

Psychological Fitness (PSYC 461) Section 005. Fall 2011. 3:00 - 4:15 pm TR in Innovation 136

Professor: Jerome L. Short, Ph.D.

Office: David King Hall 2019

Phone: 703-993-1368

Office Hours: 1:45 - 2:45 Tuesdays & Thursdays

Webpage: <http://mason.gmu.edu/~jshort> E-Mail: jshort@gmu.edu

Welcome! This course will introduce you to the theory and practice of psychological health promotion. You will have the opportunity to practice multiple psychological exercises to enhance your psychological health. There is no textbook for this course. We will read and discuss the journal articles listed for each class date. 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 : September 16 *Last day to drop: September 30

Requirements.

One Exam. Your exam is worth 100 points. The exam is 80% multiple choice (40 questions worth 2 points each) and 20% short answer questions (4 questions worth from 4 to 6 points each) based on classroom activities and the readings. The exam is cumulative. Two exams will be offered. If you take both exams, you will receive credit for your higher score. One exam will occur during the semester on Tuesday, Nov. 15 and another exam will occur during the final exam period on Thursday, Dec. 15.

Two Movie Reviews. Your movie reviews are each worth 50 points (100 points total). I will assign you to a group of three students who will watch a movie focused on character strengths. You will discuss it, and then your group will write an approximately 5 page paper to describe: 1) the character strengths that apply to one of the main characters; 2) the theoretical causes of the character strengths for that character; 3) cultural considerations; 4) personal weaknesses or psychological disorders of the character; and 5) the points of agreement and disagreement in your group discussions. I will provide the list of movies. The review are due on Thursday, Sept. 15 and Thursday, Oct. 6.

Psychological Exercise Project. This project is worth 100 points and you will write a report in the form of a single-participant scientific study that one might find in an issue of *Clinical Case Studies*. The report should include Introduction, Method, Results, and Discussion sections with a minimum of three references from psychology journals. Your report can range from 7 to 10 pages. This report is due on Tuesday, Oct. 25. I will provide you standardized measures to assess yourself twice. In between, you will choose at least 5 psychological exercises that you will implement to help maintain or improve your psychological fitness.

Creative Project. This project is worth 100 points. You have a lot of options to carry out this project, but you must submit a one page proposal for the professor to approve by Tuesday, Nov. 1. The project must focus on some aspect of psychological fitness and could include a TED lecture <http://www.ted.com>, instructional video, a website, a guide, an application for a smartphone, developing a series of new psychological exercises, a traditional research paper (7 to 12 pages and minimum of 10 references), or other ideas. The Creative Project is due by Thursday, Dec. 8.

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

Extra Credit. You can earn up to 8 points of extra credit that is added onto your point total for the class. There are two ways to earn these points. First, you can participate as a volunteer for four hours in psychology department research (2 points per hour). Alternatively, you can write a psychology journal article summary and critique on a content area covered by your book that is four typed pages (2 points per page).

Honor Code: The Honor Code of George Mason University deals specifically with cheating and attempted cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing. Students should be familiar with the code and connected policies, set out at <http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies>. This course will be conducted in accordance with those policies.

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.

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

| | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| A+ = 388 - 400 (97% or more) | A = 372 - 387 (93 - 96%) | A- = 360 - 371 (90 - 92%) |
| B+ = 348 - 359 (87 - 89%) | B = 332 - 347 (83 - 86%) | B- = 320 - 331 (80 - 82%) |
| C+ = 308 - 319 (77 - 79%) | C = 292 - 307 (73 - 76%) | C- = 280 - 291 (70 - 72%) |
| D = 240 - 279 (60 - 69%) | F = 000 - 239 (below 60%). | |

Course Topics, Assignments, and Exam Dates.

8/30 Psychological Fitness Compton, W.C. (2005). Interventions for enhanced well-being (pp. 175-195). *Introduction to positive psychology*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

9/1 * Complete measures for time 1 for Psychological Exercise Project *

Seligman, M.E.P., Steen, T.A., Park, N., & Peterson, C. (2005). Positive psychology progress: Empirical validation of interventions. *American Psychologist*, 60(5), 410-421.

9/6 Seligman, M.E.P., & Fowler, R.D. (2011). Comprehensive soldier fitness and the future of psychology. *American Psychologist*, 66(1), 82-86.

9/8 Healthy Thinking Carver, C.S., & Connor-Smith, J. (2010). Personality and coping. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 61, 679-704.

9/13 Carver, C.S., Scheier, M.F., & Segerstrom, S.C. (2010). Optimism. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 30, 879-889.

9/15 ** Movie Review 1 Due **

Emmons, R.A., & Mishra, A. (2011). Why gratitude enhances well-being: What we know, what we need to know. In K.M. Sheldon, T.B. Kashdan, & M.F. Steger (Editors), *Designing positive psychology: Taking stock and moving forward* (pp. 248-262). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

9/20 Brown, K. W., Ryan, R. M., & Creswell, J. D. (2007). Mindfulness: Theoretical foundations and evidence for its salutary effects. *Psychological Inquiry*, 18, 211-237.

9/22 Healthy Identity Markus, H.R., & Kitayama, S. (2010). Cultures and selves: A cycle of mutual constitution. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 5(4), 420-430.

9/27 Plaut, V.C., Markus, H.R., & Lachman, M.E. (2002). Place matters: Consensual features and regional variation in American well-being and self. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 83(1), 160-184.

9/29 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.

10/4 Moral Health Park, N., Peterson, C., & Seligman, M.E.P. (2004). Strengths of character and well-being. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 23(5), 603-619.

10/6 ** Movie Review 2 due **

Schulman, M. (2002). How we become moral: The sources of moral motivation. In C.R. Snyder & S.J. Lopez (editors): *Handbook of positive psychology* (pp. 499-512). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

10/11 * No Class *

10/13 * Complete Measures for Time 2 for Psychological Fitness Project *

Pargament, K.I., & Sweeney, P.J. (2011). Building spiritual fitness in the army. *American Psychologist*, 66(1), 58-64.

10/18 Healthy Behaviors Baumeister, R. F., Gailliot, M. T., DeWall, C. N. & Oaten, M. (2006). Self-regulation and personality: Strength-boosting interventions and trait moderators of ego depletion. *Journal of Personality*, 74, 1773-1802.

10/20 Reynolds, E. K., MacPherson, L., Tull, M. T., Baruch, D. E., & Lejuez, C. W. (2011). Integration of the brief Behavioral Activation Treatment for Depression (BATD) into a college orientation program: Depression and alcohol outcomes. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 1-10.

10/25 ** Psychological Exercise Project Due ** Brick, C.A., Seely, D.L., & Palermo, T.M. (2010). Association between sleep hygiene and sleep quality in medical students. *Behavioral Sleep Medicine*, 8(2), 113-121.

10/27 Rozin, P., & Holmes, J.M. (2010). Psychology and sensory marketing, with a focus on food. In A. Krishna (ed.), *Sensory marketing: Research on the sensuality of products* (pp. 303-321). New York, NY: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

11/1 * Proposal for Creative Project Due * Emotional Health Fredrickson, B.L. (2001). The role of positive emotions in positive psychology. *American Psychologist*, 56(3), 218-226.

11/3 Quoidbach, J., Berry, E.V., Hansenne, M., & Mikolajczak, M. (2010). Positive emotion regulation and well-being: Comparing the impact of eight savoring and dampening strategies. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 49, 368-373.

11/8 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.

11/10 Algoe, S.B., & Fredrickson, B.L. (2011). Emotional fitness and the movement of affective science from lab to field. *American Psychologist*, 66(1), 35-42.

11/15 ** EXAM 1 **

11/17 Healthy Relationships Gable, S.L., & Gosnell, C.L. (2011). The positive side of close relationships. In K.M. Sheldon, T.B. Kashdan, & M.F. Steger (Editors), *Designing positive psychology: Taking stock and moving forward* (pp. 265-279). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

11/22 Cacioppo, J.T., Reis, H.T., & Zautra, A.J. (2011). Social resilience: The value of social fitness with an application to the military. *American Psychologist*, 66(1), 43-51.

11/24 * No Class *

11/29 Gottman, J.M., Gottman, J.S., & Atkins, C.L. (2011). The comprehensive soldier fitness program: Family skills component. *American Psychologist*, 66(1), 35-42.

12/1 Sexual Health Stephenson, K.R., Ahrhold, T.K., & Meston, C.M. (2011). The association between sexual motives and sexual satisfaction: Gender differences and categorical comparisons. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 40(3), 607-618.

12/6 Bancroft, J., Long, J.S., & McCabe, J. (2011). Sexual well-being: A comparison of U.S. black and white women in heterosexual relationships. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 40(4), 725-740.

12/8 ** Creative Project Due ** Review

12/15 ** EXAM 2 ** (1:30 – 4:15)