

PSYC 417 (001): Science of Well Being Fall 2016

Instructor:	Alice L. Zafiris, Psy.D.	Day: Tuesday/Thursday
Email:	azafiris@gmu.edu	Time: 1:30-2:45PM
Phone:	(703) 594-6436	Place: Robinson A123
Office Hours:	Tuesdays- 12pm-1pm and by appointment	Credit Hours: 3

Prerequisites: PSYC 100

Required Text: Lynn, S.J., O'Donohue, W.T., & Lilienfeld, S.O. (2015). *Health, Happiness, and Well-Being: Better Living Through Psychological Science*. Thousand Oaks, CA.

Required Readings: Other readings will be required, as noted on the class schedule. These articles will be made available via Blackboard.

Course Description: This course will focus on the positive aspects of human experience and will critically examine and interpret the latest research in clinical, social, and personality psychology on well-being, character strengths, and personal growth. Highlighting the concepts and techniques to enhance optimism, decrease stressors, and significantly increase well-being, this course seeks to answer such questions as what is well-being, what contributes to satisfying, engaging, and meaningful living, and which practices and conditions best foster well-being? This format for this course will be didactic, experiential, and interactive.

Course Objectives:

1. Students will demonstrate knowledge of the overview of theory and research on psychological well-being.
2. Students will become knowledgeable consumers of information related to psychological and physical health and well-being.
3. Students will develop an understanding of the dimensions of subjective well-being and application to their lives.
4. Students will acquire skills to maintain a scientific and psychological basis from which to understand and change attitudes, behaviors, and feelings in regard to psychological well-being.
5. Students will acquire insight into their own strengths and virtues and learn strategies to increase their happiness and overall quality of life.

Course Requirements & Grading:

1. **Attendance & Class Participation: 20%** of your grade will be based on your contributions to class. You are expected to attend every lecture prepared, having read the assigned materials, and actively engage in class discussions and activities. Class participation is critical not only to the success of each of you, as it demonstrates engagement in the learning process and stimulates critical thinking; but also to the course as a whole, contributing to a more diverse, dynamic, and meaningful learning environment.. Excessive absences, tardy arrivals, and early departures will be factored into your overall grade for the course.
2. **Exams: 20%** of your grade will be based on your scores across 2 exams will be given, each accounting for 10% of your exam grade. Exams will assess knowledge from class lectures, as well as the required reading.
3. **Experiential Activities: 30%** of your grade will be based on your completion of 6 experiential exercises throughout the semester with the goal being to apply the course material to your daily life. You will be expected to write a short (1-2 page, single spaced) reflection paper about your experience with each activity.
4. **Self-Change Project: 30%** of your grade will be based on your completion of a final paper highlighting the identification, development, and implementation of a positive intervention on yourself over the course of the semester. **This final paper will be in lieu of a final exam and is due, by email, on Tuesday, December 13th, no later than 4:15pm.**

Grading Scale:

A	=	93-100	C+	=	77-79
A-	=	90-92	C-	=	70-72
B+	=	87-89	D+	=	67-69
B	=	83-86	D	=	60-66
B-	=	80-82	F	=	Less than 60

Honor Code: GMU is an Honors Code University. Students are expected to know, understand, and adhere to this Honor Code. The instructor of this course reserves the right to enter a failing grade for any student found guilty of an honor code violation.

Statement of Technology: Regarding electronic devices (such as laptops, tablets, cell phones, etc.), please be respectful of your peers and your instructor and do not engage in activities that are unrelated to class. Such disruptions show a lack of professionalism and may affect your participation grade.

Students with Disabilities: If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact Disability Resource Services (DRS) at 703-993-2474.

Official Communications via GMU Email: Mason uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. Examples include communications from course instructors, notices from the library, notices about academic standing, financial aid information, class materials, assignments, questions, and instructor feedback. Students are responsible for the content of university communication sent to their Mason email account and are required to activate that account and check it regularly.

Class Cancellation Policy: In the event that class is cancelled, all students will be notified via their GMU email as soon as possible. In some cases, course lecture materials may be made available on Blackboard. The instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus, as needed, in the event that class is cancelled.

Add/Drop Deadlines: The last day to add this class is Tuesday, September 6. The last day to drop this class is Friday, September 30.

CLASS SCHEDULE

DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENTS	REQUIRED READINGS
8/30	Orientation & Course Introduction		
9/1	Overview- Positive Psychology		<input type="checkbox"/> Seligman, M.E.P., & Csikszentmihalyi, (2000). Positive psychology: An introduction. <i>American Psychologist</i> , 55, 5-14.
9/6	Subjective well-being and happiness		<input type="checkbox"/> Lynn, O'Donohue, & Lilienfeld- Chapter 11 <input type="checkbox"/> Lyubomirsky, S., Sheldon, K.M., & Schkade, D. (2005). Pursuing happiness: The architecture of sustainable change. <i>Review of General Psychology</i> , 9, 111-131.
9/8	Assessment of well-being		<input type="checkbox"/> Ellardus van Zyl, L., & Rothmann, S. (2014). Towards happiness interventions: construct clarification and intervention methodologies. <i>Journal of Psychology in Africa</i> , 24, 327-341
9/13	Approaches to Well-Being		<input type="checkbox"/> Ryan, R.M., & Deci, E.L. (2001). On happiness and human potentials: A review of research on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. <i>Annual Review of Psychology</i> , 52, 141-166. <input type="checkbox"/> Disabato, D. J., Goodman, F. R., Kashdan, T. B., Short, J. L., & Jarden, A. (2016). Different types of well-being? A cross-cultural examination of hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. <i>Psychological Assessment</i> , 28, 471-482.
9/15	Benefits of Well-Being		<input type="checkbox"/> Diener, E., & Seligman, M.E.P. (2002). Very happy people. <i>Psychological Science</i> , 13, 80-83. <input type="checkbox"/> Diener, E. (2012). New findings and future directions for subjective well-being research. <i>American Psychologist</i> , 67, 590-597.
9/20	Cultural and Contextual Influences on Well-Being	Experiential Activity #1 Due: Reflection Paper-	<input type="checkbox"/> Biswas-Diener, R., & Diener, E. (2006). The subjective well-being of the homeless, and

		Intentional Acts of Kindness	<p>lessons for happiness. <i>Social Indicators Research</i>, 76, 185-205</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Lucas, R.E. (2007). Adaptation and the set-point model of subjective well-being: Does happiness change after major life events? <i>Current Directions in Psychological Science</i>, 15, 122-125.
9/22	Positive Psychology Interventions		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Bolier, L., Haverman, M., Westerhof, G.J., Riper, H., Smit, F., & Bohlmeijer, E. (2013). Positive psychology interventions: A meta-analysis of randomized controlled studies. <i>BMC Public Health</i>, 13, 119-139. □ Schueller, S.M., & Parks, A.C. (2014). The science of self-help: Translating positive psychology research into increased individual happiness. <i>European Psychologist</i>, 19, 145-155.
9/27	EXAM # 1		
9/29	Online Lecture	Take VIA Character Strength Survey	
10/4	Psychological Strengths-I	Submit idea for final self-improvement project by email.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Park, N., Peterson, C., & Seligman, M.E.P. (2004). Strengths of character and well-being. <i>Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology</i>, 23, 603-619.
10/6	Psychological Strengths- II	Experiential Activity #2 Due: VIA Character Strength Survey Reflection Paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Biswas-Diener, R., Kashdan, T.B., & Minhas, G. (2011). A dynamic approach to psychological strength development and intervention. <i>The Journal of Positive Psychology</i>, 6, 106-118.
10/11	No Class- Monday classes meet on Tuesday		
10/13	Mindfulness & Acceptance-I		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Lynn, O'Donohue, & Lilienfeld- Chapter 4
10/18	Mindfulness & Acceptance- II		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Brown, K.W., Ryan, R.M., & Creswell, J.D. (2007). Mindfulness: Theoretical foundations and evidence for its salutary effects. <i>Psychological Inquiry</i>, 18, 211-237.
10/20	Positive Emotions		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Fredrickson, B.L. (2001). The role of positive emotions in positive psychology: The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. <i>American Psychologist</i>, 56, 218-226. □ Cohen, S., & Pressman, S.D. (2006). Positive affect and health. <i>Current Directions in Psychological Science</i>, 15, 122-125.
10/25	Emotion Regulation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Lynn, O'Donohue, & Lilienfeld, Chapter 2 □ Kashdan, T.B., Barrett, L.F., & McKnight, P.E. (2015). Unpacking emotion differentiation: Transforming unpleasant experience by perceiving distinctions in negativity. <i>Current Directions In Psychological Science</i>, 24, 10-16.
10/27	Well-being and self-care- I Sleep & Relaxation	Experiential Activity #3 Due: Reflection Paper- Mindfulness Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Lynn, O'Donohue, & Lilienfeld, Chapter 7 □ Lynn, O'Donohue, & Lilienfeld, Chapter 8

11/1	Well-being and self-care- II Nutrition & Exercise		<input type="checkbox"/> Lynn, O'Donohue, & Lilienfeld, Chapter 9 <input type="checkbox"/> Lynn, O'Donohue, & Lilienfeld, Chapter 10
11/3	Effective Problem Solving		<input type="checkbox"/> Lynn, O'Donohue, & Lilienfeld, Chapter 3 <input type="checkbox"/> D'Zurilla, T.J., & Sheedy, C.F. (1991). Relation between social problem-solving ability and subsequent level of psychological stress in college students. <i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i> , 61, 841-846.
11/8	Psychological Flexibility: Coping, Resilience, & Posttraumatic Growth- I	Experiential Activity #4 Due: Reflection Paper- Three Blessings	<input type="checkbox"/> Lynn, O'Donohue, & Lilienfeld, Chapter 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Kashdan, T.B., & Rottenberg, J. (2010). Psychological flexibility as a fundamental aspect of health. <i>Clinical Psychology Review</i> , 30, 865-878.
11/10	Psychological Flexibility: Coping, Resilience, & Posttraumatic Growth- II		<input type="checkbox"/> Bonanno, G.A. (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.
11/15	EXAM # 2		
11/17	Gratitude		<input type="checkbox"/> Grant, A.M., & Gino, F. (2010). A little thanks goes a long way: Explaining why gratitude expressions motivate prosocial behavior. <i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i> , 98, 946-955. <input type="checkbox"/> Nezlek, J.B., Newman, D.B., & Thrash, T.M. (2016). A daily diary study of relationships between feelings of gratitude and well-being. <i>The Journal of Positive Psychology</i> , DOI: 10.1080/17439760.2016.1198923.
11/22	Curiosity	Experiential Activity #5 Due: Reflection Paper- Growth Narrative or Resiliency Story	<input type="checkbox"/> Kashdan, T.B. & Steger, M.F. (2007). Curiosity and pathways to well-being and meaning in life: Traits, states, and everyday behaviors. <i>Motivation and Emotion</i> , 31, 159-173.
11/24	No Class- Thanksgiving		
11/29	Relationships		<input type="checkbox"/> Lynn, O'Donohue, & Lilienfeld, Chapter 14 <input type="checkbox"/> Feeney, B.C., & Collins, N.L. (2015). A new look at social support: A theoretical perspective on thriving through relationships. <i>Personality and Social Psychology Review</i> , 19, 113-147.
12/1	Meaning in Life	Experiential Activity #6 Due: Reflection Paper- Gratitude Letter	<input type="checkbox"/> Steger, M.F., Oishi, S., & Kashdan, T.B. (2009). Meaning in life across the life span: Levels and correlates of meaning in life from emerging adulthood to older adulthood. <i>The Journal of Positive Psychology</i> , 4, 43-52.
12/6	Wisdom		<input type="checkbox"/> Lynn, O'Donohue, & Lilienfeld, Chapter 13
12/8	Small Group Reflections		
12/13	FINAL EXAM: SELF-CHANGE PAPER DUE BY 4:15PM		