

Wesleyan University
Winter Session
2022

The Science of Happiness

Instructor: Jennifer D'Andrea, PhD

Class Meetings: Monday – Friday
10 AM – 12 PM and 1 PM – 3 PM

Class Meeting Dates: January 4th – 7th
January 10th – 14th
January 17th

Location: Your Computer

Email: jdandrea@wesleyan.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Positive Psychology is the study of human happiness. The field has compiled an enormous research base offering evidence of the fundamental components of well-being and flourishing. While early work utilized a narrow, Western definition of happiness, the discipline later broadened its focus to include traditionally Eastern concepts such as social harmony and compassion. More recently, the field has been redefined through second wave positive psychology and a newly emerging third wave positive psychology, both of which seek to break free from the binary concepts of “positive” and “negative” in favor of a dialectic approach while utilizing concepts of flourishing through suffering found in indigenous psychology, as well as including models for systemic change found in social work, sociology, and economics.

This course will trace the history and development of Positive Psychology from its inception to the current state of the field, utilizing selected chapters from a Positive Psychology text supplemented by journal articles. Core concepts will be discussed and critiqued. Students will be required to keep “flourishing journals” and complete out-of-class activities for the purpose of personal reflection upon and practice of individual experiences of happiness. Additional course requirements include 4 short reflection papers, in-class discussion and a final project.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of the course, students will be able to:

- Critique, discuss, and apply the positive psychology research literature.
- Apply core theories, science, and application of positive psychology to psychological, emotional, and biological processes.
- Apply concepts of first wave, second wave, and third wave positive psychologies on both a macro/systemic and micro/individual level.
- Develop an individualized plan for the integration of salient positive psychology concepts into everyday life.

REQUIRED READING

Selected chapters from:

Lopez, Pedrotti, & Snyder (2019). *Positive Psychology: The Scientific and Practical Explorations of Human Strengths 4th Edition*.

- *All Chapters will be uploaded to the course Moodle.*
- *In addition to selected text chapters, journal articles will be assigned reading for each class meeting.*
- ***All required reading will be uploaded to the course Moodle.***

ASSIGNMENTS

Class discussion

In- and out-of-class activities and exercises

Flourishing journal

- Journal entries are based upon individual reflection exercises and practice activities completed in and out of class time

4 short reflection papers

- 3-5 pages based upon readings, activities, and discussions
- Papers can be emailed to me or uploaded to course Moodle
- Due at the following intervals:
 - Class 2 January 5th
 - Class 4 January 7th
 - Class 6 January 11th
 - Class 8 January 13th

Final Project: Personal Flourishing Plan

- Class participants will submit a personalized flourishing plan developed from readings, discussions, journal reflections, and activities conducted throughout the course.

ASSESSMENTS

Class Attendance:	20%	
In-Class Participation:	20%	
Happiness Journal (ungraded):	10%	Due Monday January 17th
Reflection Papers	25%	See above for Dates
Final Project:	25%	Due Monday January 17th

ATTENDANCE POLICY

You are expected to attend all classes. If you are unable to attend a class meeting, you must alert me in advance and develop a plan for completing the material.