

## **The Pursuit of Happiness Psychology 300**

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In this course we will examine and discuss the meaning, significance, and pursuit of happiness. Many of the readings are derived from the field of positive psychology, which is the scientific study of positive emotions, traits, and institutions that enable individuals and communities to thrive. We will use Buddhist philosophy and practices as mechanisms through which to contemplate the role of body and mind in the pursuit of happiness.

### **Learning Objectives**

- 1) Critically analyze basic and applied research on affective, cognitive, social, biological, and behavioral aspects and correlates of happiness.
- 2) Consider and compare proposed pathways and barriers to happiness from empirical, theoretical, and philosophical perspectives.
- 3) Sample potential pathways to well-being through practicing community service, meditation, and yoga.
- 4) Communicate core course ideas and information to a broader academic audience, actively engage with core ideas from other disciplines, and participate in a collaborative process of synthesizing these ideas.
- 5) Engage in a proactive and thoughtful process of self-examination with regard to personal ideals, goals, and mechanisms of happiness.

### **Course Structure and Features**

This course will involve sessions of lecture/discussion, experiential learning, and multidisciplinary collaboration.

#### Four Classes in Buddhist Meditation led by Barbara Rowe

A meditation workshop will be taught by Barbara Rowe. Each session will include a brief lecture/discussion about Buddhist perspectives of meditation and meditation practice. Students are expected to attend all four meditation classes, which will be held on Wednesday afternoons from 1-3pm.

#### Yoga Workshop in Eight Sessions

Yoga will be taught by Susan Evans. Each class will be appropriate for beginners. Students are expected to attend at least seven of the eight sessions, which are scheduled from 10:30-11:45am on Tuesdays and Thursdays in the Warner Center Dance Studio.

### Habitat for Humanity Service Learning

Students will sign up for at least **two** 4-hour shifts of work at a Habitat for Humanity house under construction on Village Way (off Greenhouse Road) or off Diamond Street in Lexington. The following shifts are available for our class:

- Tues. April 23, 1:15-5pm
- Thurs. April 25, 1:15-5pm or 5-8pm
- Sat. April 27, 8:30am-12:15pm or 1:15-5pm
- Tues. April 30, 1:15-5pm
- Thurs. May 2, 1:15-5pm or 5-8pm
- Tues. May 7, 1:15-5pm
- Thurs. May 9, 5-8pm
- Thurs. May 16, 5-8pm

Only five class members can sign up for each shift, and we will work together to arrange carpooling for shifts if necessary. Drivers should be aware of the University vehicle use policy (<http://www.wlu.edu/x31884.xml>) and should know that in the case of an accident, personal auto insurance would be invoked.

### Multidisciplinary Colloquium

This class is linked with two other courses that address issues related to the pursuit of happiness: Professor Kosky's **Religion 205** course and Professor Eastwood's **Sociology 290** course. Our classes will meet together each Friday for a colloquium in which students will present and discuss core ideas considered in each course during the week. Participating in this learning community will allow us to place the concepts that we have discussed in detail within a larger, multidisciplinary context. The insights and information of each of the three participating courses will complement and potentiate one another, which is the beauty and power of a liberal arts educational experience.

## **Course Process and Grading**

Assignments for this course draw heavily on a writing-to-learn approach. Writing is a very effective tool for increasing cognitive engagement with new information. Through the act of writing, we can actively process the content of what we have read and critically analyze it. Through writing, we stumble across linkages with other elements of our knowledge base and our personal experience that contribute to our understanding of new information. In this process, we develop new ideas and opinions about the material.

**Writing Portfolio (30%)**: The writing portfolio will contain reading responses for every Monday and Wednesday class meeting and additional assignments arising throughout the term.

For each class meeting, please type and bring to class a thoughtful Writing Portfolio (WP) entry. Some WP entries will be unprompted, in which case they may take a variety of forms (e.g., observation, point for discussion, question about the material). Other WP entries will involve specific prompts. All entries should include **critical analysis** of the material. Daily items will be submitted to me in each class meeting, and at the end of the semester you will edit, print out, and turn in the complete collection of your entries. The WP will serve four very important functions. It will:

- Prompt you to actively process and critically analyze the material
- Provide me with a daily measure of your engagement with the material
- Provide a ready supply of intriguing discussion topics within each class meeting
- Provide a summary of your intellectual and creative development from the beginning to the end of the course

Your writing portfolio will be evaluated as a complete body of work at the end of the term based on the degree to which it reflects:

- Consistent effort
- Mastery of concepts
- Clarity and sophistication of analysis
- Thoughtfulness, creativity, and originality
- Polish and professionalism

Oral and Poster Presentation (20%): Working in a small group, create and deliver a 15-minute teaching presentation (followed by a 5-minute discussion/Q&A period) to explain and discuss one or more core concepts of the course in the Friday multidisciplinary colloquium. Integrate audiovisual aids, activities, and/or props into your presentation, if relevant. Develop points to lead a discussion of the topic.

Create a poster to highlight one or more of the topics you have presented. Present the poster during the Spring Term Festival Poster session on May 17<sup>th</sup>.

### Take Home Test (20%)

Themes Essay (20%): Identify and explain *three* major themes that have cut across the material we have discussed in the Pursuit of Happiness. In a final conclusions section of this essay, link these themes to *two* primary take-home message(s) with which you will leave this course.

Class Participation (10%): Attend each class. Be prepared. Contribute to class discussions. Keep a log of the dates of your participate in all required activities, to be turned in with your Themes Essay.

## **Late / Missing Assignments**

All assignments, including writing portfolio entries, are due at the designated time. Two points will be deducted from the final writing portfolio grade for each entry that is turned in after the beginning of class. Ten points will be deducted from the final writing portfolio grade for each missing entry. Take Home Tests and Themes Essays will incur a 10-point penalty for each hour they are late, beginning at 5pm.

## **Reading Materials**

### Required

Articles on Sakai

Haidt, J. (2006). *The happiness hypothesis: Finding modern truth in ancient wisdom*. Basic Books.  
ISBN: 978-0465028023

Gyatso, Geshe Kelsang (2005). *How to Solve Our Human Problems*. Tharpa Publications: Glen Spey, New York.  
ISBN: 978-0978906719

### Recommended

Yee, R. & Zolotow, N. (2002). *Yoga: The poetry of the body*. St. Martin's Griffin: New York.  
ISBN: 978-0312273316

## Working Schedule

Date	Time	Topic	Activity	Reading
Mon April 22	10:10-12:10 Reid 301	<b>Positive Psychology</b> Constructs of happiness		HH Chapter 1 (The Divided Self).  Schueller, S., & Seligman, M. (2010). Pursuit of pleasure, engagement, and meaning: Relationships to subjective and objective measures of well-being. <i>The Journal of Positive Psychology, 5</i> , 253-263.  Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1999). If we are so rich, why aren't we happy? <i>American Psychologist, 54</i> , 821-827.
	1-3 Reid 301	<i>The Life a House Built: The Jimmy &amp; Rosalyn Carter Work Project</i>  Jane Ann Wells	Film & Discussion  Introduction to HfH	
Tues April 23	10:30-11:45 Warner Center Dance Studio		Yoga	
	1:15-5 Village Way		HfH	
Wed April 24	10:10-12:10 Reid 301	<b>Happiness in Affective Context</b> Positive affect Broaden and Build Theory  Evolutionary perspectives (Meet with Professor Whiting's class)		HH Chapter 2 (Changing Your Mind).  Diener, E. & Diener, C. (1996). Most people are happy. <i>Psychological Science, 7</i> , 181-185.  Fredrickson, B. L. (2003). The value of positive emotions. <i>American Scientist, 91</i> , 330-335.  Fredrickson, B. & Losada, M. (2005). Positive affect and the complex dynamics of human flourishing. <i>American Psychologist, 60</i> , 678-686.  Fredrickson, B., Mancuso, R., Branigan, C., & Tugade, M. (2000). The undoing effect of positive emotions. <i>Motivation and Emotion, 24</i> , 237-258.  Buss, D. (2000). The evolution of happiness. <i>American Psychologist, 55</i> , 15-23.

	1-3 Leyburn Library Sacred Space	Buddhist Philosophy	Meditation	HTSOHP Appendices I & IV, Part I
Thurs April 25	10:30-11:45 Warner Center Dance Studio		Yoga  Presentation preparations	Yee, pp. xv – 4, 29 - 66
	1:15-5 Village Way		HfH	
	5-8		HfH	
Fri April 26	10:10-12:15 Sci 214	Colloquium with Kosky & Eastwood classes	Presentations	
Mon April 29	10:10-12:10 Reid 301	<b>Neural Underpinnings of Happiness</b>  Guest Lecturer: Adam Green, Ph.D. Assistant Professor Department of Psychology Georgetown University		Kent Berridge, Richard Davidson, & Daniel Gilbert <i>The Neuroscience of Happiness: Aspen Ideas Festival</i> <a href="http://www.aspenideas.org/session/new-neuroscience-happiness">http://www.aspenideas.org/session/ new-neuroscience-happiness</a>  Kringelbach, M., & Berridge, K. (2009). Towards a functional neuroanatomy of pleasure and happiness. <i>Trends in Cognitive Sciences, 13</i> (11), 479-487).  Allen, M. et al. (2012). Cognitive- affective neural plasticity following active-controlled mindfulness intervention. <i>The Journal of Neuroscience, 32</i> (44), 15601-15610.
	1-3 Stackhouse	<i>The Buddha</i>	Film & Discussion	
Tues April 30	10:30-11:45		Yoga	
	1:15-5		HfH	
Wed May 1	10:10-12:10 Reid 301	<b>Happiness in Cognitive Context</b> Motivation Cognitive Gymnastics Affective Forecasting Hedonic treadmill Choice	Dan Gilbert: TED	HH Chapters 3 (Reciprocity), 4 (Hypocrisy), 5 (Pursuit of Happiness).  Lyubomirsky, S. (2001). Why are some people happier than others? The role of cognitive and motivational processes in well-being. <i>American Psychologist, 56</i> , 239- 249.  Koo, M., Algoe, S., Wilson, T., & Gilbert, D. (2008). It's a wonderful

				<p>life: Mentally subtracting positive events improves people's affective states, contrary to their affective forecasts. <i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i>, 95, 1217-1224.</p> <p>Diener, E., Lucas, R., &amp; Scollon, C. (2006). Beyond the hedonic treadmill: Revising the adaptation theory of well-being. <i>American Psychologist</i>, 61, 305-314.</p> <p>Schwartz, B., Ward, A., Monterroso, J., Lyubormirsky, S., White, K., &amp; Lehman, D. (2002). Maximizing versus satisficing: Happiness is a matter of choice. <i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i>, 83, 1178-1197.</p>
	1-3	Buddhist Philosophy	Meditation	HTSOHP Part II, pp. 19-49
Thurs May 2	10:30-11:30 10-11:45		Yoga  Presentation preparations	Yee, pp. 67 - 104
	1:15-5	<b>TAKE HOME TEST DUE 5PM</b>	HfH	
	5-8		HfH	
Fri May 3	10:10-12:15 Sci 214	Colloquium with Kosky & Eastwood classes	Presentations	
Mon May 6	10:10-12:10 Reid 301	<b>Resilience Mechanisms of Pursuit</b>		<p>HH Chapters 6 (Love), 7 (Adversity).</p> <p>Bonanno, G. (2004). Loss, trauma, and human resilience: Have we underestimated the human capacity to thrive after extremely aversive events? <i>American Psychologist</i>, 59, 20-28.</p> <p>Lyubormirsky, S., Sheldon, K., &amp; Schkade, D. (2005). Pursuing happiness: The architecture of sustainable change. <i>Review of General Psychology</i>, 9, 111-131.</p> <p><b>Lehrer, J. (2012). The Forgetting Pill Erases Painful Memories Forever.</b>  <a href="http://www.wired.com/magazine/2012/02/ff_forgettingpill/all/">http://www.wired.com/magazine/2012/02/ff_forgettingpill/all/</a></p>
	1-3 Stackhouse	<i>Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind</i>	Film & Discussion	

Tues May 7	10:30-11:45		Yoga	
	1:15-5		HfH	
Wed May 8	10:10-12:10 Reid 301	Happiness in Social Context		<p>Diener, E. &amp; Oishi, S. (2005). The nonobvious social psychology of happiness. <i>Psychological Inquiry</i>, 16, 162-167.</p> <p>Inglehart, R., Foa, R., Peterson, C., &amp; Welzel, C. (2008). Development, freedom, and rising happiness: A global perspective (1981-2007). <i>Perspectives on Psychological Science</i>, 3, 264-285.</p> <p>Graham, C. &amp; Chattopadhyay, S. (2012). Gender and well-being around the world. <i>Global Economy and Development Program</i>. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution.</p> <p>King, P. &amp; Furrow, J. (2004). Religion as a resource for positive youth development: Religion, social capital, and moral outcomes. <i>Developmental Psychology</i>, 40, 703-713.</p>
	1-3	Buddhist Philosophy	Meditation	HTSOHP Part II, pp. 49 - 90
Thurs May 9	10:30-11:45		Yoga	
			Presentation preparations	Yee, pp. 105 - 158
	5-8		HfH	
	5:30pm Stackhouse	Bob Mankoff, New Yorker Cartoon Editor		
Fri May 10	10:10-12:15 Sci 214	Colloquium with Kosky & Eastwood classes	Presentations	
Mon May 13	10:10-12:10 Reid 301	Happiness and Health		<p>HH Chapters 8 (Virtue), 9 (Divinity).</p> <p>Danner, D., Snowdon, D., &amp; Friesen, W. (2001). Positive emotions in early life and longevity: Findings from the Nun Study. <i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i>, 80, 804-813.</p> <p>Cohen, S. &amp; Pressman, S. (2006). Positive affect and health. <i>Current Directions in Psychological Science</i>, 15, 122-125.</p>

				<p>Earlywine, M. (2011). Humor and health. In <i>Humor 101</i>, 139-166. New York: Springer.</p> <p>Ryff, C. D., Singer, B. H., &amp; Love, G. D. (2004). Positive health: Connecting well-being with biology. <i>Philosophical Transactions: Biological Sciences</i>, 359, 1383-1394.</p>
	1-3 Reid Stackhouse		Film TBA	
Tues May 14	10:30-11:45		Yoga	
	1:15-5		HfH	
Wed May 15	10:10-12:10 Reid 301	<p><b>Generating Happiness</b> Capitalizing on Strengths Interventions</p> <p><b>WRITING PORTFOLIO DUE IN CLASS</b></p>		<p>HH Chapter 10 (Meaning).</p> <p>Dahlsgaard, K., Peterson, C., &amp; Seligman, M. (2005). Shared virtue: The convergence of valued human strengths across culture and history. <i>Review of General Psychology</i>, 9, 203-213.</p> <p>Peterson, C., Ruch, W., Beermann, U., Park, N., &amp; Seligman, M. (2007). Strengths of character, orientations to happiness, and life satisfaction. <i>The Journal of Positive Psychology</i>, 2, 149-156.</p> <p>Lyubormirsky, S., Dickerhoof, R., Boehm, J., &amp; Sheldon, K. (2011). Becoming happier takes both a will and a proper way: An experimental longitudinal intervention to boost well-being. <i>Emotion</i>, 11, 391-402.</p> <p>Fredrickson, B., Cohn, M., Coffey, K., Pek, J., &amp; Finkel, S. (2008). Open hearts build lives: Positive emotions, induced through loving-kindness meditation, build consequential personal resources. <i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i>, 95, 1045-1062.</p> <p>Bring results of VIA Strengths Inventory: <a href="http://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/questionnaires.aspx">http://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/questionnaires.aspx</a></p>
	1-3		Meditation	



Thurs May 16	10:30-11:30  10-11:45		Yoga  Presentation preparations	Yee pp. 159 - 186, 330-332
	5-8		HfH	
Fri May 17	10:10-12:15 Sci 214  12-1 Cannan Green	Colloquium with Kosky & Eastwood classes  Spring Term Festival: Poster Session  THEMES ESSAY DUE 5PM	Presentations	

## Themes Essay

Due via email Friday, May 17<sup>th</sup> before 5pm

Identify and explain *three* major themes that have cut across the material we have discussed in *The Pursuit of Happiness*. In a final conclusions section of this essay, present *two* primary take-home message(s) with which you will leave this course.

- Themes = objective and evidence-based observations that are supported by facts and information referenced from class readings and/or discussions
- Take-home messages = subjective statements reflecting personal perspectives or opinions

### Grading criteria:

**Creativity:** Themes and take-home messages reflect a thoughtful approach, originality, and insight.

**Organization:** Themes are clearly stated and defended in a logical progression of ideas.

**Explanation:** Themes are fully developed through description and evidence.

**Synthesis / Integration:** Themes are supported with information taken from multiple class topics and sources. Effective connections are made within and between ideas.

**Conclusions:** Take-home messages are clearly stated and fully developed.

**Polish:** Essay has been edited and proofread into a polished and professional final product.

### Format:

- 750 - 1000 words
- double-spaced
- 12-point font, 1-inch margins
- APA formatting and referencing not required