals and early departures are disruptive.
2) Wait until class is completely over before putting belongings away or zipping your backpack.
3) Please do not engage in side conversations with your neighbor during class.
4) Keep cell phones and other mobile 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 multiple choice and short answer questions drawn from material in lecture and in the readings. Three non-cumulative midterm exams will be held in class on the following days:

- Tuesday, February 16
- Tuesday, March 29
- Thursday, April 28

An optional, fully cumulative final exam will be held on Monday, May 9, from 1:00-3:00 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 a catastrophic medical emergency or other comparable family emergency. These will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

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 asked to submit a thought paper that relates to a previous or upcoming course topic. These papers are intended to be a fun way to reflect on the material and think about its real-world applications. Specific thought paper topics will be posted each week on Blackboard, and generally fall into two categories:

Option #1: Respond to the prompt provided on Blackboard
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 should be approximately 250-500 words and submitted through a link that will be emailed to you each Thursday evening. 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 14 altogether, but only 13 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 14 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 29—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 assignment. These are due to the TA in hard copy by the beginning of class on April 26—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 26.

Further, as noted on p. 2, if you complete all 14 thought papers throughout the semester, the 14th paper may count as one additional extra credit point.

BREAKDOWN OF GRADE:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points Possible</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highest 3 exam scores (each worth 100 points)</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thought papers</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research credit</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extra credit</strong></td>
<td><strong>up to 3</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The Grading Scale is based on the following formula:

(Exam 1 + Exam 2 + Exam 3 + Thought Papers + Research Credit + Extra Credit) / 319

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>≥ 92.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>89.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>86.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>82.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>76.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>72.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>66.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>69.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>59.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt; 59.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

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
I am responsible for reporting all cases of suspected academic dishonesty to the Dean’s office. Feel free to 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 reading assignments listed in italics are available at [http://ares.wustl.edu](http://ares.wustl.edu)  
Blackboard links are available in the “Reading Assignments” section of [http://bb.wustl.edu](http://bb.wustl.edu)

## PART I: FOUNDATIONS OF HAPPINESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture Topic</th>
<th>Reading Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tues, Jan 19</td>
<td>Introduction to the Course</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Thurs, Jan 21  | History and Methods of Positive Psychology         | *Positive Psychology*  
Ch. 2 The Meaning and Measure of Happiness (pp. 14-36) |
| Tues, Jan 26 & | Positive Emotions                                  | *The Science of Happiness*  
Ch. 1: The Secret of Smiling (pp. 3-21)  
Ch. 2: Positive Feelings as a Compass (pp. 22-30) |
| Thurs, Jan 28  |                                                   |                                                                                    |
| Tues, Feb 2 &  | Biological Foundations of Happiness               | *The Science of Happiness*  
Ch. 3: The Happiness System (pp. 31-47)  
Ch. 4: The Malleable Brain (pp. 48-69)  
Link available on Blackboard:  
Searching the Brain for Happiness |
| Thurs, Feb 4   |                                                   |                                                                                    |
| Tues, Feb 9 &  | Positive Traits                                    | *Positive Psychology: The Science of Happiness and Human Strengths*  
Ch. 2: Positive Traits (pp. 48-59) |
| Thurs, Feb 11  |                                                   |                                                                                    |
| Tues, Feb 16   | EXAM 1: Covers all Lecture Material and Reading Assignments from Jan 21 - Feb 11 | |

## PART II: MINDSETS OF HAPPINESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture Topic</th>
<th>Reading Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Thurs, Feb 18 &| Hedonic Adaptation: Why Money Does Not Buy Happiness | *Gross National Happiness*  
Ch. 5: Does Money Buy Happiness? (pp. 111-132)  
*Oxford Handbook of Stress, Health, and Coping*  
Ch. 11: Hedonic Adaptation to Positive and Negative Experiences (pp. 200-220) |
| Tues, Feb 23   |                                                   |                                                                                    |
| Thurs, Feb 25 &| Treats, Experiences, and Memories: When Money Does Buy Happiness | *If money doesn’t make you happy, then you probably aren’t spending it right*  
By Dunn, Gilbert, & Wilson |
| Tues, March 1  |                                                   |                                                                                    |
| Thurs, March 3 | Prosocial Behavior                                 | *Gross National Happiness*  
Ch. 8: The Secret to Buying Happiness (pp. 175-185) |
| Tues, March 8  | Perfectionism (At WashU?! No...)                   | *The Six Pillars of Self-Esteem*  
Ch. 1: Self-Esteem: The Immune System of Consciousness (pp. 3-25)  
Link available on Blackboard:  
How Not to Talk to Your Kids: the inverse power of praise |
## PART II cont’d: MINDSETS OF HAPPINESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture Topic</th>
<th>Reading Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Thurs, March 10             | Flow: Losing all Track of Time                     | *Handbook of Positive Psychology*  
Ch. 7: The concept of Flow (pp. 89-105)                                           |
| Tues, March 15 &            | **SPRING BREAK**                                   |                                                                                   |
| Thurs, March 17             |                                                    |                                                                                   |
| Tues, March 22 &            | **Mindfulness Meditation** (a.k.a. Attention Training) | Link available on Blackboard:  
The Art of Now: Six Steps to Living in the Moment                                  |
| Thurs, March 24             |                                                    |                                                                                   |
| Tues, Mar 29                | **EXAM 2: Covers all Lecture Material and**        | Reading Assignments from Feb 18 - March 24                                         |

## PART III: HABITS OF HAPPINESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture Topic</th>
<th>Reading Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Thurs, March 31 &           | *mens sana in corpora sano:* A Healthy Mind        | *Positive Psychology in Practice*  
Ch. 9: Physical Activity: Positive Psychology in Motion (pp. 146-164)  
Link available on Blackboard:  
Your Sleep Cycle Revealed                                         |
| Tues, April 5               | in a Healthy Body                                   |                                                                                   |
| Thurs, April 7 &            | **Decision-Making, Willpower, and Self-Control**   | *Positive Psychology in Practice*  
Ch. 6: Doing Better but Feeling Worse: The Paradox of Choice (pp. 86-104)  
Link available on Blackboard:  
The Science of Success: Here's What Really Happens When You Extend a Deadline |
| Tues, April 12              |                                                    |                                                                                   |
| Thurs, April 14             | **Emotional Intelligence**                          | *Positive Psychology in Practice*  
Ch. 28: Emotional Intelligence in Practice (pp. 447-463)                                  |
| Tues, April 19              | **NO CLASS**                                       | Catch up on readings, Prepare for exam, Try out happiness interventions from the class |
| Thurs, April 21 &           | **Positive Relationships**                         | *Happiness: Unlocking the Mysteries of Psychological Wealth*  
Ch. 4: Happiness and Social Relationships: You Can’t Do Without Them (pp. 47-67)  
Link available on Blackboard:  
What makes marriage work?                                           |
| Tues, April 26              |                                                    |                                                                                   |
| Thurs, April 28             | **EXAM 3: Covers all Lecture Material and**        | Reading Assignments from March 31 – April 26                                         |

| Mon, May 9                  | **OPTIONAL FINAL: Covers all Lecture Material from Jan 21 – April 26** |

**Please note:** The course schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.
How to participate in experiments for credit in the Department of Psychology

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. The purpose of this memo is to provide a brief summary of how to get started participating in research.

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: http://experimetrix.com/wu/ You can also access the site through the Department of Psychology website, at http://psych.wustl.edu and clicking on “research participation”.

Note: EARNING CREDIT BY PARTICIPATING IN RESEARCH IS OPTIONAL. SEE THE SYLLABUS FOR OTHER OPTIONS

If you would like to earn credit by participating in research, the website is very easy to use and is largely self-explanatory. Just a few things to keep in mind:

1. When you first access the site, make sure that you click on “read me” and read the subject pool guidelines. This is important even if you have used the pool before, because some minor procedures may have changed since you last used it. It is your responsibility to make sure that you are aware of and follow all guidelines. Failure to do so may mean a loss of credit.

2. New users should click on NEW USERS to get started. Students who have used this website before can use the same logon and password that they have used in past semesters. If you have forgotten your logon or password, the website allows you to have this information sent to you again via email. After logging in, you are ready to start scheduling yourself for experiments.

3. POLICY ON CANCELLING A SESSION: Please keep track of your appointments and make sure that you show up on time. If you must cancel, then it is necessary for you to do so no later than 4 hours before the scheduled time. If you fail to show up for a study without canceling on time, or if you show up more than 10 minutes late, this information will be recorded in our data base. Students with excessive number of no-shows will be given a warning; continued pattern of no shows following this warning may result in being asked to complete the rest of your credits through alternative projects.

4. The last date to participate in experiments is on 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 in fact 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.

5. It is UP TO YOU to check your experimetrix profile, daily, to keep track of your appointments and to make sure that you did not accidentally sign up for a study. IF YOU SIGN UP FOR A STUDY YOU MUST EITHER (A) SHOW UP OR (B) CANCEL NO LATER THAN FOUR HOURS BEFORE THE SCHEDULED STUDY. DO NOT SIGN UP FOR AN EXPERIMENT UNLESS YOU ARE SURE YOU CAN MAKE IT. IF YOU SIMPLY FAIL TO SHOW, THIS WILL HAVE IMPORTANT CONSEQUENCES FOR YOUR ABILITY TO EARN RESEARCH CREDIT.

**Reminder to returning users: There is a “research credit cap” in place, which applies after you have earned a total of 24 research credits. See the subject pool website for details; click on the “research cap” link. Note: You must contact the webmaster each subsequent semester—this is not done automatically. You must contact the webmaster no later than the last day of class in any given semester in order to use this option.
Positive Psychology in the Media

Positive Psychology is everywhere once you start to look for it. You can earn research credit by bringing in a real-world examples, applications, or 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 paragraph describing how the illustration demonstrates a particular principle in positive psychology, along with the corresponding reading page(s) and/or lecture date.

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 26, which is the last lecture of the semester.