

Psychological Fitness (PSYC 408)

Spring 2017, Section 001. 10:30 - 11:45 pm MW in MTB 1006

Professor: Jerome Short, Ph.D.

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Office Hours: 9:20 - 10:20 Mondays & Wednesdays

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Recommended Textbook: Lynn, S. J., O'Donohue, W. T., & Lilienfeld, S. O. (Eds.). (2015). *Health, happiness, and well-being*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Welcome! This course will introduce you to the theory, research methods, and development of psychological fitness. You will have the opportunity to practice multiple psychological exercises to enhance your psychological fitness. I expect you to attend class regularly and to complete all reading assignments before each class. I will use class time for lectures, discussions, videos, and class demonstrations of psychological exercises.

*Last day to add course: January 30 *Last day to drop course with 33% penalty: February 13

*Last day to drop course with 67% tuition penalty: February 24

Requirements.

Ten Quizzes. Your 10 quizzes are worth 7 points each. The quizzes are multiple-choice and may occur on any class day. There are no longer exams or final exam.

Ten Discussion Board Posts. Your 10 discussion board posts are worth up to 3 points each. These posts will focus on doing psychological exercises (study techniques, gratitude, etc.) Your score is 0 if you do not post anything by the deadline. You can earn a point for summarizing what you did, another point for evaluating what you did (costs vs. benefits, relating it to class discussion, or relating it to research findings), and another point for constructively commenting on another student's post to move the discussion forward. Limit your posts to a maximum of 10 sentences.

Exercise Study. This project is worth 100 points and you will write a report in the form of a single-participant scientific study. I will provide measures to assess you twice. In between, you will implement and log daily at least five psychological exercises to help improve your psychological fitness. I will provide a sample report that explains how to write each section. The report will include Introduction, Method, Results, and Discussion sections with a minimum of five references from psychology journals beyond the references I have for the measures. Your report can range from 7 to 12 pages.

Creative Project. This project is worth 100 points. The project must focus on some aspect of psychological well-being and could include a booklet (paper or electronic) for a group that could benefit from the information, a website, an instructional video, a TED lecture <http://www.ted.com>, a children's story, original music, original art work, a traditional research paper (7 to 12 pages and minimum of 10 references), or other creative ideas. For creative projects, you will need to provide an introduction to explain who is the intended audience and the research foundation for the instructional material.

Missed Quizzes. You can make-up a missed quiz if you have a note from a physician that you could not attend the class. The professor will consider other reasons for missing a quiz and will decide whether or not to allow the student to make-up the quiz. Make-up quizzes may have a different format from the original quiz.

Extra Credit. You can earn up to 14 points of extra credit that is added onto your point total for the class. You can earn these points with correct answers to two additional 7-point quizzes.

Honor Code. George Mason University has an Honor Code, which requires all members of this community to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing are all prohibited. It is every student's responsibility to familiarize himself or herself with the Honor Code. The Honor Code is available at: <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code-2/> All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee.

Academic Accommodations. If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Official Communications via GMU E-mail: 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 e-mail account, and are required to activate that account and check it regularly.

Technology. Course information will be available in Blackboard. Students will need to use computers to search for articles and write papers.

Class Cancellation Policy: Students will receive emails when classes are cancelled and information about when we will make up classes.

Grading. I will base your final grade on your point total as defined below.

A+ = 291 - 300 (97% or more)	A = 279 - 290 (93 - 96%)	A- = 270 - 278 (90 - 92%)
B+ = 261 - 269 (87 - 89%)	B = 249 - 260 (83 - 86%)	B- = 240 - 248 (80 - 82%)
C+ = 231 - 239 (77 - 79%)	C = 219 - 230 (73 - 76%)	C- = 210 - 218 (70 - 72%)
D = 180 - 209 (60 - 69%)	F = 000 - 179 (below 60%).	

Course Topics, Assignments, and Exam Dates.

1.23 Defining Psychological Fitness Ryff, C. D. (2014). Psychological well-being revisited: Advances in the science and practice of eudaimonia. *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics*, 83, 10-28.

Short, J. L. (2012). Psychological fitness for older adults: A pilot intervention. *Seniors Housing & Care Journal*, 20(1), 71-84.

1.25 Lyubomirsky, S., & Layous, K. (2013). How do simple positive activities increase well-being? *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 22(1), 57-62.

Kashdan, T. B., & Rottenberg, J. (2010). Psychological flexibility as a fundamental aspect of health. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 30, 865-878.

1.30 Scheuller, S. M., & Parks, A. C. (2014). The science of self-help: Translating positive psychology into increased individual happiness. *European Psychologist*, 19(2), 145-155.

Walsh, R. (2011). Lifestyle and mental health. *American Psychologist*, 66(7), 579-592.

2.1 **Healthy Thinking** Cary, B. (2015). *How we learn: The surprising truth about when, where, and why it happens*. New York: Random House.

2.6 Carver, C.S., & Scheier, M.F. (2014). Dispositional optimism. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 18(6), 293-299.

Meevissen, Y. M. C., Peters, M. L., & Alberts, H. J. E. M. (2011). Become more optimistic by imagining a best possible self: Effects of a two week intervention. *Journal of Behavior Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry*, 42, 371-378.

2.8 Davis, D. E., Choe, E., Meyers, J. ... Worthington, Jr., E. L. (2016). Thankful for the little things: A meta-analysis of gratitude interventions. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 63(1), 20-31.

2.13 Malaktaris, A., Lemons, P., Lynn, S. J., & Condon, L. (2015). Chilling out. In S. J. Lynn, W. T. O'Donohue, & S. O. Lilienfeld (Eds.) *Health, happiness, and well-being* (pp. 142-166). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

2.15 Crum, A. J., Salovey, P., & Achor, S. (2013). Rethinking stress: The role of mindsets in determining the stress response. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 104(4), 716-733.

2.20 Nezu, C. M., Nezu, A. M., & Ricelli, S. (2015). Effective problem solving. In S. J. Lynn, W. T. O'Donohue, & S. O. Lilienfeld (Eds.) *Health, happiness, and well-being* (pp. 41-61). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

2.22 **Healthy Identity** Fu, A. S., Plaut, V. C., Treadway, J. R., & Markus, H. R. (2014). Places, products, and people "make each other up": Culture cycles of self and well-being. In P. J. Rentfrow (Ed.) *Geographical psychology: Exploring the interaction of environment and behavior* (pp. 275-300). Washington, DC, US: American Psychological Association.

2.27 Cheung, E. O., & Gardner, W. L. (2016). With a little help from my friends: Understanding how social networks influence the pursuit of the ideal self. *Self and Identity*, 15(6), 662-682.

3.1 McKnight, P. E., & Kashdan, T. B. (2009). Purpose in life as a system that creates and sustains health and well-being: An integrative, testable theory. *Review of General Psychology*, 13, 242-251.

3.6 **Moral Health** Haidt, J. (2013). Moral psychology for the twenty-first century. *Journal of Moral Education*, 42(3), 281-297.

3.8 Quinlan, D., Swain, N., & Vella-Brodrick, D. A. (2012). Character strengths interventions: Building on what we know for improved outcomes. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 13, 1145-1163.

Sternberg, R. J. (2015). Building wisdom and character. In S. J. Lynn, W. T. O'Donohue, & S. O. Lilienfeld (Eds.) *Health, happiness, and well-being* (pp. 296-316). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

3.13 and 3.15 * No class * (Spring Break)

3.20 * Complete measures for time 1 for Exercise Study *

Padgett, E. A., Kusner, K. G., & Pargament, K. I. (2015). Integrating religion and spirituality into treatment. In S. J. Lynn, W. T. O'Donohue, & S. O. Lilienfeld (Eds.) *Health, happiness, and well-being* (pp. 272-295). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

3.22 **Healthy Behaviors** Maxwell, R., & Lynn, S. J. (2015). Exercise. In S. J. Lynn, W. T. O'Donohue, & S. O. Lilienfeld (Eds.) *Health, happiness, and well-being* (pp. 223-248). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

3.27 Gillen, J. B., Percival, M. E., Skelly, L. E., Martin, B. J., Tan, R. B., Tarnopolsky, M. A., & Gibala, M. J. (2014). Three minutes of all-out intermittent exercise per week increases skeletal muscle oxidative capacity and improves cardiometabolic health. *PLoS One*, 9(11), e111489.

Sleiman, S. F., Henry, J., Al-Haddad, R., ... Chao, M. V. (2016). Exercise promotes the expression of brain derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF) through the action of the ketone body B-hydroxybutyrate. *eLife*, 5:e15092.

3.29 Bootzin, R. R., Blank, E., & Peck, T. (2015). Sleeping well. In S. J. Lynn, W. T. O'Donohue, & S. O. Lilienfeld (Eds.) *Health, happiness, and well-being* (pp. 168-194). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

4.3 * Complete measures for time 2 for Exercise Study *

Pearson, A., & Craighead, L. W. (2015). Science weighs in on obesity. In S. J. Lynn, W. T. O'Donohue, & S. O. Lilienfeld (Eds.) *Health, happiness, and well-being* (pp. 195-222). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Hofmann, W., Vohs, K. D., & Baumeister, R. F. (2012). What people desire, feel conflicted about, and try to resist in everyday life. *Psychological Science*, 23(6), 582-588.

4.5 Emotional Health Ritschel, L. A., & Ramirez, C. L. (2015). Emotion regulation. In S. J. Lynn, W. T. O'Donohue, & S. O. Lilienfeld (Eds.) *Health, happiness, and well-being* (pp. 14-40). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

4.10 Nelson, S. K., Kurtz, J. L., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2015). What psychological science knows about achieving happiness. In S. J. Lynn, W. T. O'Donohue, & S. O. Lilienfeld (Eds.) *Health, happiness, and well-being* (pp. 250-271). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Shiota, M.N., Neufeld, S.L., Danvers, A.F., Osborne, E.A., Sng, O., & Yee, C.I. (2014). Positive emotion differentiation: A functional approach. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 8/3, 104-117.

4.12 ** Exercise Study due **

Algoe, S.B., & Haidt, J. (2009). Witnessing excellence in action: the 'other-praising' emotions of elevation, gratitude, and admiration. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 4(2), 105-127.

Levitin, D. J. (2013). Neural correlates of musical behavior: A brief overview. *Music Therapy Perspectives*, 31(1), 15-24.

4.17 Healthy Relationships Johnson, M. (2015). Making marriage and other relationships work. In S. J. Lynn, W. T. O'Donohue, & S. O. Lilienfeld (Eds.) *Health, happiness, and well-being* (pp. 318-340). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

4.19 Allen, K. D., Shriver, M. D., & Nadler, C. (2015). Raising our kids well: Guidelines for positive parenting. In S. J. Lynn, W. T. O'Donohue, & S. O. Lilienfeld (Eds.) *Health, happiness, and well-being* (pp. 369-404). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

4.24 Kurtz, L. E., & Algoe, S. B. (2015). Putting laughter in context: Shared laughter as behavioral indicator of relationship well-being. *Personal Relationships*, 22(4), 573-590.

4.26 Sexual Health Fite, R. A. (2015). The joys of loving. In S. J. Lynn, W. T. O'Donohue, & S. O. Lilienfeld (Eds.) *Health, happiness, and well-being* (pp. 341-368). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

5.1 ** Creative Project Due ** Review projects in class

5.3 Vrangalova, Z. (2015). Hooking up and psychological well-being in college students: Short-term prospective links across different hookup definitions. *Journal of Sex Research*, 52(5), 485-498.

5.10 No final exam