

The Pursuit of Happiness Cognitive and Behavioral Science 300 Spring 2020

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 Phone: 458-8248
 Class Meetings: MWRF 9:30 – 11:30am
 Zoom Link: <https://wlu.zoom.us/my/karlamurdock>
 Experiential activities, group meetings, independent work: MTWRF afternoons

Positive psychology is an empirical field that synthesizes research on positive subjective experiences (happiness, pleasure, well-being), individual traits (character strengths and virtues), and social institutions (families, schools, businesses, religious organizations, civic organizations) that enable individuals and communities to thrive. We will survey the field and use primary source material to deepen our understanding of its scientific methodology. We will also explore its applications in personal, clinical, community, and professional contexts.

Learning Objectives

- 1) Explore the historical, cultural, and empirical contexts in which the field of positive psychology has emerged.
- 2) Critically analyze basic and applied research on affective, cognitive, social, biological, and behavioral aspects and correlates of happiness.
- 3) Sample potential pathways to well-being through experiential and service learning.
- 4) Engage in a proactive and thoughtful process of self-examination with regard to personal ideals, goals, and mechanisms of happiness.

Course Structure and Features

A goal for this class is to develop a daily meditation and yoga practice during the spring term.

Koru Mindfulness Meditation Class

Every Thursday from 9:30 – 11:00 am our class will meet with teachers from the Center for Koru Mindfulness. Koru Mindfulness is an evidence-based curriculum specifically designed for teaching mindfulness, meditation, and stress management to young adults. Our teachers will be Bibi Gnagno, Roger Mancastroppa, and Karen Newton (bios: <https://korumindfulness.org/about/team/koru-trainers/>). This course involves daily meditation practice using the Koru app.

Please register for the Koru class here: https://student.korumindfulness.org/course-detail.html?course_id=3349



Yoga Practice

A goal for this class is to develop a daily yoga practice during the spring term. The recommended curriculum is this free 30-day program, with sessions ranging from 20-45 minutes in duration: <https://yogawithadriene.com/home-30-days-of-yoga/>. As an alternative, this YouTube channel has briefer theme-based practices: <https://www.youtube.com/user/SarahBethShow/videos?app=desktop>. You may complete your yoga practice at your convenience. We will also be participating together in brief yoga breaks during our long MWF class meetings.

Reading Materials

BoD: Gay, R. (2019). *The book of delights*. Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill.
ISBN 978-1616207922

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

MTS: Rogers, H. (2016). *The mindful twenty-something*. New Harbinger Publications, Inc.
ISBN: 978-1626254893

Wallace, D.F. (2009). *This is water: Some thoughts, delivered on a significant occasion, about living a compassionate life*. Little, Brown, and Company.
ISBN: 978-0316068222

Articles provided via email

Recommended resource:

Stanton, B. (2015). *Humans of New York: Stories*. St. Martins Press.
ISBN-13: 978-1250058904

Additional Materials

Yoga mat, block/s, strap

Course Process and Evaluation

This course uses a writing-to-learn approach. Writing is a very effective tool for engaging 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 perspectives about the material.

Writing Portfolio (30%)

The Writing Portfolio (WP) will contain critical reflections on course readings and experiences. Entries will be, on average, one typed page, but the emphasis should be on quality, not quantity, of content.

The WP will serve four very important functions. It will:

- Help you to read course materials with a more critical eye and process content more actively
- Provide me with a consistent measure of your engagement with the material
- Supply intriguing discussion topics within each class meeting
- Reflect your intellectual and creative development from the beginning to the end of the course

To prepare for each MWF class meeting, **turn in via Canvas before class** the WP entry described under “Class Meeting” on the schedule below. Please number and date all of your entries. It is advisable to save all of your WP entries in a folder on Box so you will not lose track of them. At midterm and at the end of the term you will compile all entries into a single Word document to turn in for evaluation.

All WP entries should include critical analysis. You may choose to: link the current information with content from other courses or with theoretical or empirical material from our course; consider the information through the lens of a life experience; discuss multiple perspectives of the course material and/or strengths/weaknesses of these perspectives; develop and address interesting discussion topics or questions for our class meeting; or take any other approach that demonstrates your full and deep engagement with the information.

Class Participation (30%)

This course will be conducted in a seminar style involving minimal lecture and mostly discussion. Thus, you must attend our class meetings having read all of the assigned articles for that day – otherwise, you will be bored, lost, and/or embarrassed! Most students find these readings to be intrinsically interesting, so I expect that you will approach class preparation with interest and eager anticipation.

Your faithful completion of experiential aspects of this course will make this a meaningful, memorable, and maybe even transformative spring term. Daily meditation and yoga practice will lay a foundation that you will be able to build on in the short- and long-term future. A collection of mini-experiments will help you to explore mechanisms and pathways through which we can synthesize happiness in our lives. Noticing delights will be self-reinforcing and may change the way you move through the world. Video reviews will give our class another way to connect and play with interesting ideas.

- **Yoga practice:** Please log your participation, at least four days per week, on Canvas.
- **Meditation practice:** Your daily participation will be logged on the Koru app.
- **Mini-experiments:** Describe and critically reflect about at least three of the mini-experiments during the term on our class blog.
- **Delights:** Share photos of small delights at least four times per week on our class blog.
- **Video discussions:** Critically reflect about afternoon “watches” at least twice per week on our class blog.

This is our class blog, where we will interact with one another about mini-experiments, delights, and video discussions: <https://pursuitofhappiness.academic.wlu.edu/>. We will be able to view each other’s entries in each of these three categories.

Please use this format for the title of each of your blog entries:
name/assignment category/assignment name or label

For instance:

Caitlin/mini-experiment/gratitude letter
 Elena/delight/sunrise over Lexington
 Sam/video/Corey Keyes

Helen MacDermott (ITS) has created a very helpful video tutorial for blog posts:

<https://wlu.yuja.com/V/Video?v=1057872&node=4042926&a=183849880&autoplay=1>

If you run into any trouble or have any questions, please feel free to reach out to her directly at 540-458-4561 (office); 540-460-8839 (cell); or hmacdermott@wlu.edu.

Strengths and Virtues Project (20%)

This is a small group photojournalistic project that will unfold during the spring term and culminate in a class presentation. Details about this assignment are provided later in the syllabus.

Themes Essay (20%)

This is a formal essay and your final synthesis of material from this class. It is essentially a final exam. Details about this assignment are provided later in the syllabus.

Course Practices of Conscientiousness and Respect

This class has a lot of wonderful moving pieces. It will require an extra measure of conscientiousness in order to keep on top of everything. It may require an extra measure of flexibility, as well, as we navigate new technologies together. We will rise to the challenge with patience and good humor!

In many ways this course material will directly align with and apply to our lives. Relating it to personal experiences may infuse the ideas and information with added clarity and meaning. You will have many opportunities to write about and discuss your experiences in class assignments, meetings, and blog posts, and I welcome this. However, please don't feel pressured or encouraged to disclose any information about yourself that you will later wish you hadn't!

In order for us to optimize the quality of our time together, please follow these steps and tips during our Zoom meetings:

- Position yourself in a quiet location without distractions or ambient noise.
- Consider sitting in front of a light source and minimizing bright lights behind you (e.g., windows) so that your video image will be bright and clear.
- Click on this meeting link to join our class meetings: <https://wlu.zoom.us/my/karlamurdock> (meeting ID 602-776-2455) and enable audio and video.
- Your first and last name should be displayed at the bottom of your video image. If they aren't, click on the blue 3-dot icon in the top right corner of your image, chose "rename", and type your first and last name.
- At the top right of your screen, select "Gallery View" instead of "Speaker View". This will allow you to see everyone in our class at the same time.
- Our class will be very discussion oriented, and we will treat it like any other seminar. When you are ready to make a point, just raise your hand and I will call on you.
- In order to preserve bandwidth, we will all default to "mute" when we aren't speaking.
- We will have the best experience this term if we act and dress as if we are meeting together in person (as opposed to lounging in bed in our PJs). If at all possible, please:

- Sit upright in a chair that allows you to stay alert and engaged.
- Please give your full attention to our shared endeavor. Store your cellphone in a different room so you are not tempted to use it during class.
- Disable email and avoid the temptation to use your computer for non-class purposes.
- Use a notebook to take notes during class. The data are clear that handwritten note-taking is more effective than typing notes for comprehension and retention of information.

Working Schedule

CLASS MEETING	Class meeting	TOPIC	READING / PAGES	WATCH
Wed April 29				
9:30 – 10:15 am		Positive Psychology Hedonic vs. eudaimonic happiness Positive affect Subjective well being		
10:30 – 11:30 am	WP: Introduction story ●Two strengths ●An activity that makes you happy ●An experience in your life that showed you at your very best – the most YOU. This isn't about achievements, talents, or even skills. It is about a time you felt most alive and most quintessentially <i>yourself</i> .	Introductions		
afternoon			BoD Essayettes 1 - 6	Video: This is Water https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eC7xzavzEKY
Thurs April 30				
9:30 – 11:00 am		Koru Mindfulness Class	MTS Parts 1-2	
afternoon			BoD Essayettes 7 - 12	Video: Barbara Fredrickson

				https://greatgood.berkeley.edu/video/it-em/positive-emotions-open-our-mind
Fri May 1				
9:30 – 10:30 am	WP: Explain the dual continuum concepts of mental illness and mental health, and the relationship between them. Explain two of Keyes' empirically based rationales for adopting the dual continuum model.	Hedonic Adaptation Broaden and Build Model	Fredrickson, B. L. (2003). The value of positive emotions. <i>American Scientist</i> , 91, 330-335.	
10:45 – 11:30 am		Dual Continuum Model	Keyes, C. (2007). Promoting and protecting mental health as flourishing: A complementary strategy for improving national mental health. <i>American Psychologist</i> , 62, 95-108.	Video: Corey Keyes: https://www.txatlanta.com/dr-corey-keyes
afternoon	Mini-Experiment: Secret Good Deed		BoD Essayettes 13 - 18	
Mon May 4				
9:30 – 10:30 am	WP: Discuss two original examples of situations in which we may attribute experiences/behaviors to conscious control when they may be better explained by automatic processes. In these examples, how might our over-attribution of conscious control be problematic vs. beneficial?	Happiness Hypothesis	HH Chapters: 1 (The Divided Self). 2 (Changing Your Mind)	
10:45 – 11:30 am		Strengths and Virtues Strengths-spotting Strengths and	Complete the VIA Strengths Inventory: http://www.authenticappiness.sas.upenn.edu/questionnaires.aspx	Humans of New York https://www.humansofnewyork.com/

		Virtues Project		
afternoon			BoD Essayettes 19 - 24	Video: Susan Cain https://www.ted.com/talks/susan_cain_the_power_of_introverts?language=en
Tues May 5				
		Strengths & Virtues Project		
afternoon			BoD Essayettes 25 - 30	Video: <i>The Buddha</i> https://wlu.kanopy.com/video/buddha
Wed May 6				
9:30 – 10:30 am	WP: Csikszentmihalyi discusses the concept of relative deprivation. Discuss two processes of comparison that you recognize in your own life. How have these comparison processes tended to affect you?	Buddhist philosophy Flow Mindful listening	Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1999). If we are so rich, why aren't we happy? <i>American Psychologist</i> , 54, 821-827.	
10:45 – 11: 30 am		Positive Affect and Health Wise psychological interventions	Cohen, S. & Pressman, S. (2006). Positive affect and health. <i>Current Directions in Psychological Science</i> , 15, 122-125. Walton, G. M. (2014). The new science of wise psychological interventions. <i>Current Directions in Psychological Science</i> , 23, 73---82.	
afternoon	Mini-Experiment: Gratitude Letter		BoD Essayettes 31 - 36	
Thurs May 7				
9:30 – 11:00 am		Mindfulness Workshop	MTS Part 3	
afternoon			BoD Essayettes 37 - 42	Video: Dan Ariely https://www.t

				ed.com/talks/dan-ariely-are-we-in-control-of-our-own-decisions#t-638302
Fri May 8				
9:30 – 10:30 am		Cognition	HH Chapters: 3 (Reciprocity) 4 (Hypocrisy)	
10:45 – 11:30 am	WP: Explain the concepts of: rational choice theory; regret aversion; and counterfactual thinking. Discuss three empirically-validated downsides to a maximizing tendency.	Maximizing and Satisficing	Schwartz, B., Ward, A., Monterroso, J., Lyubormirsky, S., White, K., & Lehman, D. (2002). Maximizing versus satisficing: Happiness is a matter of choice. <i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i> , 83, 1178-1197.	
afternoon			BoD Essayettes 43 - 48	
Mon May 11				
9:30 – 10:30 am	Midterm WP Due WP: Drawing from Cresswell (2014), explain top-down and bottom-up pathways through which mindfulness meditation training might yield benefits for health and well-being.	Happiness Equation Relationships	5 (Pursuit of Happiness) 6 (Love)	Sonja Lyubormirsky: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F7JDbP_x8So
10:45 – 11:30 am		Compassion and Mindfulness	Fredrickson, B., Cohn, M., Coffey, K., Pek, J., & 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. Creswell, J.D. & Lindsay, E. (2014). How does mindfulness training affect health? A mindfulness stress	Mindful schools, <i>Health Habits of Mind:</i> http://centerhealthyinds.org/join-the-movement/watch-documentary-healthy-habits-of-mind Greater Good Science Center, <i>Training your brain to send</i>

			buffering account. <i>Current Directions in Psychological Science</i> , 23, 401-407.	<i>kind thoughts:</i> https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/video/item/train_your_brain_to_be_kinder
afternoon	Mini-Experiment: Three Good Things		BoD Essayettes 49 - 54	
Tues May 12				
		Strengths & Virtues Project		
afternoon			BoD Essayettes 55 - 60	Video: Michael Norton https://www.ted.com/talks/michael_norton_how_to_buy_happiness
Wed May 13				
9:30 – 10:30 am		Neuroscience of Happiness Adam Green, Ph.D. Associate Professor of Psychology, Georgetown University Director, Georgetown Laboratory for Relational Cognition	Schultz (2007). Reward Signals. <i>Scholarpedia</i> , 2(6):2184 http://www.scholarpedia.org/article/Reward_signals Vergallito, A., Riva, P., Pisoni, A., & Lauro, L. J. R. (2018). Modulation of negative emotions through anodal tDCS over the right ventrolateral prefrontal cortex. <i>Neuropsychologia</i> , 119, 128-135. Hagerty, Isaacs, Brasington, Shupe, Fetz, & Cramer (2013). Case Study of Ecstatic Meditation: fMRI and EEG Evidence of Self-Stimulating a Reward System. <i>Neural Plasticity</i> , 2013, 1-10.	Dan Gilbert https://www.ted.com/talks/dan_gilbert_asks_why_are_we_happy/transcript?language=en
10:45 – 11:30 am			(optional): Kringelbach, M. L., & Berridge, K. C. (2017). The affective core of emotion: linking	

			pleasure, subjective well-being, and optimal metastability in the brain. <i>Emotion Review</i> , 9(3), 191-199.	
afternoon			BoD Essayettes 61 - 66	
Thurs May 14				
9:30 – 11:00 am		Mindfulness Workshop	MTS Part 4	
afternoon			BoD Essayettes 67 - 71	
Fri May 15				
9:30 – 10:30 am	WP: Define in your own words the concept of impact bias. Explain two reasons why impact bias occurs. Explain two ways in which affective forecasting errors may work in favor of our health and well-being.	Affective Forecasting	Wilson, T. & Gilbert, D. (2005). Affective forecasting: Knowing what to want. <i>Current Directions in Psychological Science</i> , 14, 131-134.	Dan Gilbert https://www.ted.com/talks/dan_gilbert_the_surprising_science_of_happiness?language=en
10:45 – 11:30 am		Money	Dunn, E., Gilbert, D., & Wilson, T. (2011). If money doesn't make you happy, then you probably aren't spending it right. <i>Journal of Consumer Psychology</i> , 21, 115-125. Read: https://behavioralscientist.org/promote-happiness-choose-time-money/	
afternoon			BoD Essayettes 72 - 77	Video: <i>Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind</i> https://ezproxy.wlu.edu/login?url=https://digitalcampus.swankmp.net/wlu322116/watch?token=882FB4A0F7781475
Mon May 18				
9:30 – 10:30am	WP: Strengths and Virtues Project profiles	Adversity	HH Ch 7 (Adversity)	

			<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>Lehrer, J. (2012). The forgetting pill erases painful memories forever. <i>Wired</i>. http://www.wired.com/2012/02/ff_forgetting_pill/</p>	
10:45 – 11:30 am		Self-Compassion		Kristen Neff https://ed.ted.com/on/zhq011AI
afternoon	Mini-Experiment: Self Compassion Break		BoD Essayettes 78 - 83	
Tues May 19				
		Strengths & Virtues Project		
afternoon			BoD Essayettes 84 - 89	Video: Dan Ariely https://www.ted.com/talks/dan_ariely_what_makes_us_feel_good_about_our_work
Wed May 20				
9:30 – 10:30 am	Themes Essay Due	Motivation Pursuing happiness Savoring	Lyubormirsky, S., Sheldon, K., & Schkade, D. (2005). Pursuing happiness: The architecture of sustainable change. <i>Review of General Psychology</i> , 9, 111-131. Lyubormirsky, S. (2007). <i>The how of happiness</i> (pp. 190-204). Penguin Press.	
10:45 – 11:30 am		Themes Essay Discussion		

afternoon			BoD Essayettes 90 - 96	
Thurs May 21				
9:30 – 11:00 am		Mindfulness workshop	MTS Part 5	
afternoon			BoD Essayettes 97 - 102	
Fri May 22				
9:30 – 10:30am	<p>Final WP Due (include entries due today)</p> <p>WP: Explain two ways that ideas from <i>This is Water</i> map onto the field of positive psychology and one way that they map onto your life.</p>	Strengths and Virtues Presentations		
	<p>WP: Reflect on the experiential elements of this class (mindfulness, yoga, mini-experiments, delights, and video discussions). What were the most meaningful, surprising, influential, and/or important aspects of these experiences?</p>	This is Water	Wallace, D.F. <i>This is water</i> . Little, Brown, & Co.	

Strengths and Virtues Project

This project will allow you to exercise your critical thinking, creativity, and teamwork skills while honing your ability to recognize and conceptualize strengths in others. Working independently in a small group of three students, you will create a photojournalistic account of strengths and virtues in *Humans of New York* style.

Groups will meet via Zoom to collaboratively develop a brief interview to assess strengths and virtues, drawing from class discussion about strengths-spotting and mindful listening. Each student will conduct at least three brief interviews: one of a member of her/his small group and one or two of other people who are available for face-to-face interviews (perhaps family members or roommates). Face-to-face interviews should include photographs that help to capture the unique essence of the interviewee. Interviews should be audiotaped or videotaped so that their content can be studied and transcribed accurately. Before interviews, describe the entire project and process to each interviewee. Ask for her/his verbal consent to be audiotaped, videotaped, and/or photographed and to have her/his photograph and quote presented in a final class project.

In Humans of New York style (see <https://www.facebook.com/humansofnewyork/> and <https://www.humansofnewyork.com/>), choose a photograph and quote and interpret it in terms of one or more potential strengths / virtues of that person. Groups will work together to design a layout in PowerPoint for presenting their interviewees to the class.

Write a WP entry in which you analyze the virtue and strength that you find most relevant for each of the humans that you interviewed. Explain the general virtue and strength, how they are related to one another, and how the interviewee's quote or story reflects those characteristics.

Themes Essay

Identify and explain *three* major themes that have cut across the material we have discussed in this class. In a final conclusions section of this essay, discuss *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 contained in 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 effectively supported with information taken from multiple class topics. Effective connections are made within and between ideas.

Take-Home Messages: Take-home messages are thoughtful and well-developed.

Polish: Essay has been edited and proofread into a polished and professional final product. Writing style is clear and concise. Formatting requirements have been met.

Format:

- 900 - 1000 words
- double-spaced
- 12-point font
- APA formatting and referencing not required

General Grading Guidelines for Class Participation and Written Assignments

Grade	Keywords	Seminar Contribution	Written Assignment
100	outstanding		
95	excellent	The student is clearly engaged throughout all class meetings. S/he is prepared to make optimal use of class time by demonstrating mastery of course concepts and raising discussion topics that promote analysis of higher order issues in the class. The student actively seeks opportunities to learn from peers as well as from the instructor. Contributes to the learning process of peers by asking sophisticated and thoughtful questions and by offering insights and suggestions based on the student's own experiences and knowledge.	The product demonstrates a level of insight and sophisticated analysis that can happen only after considerable time and energy has been devoted to the process. It shows mastery of relevant concepts and literature, integration and synthesis of ideas, and the presentation of carefully-chosen evidence to support the analysis. The writing is well-organized and the line of reasoning is effortless to follow. Mechanical errors, if any, are minimal.
90	very good		
85	good	The student is usually engaged and well-prepared, listening carefully and respectfully and contributing occasionally but helpfully to the class discussion. Compared to A-level participation, this type of participation may be characterized by less evidence of preparation, critical reflection about course concepts, or investment in the group process. For instance, discussion questions may be less thought-provoking or less effective in eliciting class participation. B-level seminar contribution may involve less active or thoughtful responses to classmates' discussion questions as well.	This is a strong product that demonstrates careful thought and planning and fulfills the key goals of the assignment. The work demonstrates mastery of central concepts and background material, critical and well-substantiated analysis, and careful attention to clarity and precision in the writing style. The paper is generally well-organized and free of grammatical errors. Compared to an A paper, this work may be characterized by relatively less evidence of insight, originality, sophistication, or depth of analysis.
80	pretty good		
75	adequate	The student's attention and/or quality of contribution to class meetings is variable. Compared to B-level participation, this type of participation may be characterized by inconsistent evidence of preparation and/or planning in order to optimize the group process of the class. For instance, contributions to class discussions may reflect little curiosity or deep thinking.	The student's work has potential but does not succeed in one or more key goals of the assignment. It may lack in sufficient description and/or critical analysis of relevant empirical literature. Main points may be poorly organized and/or inadequately developed. Elements of the writing style may make the work difficult to understand. All of these are signs that sufficient time and effort were not devoted to creating a quality piece of scholarly work.
70	fair		
65	weak	The student makes minimal contributions to the class and/or appears distracted, unprepared, or disengaged.	The student's work appears to be thrown together. Key aspects of the analysis may be inadequately supported, poorly developed, and/or unclear. The paper may be poorly written and/or difficult to follow, and may contain serious, distracting mechanical errors.
60	poor		
55	unsuccessful	The student's lack of preparation and/or disengagement detracts from the class's progress. Lack of investment in peers' work progress is problematic.	The student's work indicates a gross lack of preparation for the assignment, and the basic requirements of the assignment are not met. The work lacks evidence of adequate research, critical analysis, and/or revision. The paper may be poorly written, difficult to follow, and/or have numerous mechanical errors.
0		Student is absent.	Written work is not submitted or contains plagiarized material.