



INTRODUCTION TO POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY
Psychology 266
Fall 2017

When: Mondays 2-4 p.m.
Where: Annenberg 110 (220 South 36th Street)

Instructor: Scott Barry Kaufman, Ph.D.
Office hours: On an as need basis
The TA should be the first point of contact

TAs: Priya Dalmia
Jack Keefe
David Yaden

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The main mission of this course is to provide an up-to-date understanding of theoretical, empirical, and applied advances in the emerging field of positive psychology. Positive psychology is concerned with the use of psychological science to understand the positive, healthy, adaptive, creative, and fulfilling aspects of human behavior. The field encompasses the study of positive experiences, positive character strengths, positive relationships, and the institutions and practices that facilitate their development.

Positive experiences include the mental states of flow, mindfulness, and savoring and emotions about the present (pleasure, contentment, laughter), past (e.g., nostalgia, satisfaction, pride), and future (e.g., hope, optimism). The *positive character strengths* include wisdom, courage, compassion, love, forgiveness, humanity, justice, temperance, self-efficacy, resilience, grit, *sisu*, intelligence, curiosity, imagination, creativity, gratitude, and spirituality/transcendence. The classification of these virtues is explored. *Positive relationships* include the factors that enhance meaning and well-being among couples, family, friends, co-workers, and the community. *Positive institutions* are exemplified by positive education, positive work environments, healthy families, humane leadership, and the development of civic virtues.

This course will review the history of positive psychology, including its roots in humanistic psychology, and the contributions this new field has made to several traditional research areas in psychology. Consideration will be given to conflicting viewpoints and their respective empirical support, including the benefits of embracing both comfortable and uncomfortable emotions, the measurement and

development of different models of well-being, and the implications of deliberately attempting to increase well-being.

Throughout the course we will also engage in experiential learning and practical exercises to help you become a *whole person*, which will inform our theoretical and empirical understanding of important questions in positive psychology. My hope is that in addition to enhancing your appreciation of how the scientific method can advance understanding of the human condition, the activities and information in this course will also help you in your journey to become more *fully human*— accepting and becoming flexible with the totality of your being.

RECITATIONS

Each of you must be enrolled in one of the three available recitation sections. Rather than have groups of 50 students meet each week, we have decided to break each recitation section in half, with groups of 25 meeting every other week. Our intention with this approach is to foster meaningful discussion of positive psychology concepts and to allow time for optional sharing of reflection papers (see more on those below). Recitation is your chance to come prepared to ask your TAs any questions you may have about lecture or reading materials. Additionally, we hope meeting in smaller groups will encourage us to bond over the course of the semester and get know each other on an individual level!

TEXTBOOKS

- Dana Dunn, *Positive Psychology: Established and Emerging Issues*
- Abraham Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being*
- Scott Barry Kaufman & Carolyn Gregoire, *Wired to Create: Unraveling the Mysteries of the Creative Mind*

All textbooks (except for Dunn) are available immediately through the Penn Bookstore, and are also widely available from various online retailers. The Dunn textbook will be available at the Penn bookstore after September 11, with limited availability for purchase at other retailers.

GRADING

Grading is probably the least palatable of a teacher's responsibilities. Nevertheless, it serves a role in providing feedback to you and the institution about your performance. Your final grade for this course will be based on the following:

Brief Reflection Papers (30%): During the course of the semester, you will complete 10 positive psychology activities and then write a **1-page reflection paper** (maximum of 500 words) on the experience. Please upload your reflection to Canvas by Sunday nights at 11:59 pm. Reflection papers will not be accepted via email or handed in class. Out of respect for your TAs, who will be grading 50 papers per week, please do your best to submit reflections by the due date. **We will not be accepting late reflections, and there will be no make-ups. However, we will drop your single lowest reflection paper grade at the end of the semester.** Write something you are proud (and comfortable) to share with others, and bring a copy of your reflection to class, because occasionally papers will be read aloud in lecture. Each brief reflection is worth 3 points and will be graded on the following scale: (3) excellent reflection, thoughtful and insightful, (2) satisfactory, (1), incomplete or not relevant to the topic, and (0) not submitted. These papers will also be reviewed with scrutiny in the case of borderline grades at the end of the semester so that final grades can be rounded up or down according to quality and promptness.

Exams (60%): There will be 2 (non-cumulative) exams on material covered in lectures (including guest lectures) as well as required readings. The format will be essay. Each exam will count toward 30% of your grade. Completion of all 2 exams is mandatory. Those with a very legitimate excuse for missing an exam will be considered on a case-by-case basis. For those with three final exams scheduled on the same day, you will need to reschedule the middle exam, according to University policy.

Meta-Reflection Paper (10%): Due on 5/1/16 at 11:59 pm, you will be required to submit a more extensive reflection (maximum 2000 words), reflecting on your overall engagement with the positive psychology activities, how your well-being and flourishing has changed (or not changed) throughout the semester, and what you've learned about yourself and others by taking this course.

Extra Credit: To earn up to 3 extra credit points (e.g., raising an 82% score to 85%) in the course, you may complete up to 3 hours of Sona credit by participating in research studies. See *Research Participation Instructions* on Canvas. Note that I cannot promise that Sona studies will be available at the end of the semester, so please plan ahead and do not complain if you cannot find studies at the last minute! Also, take note that there is sometimes a delay of a couple of days before your Sona credit is assigned by the corresponding researcher. So, in cases of missing credit, your first step is to contact the Sona researcher rather than your TA. Additionally, you are also able to submit a one-page single-spaced review of any of the optional articles denoted in the syllabus with an asterisk (1 extra credit point per review, up to 3 extra credit points) by the last class.

I will use the following standard scale for assigning final letter grades for the course:

A+ = 97 and higher; A = 93-96; A- = 90-92 B+ = 87-89; B = 83-86; B - = 80-82

RE-GRADING

If you have a question or concern that there was an error in grading any of your work, **you must submit a re-grade request *in writing* to a TA no more than one week after work is returned** (late requests will NOT be considered).

PLAGIARISM

Be sure you understand the University's guidelines on Academic Integrity before submitting any assignment. See me, or someone from the Office of Student Conduct (<http://www.upenn.edu/osc>), if you have any questions – especially regarding plagiarism (what it is and how it can be avoided).

STUDENT ROLE

For each of the lecture topics, do the reading indicated below that topic in advance of the lecture. Do not expect a good learning experience if you do not keep your part. Cramming before exams assures an unsatisfactory class experience. (Incidentally, cramming has been shown empirically to be an inefficient strategy for learning.) Let's make class a creative experience – I am looking forward to learning from your astute questions (informed by the readings) and comments.

CLASS SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

LECTURE 1: Introduction & History of Positive Psychology

9/11/17

Readings:

- Dunn, Chapter 1
- Maslow, *Introduction: Toward a Psychology of Health*
- Seligman, M.E.P., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000). [Positive psychology: An introduction](#). *American Psychologist*, 55, 5-14.
- [Contributions of Humanistic Psychology to Positive Psychology](#)
- Maya Angelou, [Philanthropy](#). *Letter to My Daughter*.

Optional:

- [Humanistic Perspective](#), *Encyclopedia of Personality and Individual Differences*
- [The Humanistic Psychology–Positive Psychology Divide](#), *American Psychologist*

Assignment (all assignments are due Sunday evenings at 11:59pm):

- *Reflection #1: Positive Introductions OR Best Possible Self*

LECTURE 2: Models of Well-Being

9/18/17

Readings:

- Dunn, Chapters 2 & 5
- [Which Personality Traits Are Most Predictive of Well-Being?](#), *Scientific American*
- Baumeister, R.F. et al. (2013). [Some key differences between a happy life and a meaningful life](#). *Journal of Positive Psychology*, 8, 505-516.
- [The Differences Between Happiness and Meaning in Life](#).
- Ryff, C., Keyes, C.L.M. (1995). [The structure of psychological well-being revisited](#). *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 69, 719-727.
- Lyubomirsky, S., & Layous, K. (2013). [How do simple positive activities increase well-being?](#) *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 22, 57-62.
- Diener, E., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2002). [Very happy people](#). *Psychological Science*, 13, 81-84.

Optional:

- *The Psychology Podcast*, [Social Psychologist Roy Baumeister on Identity, the Self, and the Meaning of Life](#)
- *The Psychology Podcast*, [The Power of Meaning with Emily Esfahani Smith](#)
- *The Psychology Podcast*, [The Subtle Art of Not Giving a Fuck with Mark Manson](#)
- [Will following positive psychology advice make you happier and healthier?](#) *Mind the Brain Blog*.
- Abe, J. A. A. (2015). [A longitudinal follow-up study of happiness and meaning-making](#). *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 1-10.

Assignment:

- *Reflection #2: Three Good Thing OR Create a Positive Portfolio*

LECTURE 3: Emotions (Constructive & Destructive)

9/25/17

Readings:

- Dunn, Chapter 3
- Shioata, M.N., Keltner, D., & John, O. (2006). [Positive emotion dispositions differentially associated with Big Five personality and attachment style](#). *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 2, 61-71.
- Fredrickson, B. L. (2005) [The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions](#). In F. A. Huppert, N. Baylis, & B. Keverne (Eds.), *The science of well-being* (pp. 217-238). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Fredrickson, B. L. (2013). [Updated thinking on positivity ratios](#). *American Psychologist*, 68, 814-822.
- Kashdan, T., & Biswas-Diener, R. (2014). [The Upside of Your Dark Side](#). (Chapters 3 & 4). New York, NY: Hudson Street Press.
- *The Psychology Podcast*, [Get Out Of Your Mind and Live a Vital Life with Steven Hayes](#)

Optional:

- *The Psychology Podcast*, [Increase Your Emotional Agility with Susan David](#)
- Fredrickson, B. L., & Losada, M. F. (2005). [Positive affect and the complex dynamics of human flourishing](#). *American Psychologist*, 60, 678-686.
- Brown, N. J. L., Sokal, A. D., & Friedman, H. L. (2013). [The complex dynamics of wishful thinking: The critical positivity ratio](#). *American Psychologist*, 68, 801-813. doi: 10.1037/a0032850
- Lyubomirsky, S., King, L., & Diener, E. (2005). [The benefits of frequent positive affect: Does happiness lead to success?](#) *Psychological Bulletin*, 131, 803-855.
- Ciarrochi, J.V., Chan, A.Y.C., & Caputi, P. (2000). [A critical evaluation of the emotional intelligence construct](#). *Personality and Individual Differences*, 28, 539-561.

Assignment:

- *Reflection #3: Practice Acts of Kindness OR Pleasure vs. Philanthropy Experiment*

LECTURE 4: Flow, Mindfulness & Savoring

10/2/17

Readings:

- Dunn, Chapters 4 & 7
- Kaufman, Chapters 2, 3, & 7
- Sheldon, K. M., Prentice, M., & Halusic, M. (2014). [The Experiential Incompatibility of Mindfulness and Flow Absorption](#). *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 6, 276-283.
- [Who Enters Flow?](#) *Psychology Today*.
- [One Skeptical Scientist's Mindfulness Journey](#), *Scientific American*.

Optional:

- McMillan, R. L., Kaufman, S. B., & Singer, J. L. (2013). [Ode to positive constructive daydreaming](#). *Psychol*, 4(626), 10-3389.
- Schooler, J. W., Mrazek, M. D., Franklin, M. S., Baird, B., Mooneyham, B. W., Zedelius, C., & Broadway, J. M. (2014). [The Middle Way: Finding the Balance between Mindfulness and Mind-Wandering](#). *The Psychology of Learning and Motivation*, 60, 1-33.
- Brown, K. W., Ryan, R. M., & Creswell, J. D. (2007). [Mindfulness: Theoretical Foundations and Evidence for its Salutary Effects](#). *Psychological inquiry*, 18(4), 211-237.
- The Psychology Podcast, [Why Buddhism is True with Robert Wright](#)
- The Psychology Podcast, [Become 10% Happier with Dan Harris](#)
- The Psychology Podcast, [Dr. Daniel Siegel on the Mind: A Journey to the Heart of Being Human](#)
- The Psychology Podcast, [Mindfulness and Self-Authorship w/ Cory Muscara](#)

Assignment:

- *Reflection #4: Choose a Mindfulness Meditation OR Practice Savoring*

LECTURE 5: Guest Lecture from Jack and Priya

Monday, 10/9/17

Readings:

- Dunn, Chapter 16

LECTURE 6: Love & Self-Compassion

10/16/17

Readings:

- Baumeister, R.F., & Leary, M.R. (1995). [The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation](#). *Psychological Bulletin*, 117, 497-529.
- Leary, M.R., & Guadagno, J. (2010). [The sociometer, self-esteem, and the regulation of interpersonal behavior](#). In K.D. Vohs & R.F. Baumeister (Eds.), *Handbook of self-regulation* (2nd ed). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Maslow, *Deficiency Motivation and Growth Motivation, Defense and Growth*
- The Psychology Podcast: [Real Love with Sharon Salzberg](#)
- The Psychology Podcast: [Dr. Kristin Neff on the Healing Power of Self-Compassion](#)
- Self-Compassion Scale: [Self Compassion Scale for researchers.pdf](#)
- Klimecki, O. M., Leiberg, S., Lamm, C., & Singer, T. (2012). [Functional Neural Plasticity and Associated Changes in Positive Affect After Compassion Training](#). *Cerebral Cortex*, bhs142.

Optional:

- Dunn, Chapters 6, 15
- The Psychology Podcast, [Alan Alda on the Art and Science of Relating and Communicating](#)
- The Psychology Podcast, [The Ego is the Enemy with Ryan Holiday](#)
- The Psychology Podcast, [Alain de Botton on Love, Sex, Religion and Happiness](#)

Assignment:

- *Reflection #5: Exercise: Active Constructive Responding OR Loving Kindness Meditation OR Self-Compassion letter*

LECTURE 7: Purpose, Courage, & Resiliency (Guest Lecture, Karen Reivich)

10/23/17

Readings:

- Dunn, Chapters 13 & 10
- Kaufman, Chapter 9
- Maslow, *Values, Growth, & Health*
- Schwartz, H., et al. (2012). [Refining the theory of basic individual values](#). *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 103, 663-688.
- [What is Grit? Q & A with Angela Duckworth](#)
- [You'll Never Be Famous](#)— And That's O.K., *NY Times*

Optional:

- [Angela Duckworth on Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance](#), *The Psychology Podcast*
- [Brené Brown on Creativity, Courageous Vulnerability and Wholehearted Living](#), *The Psychology Podcast*

Assignment:

- *Reflection #6: SMART Goal-Setting* AND Post-Traumatic Growth OR Practice Your ABCs*
 - *** Note that everyone should complete the SMART Goal setting exercise – choose SMART goals that you wish to carry through the rest of the semester!*

LECTURE 8: MIDTERM

10/30/17

LECTURE 9: Health & Wellness (Guest Lectures, Jordyn Feingold and Sonia Satra)

11/6/17

Readings:

- Dunn, Chapter 8
- [Is an Optimistic Mind Associated with a Healthy Heart?](#) *Scientific American*.
- Seligman, M. E. (2008). [Positive Health](#). *Applied psychology*, 57(s1), 3-18.
- Crum, A. J., Corbin, W. R., Brownell, K. D., & Salovey, P. (2011). [Mind Over Milkshakes](#). *Health Psychology*, 30(4), 424.
- Crum, A. J., & Langer, E. J. (2007). [Mind-Set Matters Exercise and the Placebo Effect](#). *Psychological Science*, 18(2), 165-171.

Assignment:

- *Reflection #7: Unplug Challenge OR Time Tracking*

LECTURE 10: Character Strengths & Virtues (Part I): Gratitude & Forgiveness

11/13/17

Readings:

- Dunn, Chapter 9
- [Which Character Strengths Are Most Predictive of Wellbeing?](#) *Scientific American*.
- Robert Emmons, [The Power of Gratitude](#)
- Emmons, R.A. (September 8-9, 2017). [Is gratitude queen of the virtues and ingratitude king of the vices?](#) Prepared for Yale Center for Faith & Culture consultation on "Joy, Gratitude, and Complaint".
- Davis, D., et al. (2016). [Thankful for the little things: A meta-analysis of gratitude interventions](#). *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 63, 20-31.
- Wood, A.M., et al. (2010). [Gratitude and well-being: A review and theoretical integration](#). *Clinical Psychology Review*.
- [How Gratitude Changes You and Your Brain](#), Greater Good Science Center
- [How Gratitude Motivates Us to Become Better People](#), Greater Good Science Center

Optional:

- Kruse, E., et al. (2014). [An upward spiral between gratitude and humility](#). *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 5, 805-814.
- Watkins, P. (2016). [Thieves of thankfulness: Traits that inhibit gratitude](#). *The Journal of Positive Psychology*.
- Wood, A.M., et al. (2016). [A dark side of gratitude? Distinguishing between beneficial gratitude and its harmful imposters for the positive clinical psychology of gratitude and well-being](#). *The Wiley Handbook of Positive Clinical Psychology*.

Assignments:

- *Reflections #8 & #9: Take the VIA Inventory & Use Your Top Strength in New Ways AND Write a Gratitude Letter OR Forgiveness Meditation*
 - ***Note that everyone should take the VIA Inventory & Use Your Top Strength in New Ways!

LECTURE 11: Character Strengths & Virtues (Part II): Intelligence, Talent, & Creativity

11/20/17

Readings:

- Kaufman, *Introduction, Preface, & Chapter 6*
- Maslow, *Creativity in Self-Actualizing People*
- [What is talent- and can science spot what we will be best at?](#), *The Guardian*
- Kaufman, S.B., & Duckworth, A.L. (2015). [World-class expertise: A developmental model](#). *WIREs Cognitive Science*.
- [A New Theory of Human Intelligence](#), *TEDxZumbroRiver*

Assignment:

- *Reflection #10: Alternate Uses for 3 Common Objects OR Hone Your Intelligence*

LECTURE 12: Character Strengths & Virtues (Part III): Spirituality and Transcendence (Guest Lecture, David Yaden)

11/27/17

Readings:

- Maslow, *Cognition of Being in the Peak-Experiences, Peak Experiences as Acute Identity-Experiences*
- [Why Do We Experience Awe?](#) *The New York Times*
- [What a 'Transcendent Experience' Really Means](#) *New York Magazine*
- Piff, P. K., Dietze, P., Feinberg, M., Stancato, D. M., & Keltner, D. (2015). [Awe, the small self, and prosocial behavior.](#) *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 108(6), 883.
- Yaden, D. B., Haidt, J., Hood, R. W., Vago, D., Newberg, A. B. (2017). [The Varieties of Self-Transcendent Experience.](#) *Review of General Psychology.*

Optional:

- *The Psychology Podcast*, [Dacher Keltner on Love, Power, Morality, and Awe](#)
- *The Psychology Podcast*, [Your Brain on Enlightenment with Dr. Andrew Newberg](#)
- *The Psychology Podcast*, [On Ecstasy and Extraordinary States of Consciousness with Steven Kotler and Jamie Wheal](#)

Assignment:

- *Reflection #11: Develop a Personal Oath OR Create a Meaningful Music Library OR Create a Flow Experience*

LECTURE 13: Positive Environments (Guest Lectures, Dan Lerner & Torquoise Brennan)

12/4/17

Readings:

- Dunn, Chapters 11, & 12
- *The Psychology Podcast*, [Thriving in College \(And In Life\) with Dan Lerner](#)
- *The Psychology Podcast*, [Boosting Student Resilience with Dr. Diana Brecher](#)

Assignment:

- *Reflection #12: Appreciative Inquiry: College Edition OR This I Believe*

LECTURE 14: The Future of Positive Psychology

12/11/17

Readings:

- Dunn, Chapter 18
- Maslow, *Health as Transcendence of Environment*

Assignment:

- Meta-Reflection

FINAL December 18