Psych 270 Positive Psychology and Happiness
University College, Washington University in St. Louis
Sp2019, Wed 6:30-9:00pm
Tawni Hoeglund, PhD

Contact Information
Tawni.Hoeglund@wustl.edu
303-520-3397 cell/text
Office hours: Before and after class, and by appointment
I will make every effort to respond to calls, texts, and emails within 24 hours.

Course Description
While much of traditional psychology has generally focused on psychological suffering and how to relieve it, the young field of positive psychology broadly focuses on psychological thriving and how to promote it. That is, positive psychology aims to help individuals lead meaningful and fulfilling lives, cultivate what is best within themselves, and enhance their experiences of love, work, and play.

In the first part of the course, we review the history of positive psychology, examine the meaning and measurement of happiness and other indicators of well-being, explore the role of genetics and circumstances on happiness, review the research detailing who is thriving and why, and discover the myriad benefits of well-being.

In the second part of the course, we explore the research on the practices and habits that facilitate happiness and well-being. Specific practice and habit topics include strengths identification, gratitude, mindfulness, optimism, compassion, meaningful social connections, meaning and purpose in life, sleep, and more. Throughout the course, we will participate in regular class discussions and experiential learning from assessing our own happiness and strengths to engaging in many of the practices found to facilitate happiness.

Course Goals
Students who complete this course successfully will be able to:
• Articulate key concepts and findings in the field of positive psychology and apply them to real-world situations.
• Implement and evaluate cognitive, emotional, behavioral, interpersonal, and strengths-based approaches to increasing happiness, well-being, and life-satisfaction.
• Design and implement a comprehensive plan, drawing upon positive psychology findings, to foster greater thriving in their own lives or in a community within their lives.

Website
Lecture slides, in-class course materials, and grades will be available on Canvas at https://wustl.instructure.com. Some homework will be turned in via Canvas as well.

Readings
All readings are available electronically. Most reading are available via library reserves (ARES) at http://ares.wustl.edu. Some readings are available only through our Canvas website. Students are expected to complete the readings prior to class and be prepared to discuss the material in class each week. Readings are outlined in the Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments below.
Participation
Participation is a key component of this class. We will have the opportunity for many in-class activities and discussions, and I hope you will engage fully. During these discussions, you are invited to share your own views, experiences, questions, and comments as they relate to the topic. In turn, please be respectful of others when they share as well. See the Inclusive learning environment statement below. While I will encourage you to share, do so only at a level that is comfortable for you.

Impending Absences and Requests for Extensions
If you are aware of an impending absence or a need for an extension, please let me know as soon as possible. I will work with you to fairly address unavoidable course conflicts.

Missed Classes
It is your responsibility to contact me in a timely manner regarding any material you missed due to an absence. Note that you are allowed one unplanned absence. However, each unplanned absence after that will result in a 5% reduction in your final grade.

Late Work
All assigned work is due by the start of class. Late work is accepted with a 20% reduction in points for each day late. This applies to homework, the online exam, and the Thriving Plan paper. If you miss an in-class reading assessment, you may take it the following week for a 50% reduction in points.

Technology Policy
Please be respectful of your peers, the learning environment, and me by refraining from using laptops and devices for non-class-related activities during our class time. In addition, please silence your phone during class time. We will have a break midway through each evening in which you will be free to use your devices as desired.

Inclusive Learning Environment Statement
The best learning environment—whether in the classroom, studio, laboratory, or fieldwork site—is one in which all members feel respected while being productively challenged. At Washington University in St. Louis, we are dedicated to fostering an inclusive atmosphere, in which all participants can contribute, explore, and challenge their own ideas as well as those of others. Every participant has an active responsibility to foster a climate of intellectual stimulation, openness, and respect for diverse perspectives, questions, personal backgrounds, abilities, and experiences, although instructors bear primary responsibility for its maintenance.

A range of resources is available to those who perceive a learning environment as lacking inclusivity, as defined in the preceding paragraph. If possible, we encourage students to speak directly with their instructor about any suggestions or concerns they have regarding a particular instructional space or situation. Alternatively, students may bring concerns to another trusted advisor or administrator (such as an academic advisor, mentor, department chair, or dean). All classroom participants—including faculty, staff, and students—who observe a bias incident affecting a student may also file a report (whether personally or anonymously) utilizing the online Bias Report and Support System.

Ethics/Violations of Academic Integrity
Ethical behavior is an essential component of learning and scholarship. Students are expected to understand, and adhere to, the University’s academic integrity policy: wustl.edu/policies/undergraduate-academic-integrity.html. Students who violate this policy will be referred to the Academic Integrity Policy Committee. Penalties for violating the policy will be determined by the Academic Integrity Policy committee, and can include failure of the assignment, failure of the course, suspension, or expulsion from the University. If you have any doubts about what constitutes a violation of the Academic Integrity policy, or any other issue related to academic integrity, please ask your instructor.
Overview of Coursework and Grading System

50%  11 Weekly homework assignments
    The lowest grade will be dropped. Each of the remaining 10 assignments is worth 5% of your final grade. Depending on the weekly topic, the assignments will typically be
    • A prompted thought paper relating to the week’s topic (250-500 words, 1-2 pages), or
    • An experiential activity (e.g., completing a strengths assessment, implementing a gratitude practice, etc.) and a short, written reflection (250-500 words, 1-2 pages)

22%  12 Weekly reading assessments
    I expect that students will complete the reading assignments before class and be prepared to discuss them each week in class. To facilitate this, each week we will begin class with a brief reading assessment. These assessments are designed to be easy if you have completed the readings and difficult if you have not. At the end of the semester, the lowest reading assessment is dropped. Each of the remaining 11 assessments is worth 2% of your final grade. Reading assessments will begin on the second week of class.

10%  1 Online exam
    This online exam will cover material from Part I, the first three weeks, of the course. See the Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments below.

18%  Thriving plan paper (10%) and accompanying presentation (8%) during finals week
    You will design a personalized plan for thriving for yourself. You will draw upon your learnings and experiences throughout the course to tailor an on-going plan that will help you cultivate what is best within yourself, enhance your experiences of love, work, and play, and/or lead a more meaningful and fulfilling life. Papers should address what you’ve learned about happiness, well-being, and thriving in this course, both broadly and specifically about yourself, and what specific changes you would like to make and/or carry forward in your life because of what you’ve learned and experienced in this class. During presentations, students will share at a level that is comfortable for them. If you wish to pursue a less personal paper and presentation, please see me in the first three weeks of class. Options are available. The paper should be approximately 6-8 pages. PowerPoint (or similar) presentations should be approximately 10-15 minutes in length.
    Instructor feedback on a draft: You may submit an early/incomplete draft of your final paper for feedback. If you choose to do so, drafts are due by the start of class, Wed. April 17, 2019. I will provide feedback by the start of class, Wed. April 24th, 2019. Final papers will be due at the start of class during finals week, Wed., May 1, 2019.

-5%  Per unplanned absence, after the first one
    Students are expected to be on time and present for every class and to engage fully in class discussions and class activities. Because we meet only once a week, attending class is crucial and grading reflects this. That said, life does happen. The first unplanned absence is free. However, each unplanned absence after that will result in a 5% reduction in your final grade. If you become aware of an unavoidable class conflict, please let me know as soon as possible, and I will work with you to address the situation fairly.

Grade Cutoffs
A: 100% - 90%  D: <70% - 60%
B: <90% - 80%   F: <60%
C: <80% - 70%
## Schedule of Topics, Assignments, and Readings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics and Assignments</th>
<th>Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td><strong>Part I: Introduction, Theory, &amp; Research</strong>&lt;br&gt;Introduction, Scope, Themes, History</td>
<td>Compton &amp; Hoffman (2013)&lt;br&gt;Ch 1: An Intro to Positive Psychology, pp. 1-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 16</td>
<td>Cultural Influences on Happiness and Well-Being</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>HW1: Thought Paper #1, due next class</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 23</td>
<td><strong>HW2: Thought Paper #2, due next class</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Meaning and Measure of Subjective Well-Being</td>
<td>Compton &amp; Hoffman (2013)&lt;br&gt;Ch 3: Subjective Well-Being, pp. 51-77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 30</td>
<td><strong>Exam: Online Exam, due next class</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td><strong>Part II: Approaches to Happiness &amp; Subjective Well-being</strong>&lt;br&gt;Strengths &amp; Values; Personality Characteristics</td>
<td>Lopez et al (2019)&lt;br&gt;Ch 3: Classification and Measures of Strengths &amp; Positive Outcomes, pp. 55-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 6</td>
<td><strong>HW3: Values Assessment &amp; Reflection, due next class</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 13</td>
<td><strong>HW4: Gratitude Activity &amp; Reflection, due next class</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 20</td>
<td><strong>HW5: Mindfulness Activity &amp; Reflection, due next class</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper assignment: Thriving Plan, due May 1st</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Optimism &amp; Hope</td>
<td>Lopez et al (2019)&lt;br&gt;Ch 8: Seeing Our Futures Through Self-Efficacy, Optimism, and Hope, pp. 191-234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 17</td>
<td><strong>HW6: Optimism Activity &amp; Reflection, due next class</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 6</td>
<td><strong>HW7: Meaning &amp; Purpose Activity &amp; Reflection, due in 3 weeks, Week 10, March 27th</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 13</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 9</td>
<td>Guest Speaker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 20</td>
<td><strong>HW8: Thought Paper #3, due next class</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 10</td>
<td>Kindness, Compassion, and Self-Compassion</td>
<td>Goetz &amp; Simon-Tomas (2017)&lt;br&gt;Ch 1: The Landscape of Compassion, pp. 3-16&lt;br&gt;Neff &amp; Germer (2017)&lt;br&gt;Ch 27: Self-Compassion &amp; Psychol. Well-Being, pp. 371-386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 27</td>
<td><strong>HW9: Kindness Activity &amp; Reflection, due next class</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Week 11  | Meaningful Social Connections, Relationship Skills, Forgiveness | Watkins (2016)  
Ch 5: Are Relationships Important to Happiness? pp. 187-216 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apr 3</td>
<td>HW10: Social Connections Activity &amp; Reflection, due next class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Week 12 | Goal-setting, & Problem-solving Skills | Baumgardner & Crothers (2009)  
Ch 7: Goals as Windows to Well-Being, pp. 125-142 |
| Apr 10  | HW11: Goal-setting Activity & Reflection, due next class | |
| Week 13 | Self-regulation & Self-control | Baumgardner & Crothers (2009)  
Ch 8: Self-Regulation and Self-Control, pp.153-175 |
| Apr 17  | Optional due today: Thriving Plan draft submission | |
| Week 14 | Sleep & Exercise | Walker (2017)  
Ch 6: The Benefits of Sleep for the Brain, pp. 107-132  
Ch 12: Putting Positive Psychology into Motion Through Physical Activity, pp. 207-221 |
| Apr 24  | | |
| Finals Wk | Due today: Thriving Plan and Presentation | |
| May 1   | | |

**Disclaimer**
The instructor reserves the right to make modifications to this information throughout the semester.
RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

Disability resources
If you have a disability that requires an accommodation, please speak with instructor and consult the Disability Resource Center at Cornerstone (cornerstone.wustl.edu/). Cornerstone staff will determine appropriate accommodations and will work with your instructor to make sure these are available to you.

Writing assistance
For additional help on your writing, consult the expert staff of The Writing Center (writingcenter.wustl.edu) in Olin Library (first floor). It can be enormously helpful to ask someone outside a course to read your essays and to provide feedback on strength of argument, clarity, organization, etc. < The Engineering Communication Center http://engineering.wustl.edu/current-students/student-services/Pages/default.aspx offers students in the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences help with oral presentations, writing assignments, and other communications projects, as well as job-search documents such as resumes and cover letters.>

The university’s preferred name policy for students,
Additional resources and information, may be found here: registrar.wustl.edu/student-records/ssn-name-changes/preferred-name-policy/preferred-name-policy-student/.

Accommodations based upon sexual assault
The University is committed to offering reasonable academic accommodations to students who are victims of sexual assault. Students are eligible for accommodation regardless of whether they seek criminal or disciplinary action. Depending on the specific nature of the allegation, such measures may include but are not limited to: implementation of a no-contact order, course/classroom assignment changes, and other academic support services and accommodations. If you need to request such accommodations, please direct your request to Kim Webb (kim_webb@wustl.edu), Director of the Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Center. Ms. Webb is a confidential resource; however, requests for accommodations will be shared with the appropriate University administration and faculty. The University will maintain as confidential any accommodations or protective measures provided to an individual student so long as it does not impair the ability to provide such measures.

If a student comes to me to discuss or disclose an instance of sexual assault, sex discrimination, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence or stalking, or if I otherwise observe or become aware of such an allegation, I will keep the information as private as I can, but as a faculty member of Washington University, I am required to immediately report it to my Department Chair or Dean or directly to Ms. Jessica Kennedy, the University’s Title IX Coordinator. If you would like to speak with the Title IX Coordinator directly, Ms. Kennedy can be reached at (314) 935-3118, jw kennedy@wustl.edu, or by visiting her office in the Women’s Building. Additionally, you can report incidents or complaints to Tamara King, Associate Dean for Students and Director of Student Conduct, or by contacting WUPD at (314) 935-5555 or your local law enforcement agency.

You can also speak confidentially and learn more about available resources at the Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Center by calling (314) 935-8761 or visiting the 4th floor of Seigle Hall.

Bias reporting
The University has a process through which students, faculty, staff and community members who have experienced or witnessed incidents of bias, prejudice or discrimination against a student can report their experiences to the University’s Bias Report and Support System (BRSS) team. See: brss.wustl.edu

Mental health
Mental Health Services’ professional staff members work with students to resolve personal and interpersonal difficulties, many of which can affect the academic experience. These include conflicts with or worry about friends or family, concerns about eating or drinking patterns, and feelings of anxiety and depression. See: shs.wustl.edu/MentalHealth
References


