**PSYC 408: Psychological Fitness (3 credits)**

**Summer 2021, Section A01 online course**

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**Office Location:** David King Hall 2019

**Office Hours:** Online via email or Blackboard Collaborate by appointment on Wednesdays 1:00 – 3:00 pm.

**Website:** <https://psychology.gmu.edu/people/jshort>

**Last day to add course:** Wednesday, May 19 **Drop Deadlines:** Wednesday, May 19 (No tuition liability); Tuesday, May 25 (50% tuition liability; Tuesday, June 1 (unrestricted); Wednesday, June 9 (selective)

# **Course Description**

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. You will complete quizzes, discussion boards, and a psychological fitness study. The course is asynchronous and you will need to access materials in Blackboard. There are no prerequisites.

## Required Textbook There is no required textbook. There are required readings listed in Blackboard with links.

## Course Learning Outcomes

You will develop the following skills.

1. Learn and use adaptive thinking skills, emotion regulation, behavioral self-control, and social relationship skills to enhance your psychological fitness.

Collect and analyze data on your own behavior, do psychological exercises, and summarize the results in a scientific report.

Learn creative ways to share your knowledge from the course with others.

# Course Assignments

**1. 10 Quizzes.** Your 10 quizzes are worth 10 points each (100 points total). You need a LockDown browser and webcam for the quizzes and you must complete each quiz in 15 minutes once you open them. You will do quizzes with no notes, no book, and no help. Your webcam will record you during the quizzes.

**Missed Quizzes**. You can make-up a missed quiz if you have a note from a physician that explains why you could not do the quiz. 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.

**2. 3 Discussion Board Posts and Comments**. Your 3 Blackboard discussion board posts are worth up to 6 points each (18 points total). Limit your posts to a maximum of 10 sentences. Late posts will lose at least 1 point.

**3. Two Psychological Fitness Surveys.** You will complete measures of well-being, health behaviors, and self-perceptions twice to assess your psychological fitness. In between, you will implement and log daily at least five psychological exercises for two weeks to help improve your psychological fitness. These completed surveys are worth 3 points each (6 points total). Late posts will lose 1 point.

**4. 14 Days of Documenting Five Psychological Exercises.** You will document your use of 5 psychological exercises daily for 14 consecutive days to improve your psychological fitness. This documentation is worth 20 points. Late posts will lose 1 point per day.

**5. Psychological Fitness Study Paper.** This study is worth 36 points and you will write an APA-style report. I will provide a sample paper that explains how to write each section. The paper 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. Late submissions lose 1 point per day.

**Extra Credit.** You can earn up to 6 points of extra credit that is added onto your point total for the course. Describe how you could design a psychological fitness project and share it with a group of people that could benefit, such as a workshop, an instructional video, a website, or other projects. You should describe the characteristics of the people you want to help and why they could benefit, the concepts that you want to explain to them, and the specific ways that people would learn the information that is up to three typed pages (2 points per page).

# Grading Scale

Your final grade is your percentage of 180 points (10 quizzes = 100 points; 2 Surveys = 6 points; 3 Discussion Boards = 18 points;

14 Days of documenting 5 psychological exercises = 20 points; Fitness Paper = 36 points).

A+ = 97-100%; A = 93-96%; A- = 90-92%; B+ = 87-89%; B = 83-86%; B- = 80-82%;

C+ = 77-79%; C = 73-76%; C- = 70-72%; D = 60-69%; F = Below 60%

# Course Schedule

| **Class week** | **Readings** | **Assignments Due** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Week 1 5.17  Lessons 1, 2, 3 | **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.  Seligman, M. E. P. (2019). Positive psychology: A personal history. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology, 15.* (23 pages)  Short, J. L. (2012). Psychological fitness for older adults: A pilot intervention. *Seniors Housing & Care Journal*, *20*(1), 71-84.  Fritz, M. M., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2018). Whither happiness? When, how, and why might positive activities undermine well-being. In Forgas, J. P., and Baumeister, R. F. (eds.) *The Social Psychology of Living Well* (pp. 96-108). New York, NY: Routledge.  Lyubomirsky, S., & Layous, K. (2013). How do simple positive activities increase well-being? *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 22*(1), 57-62.  The Quantified Self video | **Lesson 1 Complete Time 1 Fitness Survey and submit by Thursday, 5.20.**  **Lesson 1 Discussion Responses due Thursday, 5.20.**  **Lesson 1 Begin recording 14-day logs of 5 different psychological exercises on Friday 5.21.**  **Lesson 2 Quiz due Sunday, 5.23 on first 3 articles by Ryff, Seligman, and Short and definitions PowerPoint.**  **Lesson 3 Quiz due Sunday, 5.23 on Fritz and Lyubomirsky articles, processes PowerPoint, and Quantified Self video.** |
| Week 2 5.24  Lessons 4, 5 | **Healthy Thinking**  Layous, K., Sweeny, K., Armenta, C., Na, S., Choi, I., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2017). The proximal experience of gratitude. PLoS ONE, 12(7). Article ID e0179123.  Luerssen A., Ayduk, O. (2017). Executive functions promote well-being: Outcomes and mediators. In: Robinson M., Eid M. (eds.) The happy mind: Cognitive contributions to well-being (pp. 59-75). Springer International.  Smith, J. L. & Bryant, F. B. (2017). Savoring and well-being: Mapping the cognitive-emotional terrain of the happy mind. In: Robinson M., Eid M. (eds.) *The happy mind: Cognitive contributions to well-Being* (pp. 139-156). Springer International.  Segerstrom, S. C., Carver, C. S. & Scheier, M. F. (2017). Optimism. In: Robinson M., Eid M. (eds.) The happy mind: Cognitive contributions to well-being (pp. 195-212). Springer International.  Intelligence Mindset video – Carol Dweck  Crum, A. J., Jamieson, J. P., & Akinola, M. (2020). Optimizing stress: An integrated intervention for regulating stress responses. Emotion, 20(1), 120–125. https://doi-org.mutex.gmu.edu/10.1037/emo0000670  Jazaieri, H. & Shapiro, S. (2017). Mindfulness and well-being. In: Robinson M., Eid M. (eds.) *The happy mind: Cognitive contributions to well-being* (pp. 41-58). Springer International.  Mindfulness videos by Jon Kabat-Zinn and Ellen Langer | **Lesson 4 Quiz due Sunday, 5.30 on first 4 articles, Intelligence Mindset video, and learning, memory, outlook PowerPoint.**  **Lesson 5 Quiz due Sunday, 5.30 on Crum and Jazaieri articles, Mindfulness videos, and stress, mindfulness, and coping PowerPoint.** |
| Week 3 5.31  Lessons 6, 7 | **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 Psych. Assoc.  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.  Willis, H. A., & Neblett, E. W. (2019). Racial identity and changes in psychological distress using the multidimensional model of racial identity. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cdp0000314>  Power Poser video – Amy Cuddy  **Moral Health**  Myers, D. G. (2018). Religious engagement and living well. In Forgas, J. P., and Baumeister, R. F. (eds.) *The Social Psychology of Living Well* (pp. 127-149). New York, NY: Routledge.  Hall-Simmonds, A. & McGrath, R. E. (2017): Character strengths and clinical presentation, *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, DOI: 10.1080/17439760.2017.1365160  Moral Roots video by Jonathan Haidt | **Lesson 6 Submit 14-day logs of 5 Exercises by Friday, 6.4.**  **Lesson 6 Complete Time 2 Fitness Survey and submit by Friday, 6.4.**  **Lesson 6 Quiz due Sunday, 6.6 on Healthy Identity articles and PowerPoint, and Power Poser video.**  **Lesson 7 Quiz due Sunday, 6.6 on Moral Health articles and PowerPoint, and Moral Roots video.** |
| Week 4 6.7  Lessons 8, 9 | **Healthy Behaviors**  Patel, H., Alkhawam, H., Madanieh, R., Shah, N., Kosmas, C. E., & Vittorio, T. J. (2017). Aerobic vs anaerobic exercise training effects on the cardiovascular system. *World Journal of Cardiology, 9*(2), 134–138. https://doi.org/10.4330/wjc.v9.i2.134.  Di Noia, J. (2014). Defining powerhouse fruits and vegetables: A nutrient density approach. *Preventing Chronic Disease*, *11*:130390.  Monroe, J. T. (2015). Mindful eating: Principles and practice. *Nutrition Review*, *9*(3) 217-220.  Wilckens, K. A., Ferrarelli, F., Walker, M. P., & Buysse, D. J. (2018). Slow-Wave Activity Enhancement to Improve Cognition. Trends in Neurosciences, 41(7), 470-482.  Sleep video – Matthew Walker  **Emotional Health**  Fritz, M.M., Walsh, L.C., Lyubomirsky, S. (2017). Staying happier. In: Robinson M., Eid M. (eds.) *The happy mind: Cognitive contributions to well-being*. Springer International.  Marroquín, B., Tennen, H., Stanton, A.L. (2017) Coping, emotion regulation, and well-being: Intrapersonal and interpersonal processes. In: Robinson M., Eid M. (eds.) *The happy mind: cognitive contributions to well-being*. Springer International.  Happiness video – Daniel Gilbert | **Lesson 8 Discussion Responses due Sunday, 6.13.**  **Lesson 8 Quiz due Sunday, 6.13 on Healthy Behaviors articles and PowerPoint, and Sleep video.**  **Lesson 9 Quiz due Sunday, 6.13 on Emotional Health articles and PowerPoint, and Happiness video.** |
| Week 5 6.14  Lessons 10, 11, and 12 | **Healthy Relationships**  Andrews, G., Zautra, A., & Zautra, E. (2017). On the road to social well-being. In: Robinson M., Eid M. (eds.) The happy mind: Cognitive contributions to well-being (pp. 349-367). Springer International.  Erb, S. E., Renshaw, K. D., Short, J. L., & Pollard, J. W. (2014). The importance of college roommate relationships: A review and systemic conceptualization. Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice, 51(1), 43-55.  Gable, S. L. (2018). Satisfying and meaningful close relationships. In Forgas, J. P., and Baumeister, R. F. (eds.) *The Social Psychology of Living Well* (pp. 239-256). New York, NY: Routledge.  Technology and Love video – Helen Fisher  **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.  De Jong, D. C., Adams, K. N., & Reis, H. T. (2018). Predicting women’s emotional responses to hooking up: Do motives matter? *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 35*(4), 532-556.  Sex and Brain Activity videos | **Lesson 10 Fitness Study due on Tuesday, 6.15.**  **Discussion Board 3 responses due Wednesday, 6.16**  **Lesson 11 Quiz due Sunday, 6.20 on Healthy Relationships articles and PowerPoint, and Technology and Love video.**  **Lesson 12 Quiz due Sunday, 6.20 on Sexual Health articles and PowerPoint, and Sex and Brain Activity videos.**  **Extra Credit due Sunday, 6.20** |

# University Policies and Resources

1. Student Responsibilities About Communication: Mason uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. This includes communication from course instructors, library notices, 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. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.
2. [Honor Code and Academic Honesty](http://oai.gmu.edu/): You need to know and abide by George Mason University’s Honor Code. The Code requires all members of this community to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing are all prohibited. You should contact me if you have questions about these policies. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee.
3. Students must follow the university policy for [Responsible Use of Computing](http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/) and registration in [Registrar](http://registrar.gmu.edu/) information.
4. Student services: The University provides range of services to help you succeed academically and you should make use of these if you think they could benefit you. I also invite you to speak to me (the earlier the better).
5. [The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)](http://caps.gmu.edu/) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students’ personal experience and academic performance. Counseling Center: Student Union I, Room 364, 703-993-2380.
6. Accommodations: Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the [George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS)](http://ods.gmu.edu/) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester.
7. [The George Mason University Writing Center](http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/) staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing. University Writing Center: Robinson Hall Room A114, 703-993-1200. The writing center includes assistance for students for whom English is a second language.
8. [Library](http://library.gmu.edu/for/online): Most University Libraries resources are available to you from home. They have a variety of online services.
9. Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
10. [Diversity](http://ctfe.gmu.edu/professional-development/mason-diversity-statement/): George Mason University promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty and staff. Through its curriculum, programs, policies, procedures, services and resources, Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study and personal growth.
11. [Religious Holidays](http://ulife.gmu.edu/calendar/religious-holiday-calendar/): It is the obligation of students, within the first two weeks of the semester, to provide professors with the dates of major religious holidays on which they will be absent or unable to turn in work due to religious observances.
12. [Student Privacy](http://registrar.gmu.edu/ferpa/): All students at Mason control access to their educational records and must give consent before that information is disclosed to any third party, including parents.
13. Class Cancellation Policy: If class is cancelled, I will notify you by email/blackboard on how we will make up the time.
14. Mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking: As a professor, I am designated a “Responsible Employee”, and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1412. To speak with someone confidentially, contact one of Mason’s confidential resources: Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling & Psychology Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730 or emailing cde@gmu.edu.

**Technology Requirements**

**Blackboard Login Instructions**

Access to [MyMason](http://mymason.gmu.edu) and GMU email are required to participate successfully in this course. Please make sure to update your computer and prepare yourself to begin using the online format BEFORE the first day of class. Check [the IT Support Center](http://itservices.gmu.edu/) website. Navigate to the Student Support Page for help and information about Blackboard.

**Hardware:** You will need access to a Windows or Mac computer with at least 2 GB of RAM and access to a fast and reliable broadband internet connection (e.g., cable, DSL). A larger screen is recommended for better visibility of course material. You will need speakers or headphones to hear recorded content.

**Software:** Many courses use Blackboard as the learning management system. You will need a browser and operating system that are listed compatible or certified with the Blackboard version available on the [myMason Portal](http://mymason.gmu.edu).

**Respondus LockDown Browser:** Use of the Respondus LockDown Browser and a functional webcam are required for quizzes in this online course. Please follow these instructions to download and install the Respondus LockDown Browser.

1. [Visit this URL](http://www.respondus.com/lockdown/information.pl?ID=133435885) to access the Respondus LockDown Browser download.
2. Setup is easy and only requires you to:
   1. Select your operating system.
   2. Choose "Your Own Computer" from the list of provided options.
   3. Click a download link and follow the installation directions as provided.
   4. Launch the Respondus LockDown Browser by double-clicking its shortcut icon.