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 10th – 13th
January 16th – 20th
January 23rd

Location:   Your Computer – see course Moodle for zoom link

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 5 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

- 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

5 short reflection papers
- 3-5 pages based upon readings, activities, and discussions
- Papers can be emailed to me or uploaded to course Moodle
- Due by 11:59 PM on the following dates:
  - Class 1 January 10th
  - Class 3 January 12th
  - Class 5 January 17th
  - Class 7 January 19th
  - Class 9 January 23rd

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%
Flourishing Journal (ungraded): 10% Due Friday January 27th
Reflection Papers 30% See above for Dates
Final Project: 20% Due Friday January 27th

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.
CLASS SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

Tues January 10th: Introduction to Positive Psychology

Reflection Paper #1 Due at 11:59 PM

Text:
Lopez Chapter 1

Articles:


Peters & Marek. (2020.) The snake oil charms of positive psychology. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 52*:(11), 1116-1119.


Wedns January 11th: Using A Wider Lens

Text:
Lopez Chapters 2 and 4

Articles:


Thurs January 12th: An American Happiness: Positivity And Goal Pursuit

Reflection Paper #2 Due 11:59 PM

Text:
Lopez Chapters 6 and 8

Articles:


Friday January 13th: The Trouble With Resilience

Text:
Lopez Chapter 5

Articles:


Vella & Pai (2019). Theoretical review of psychological resilience: defining resilience and resilience research over the decades. *Archives of Medicine and Health Sciences, 7*(2), 233-238.

Blog Posts:

[http://teresachinn.co.uk/the-problem-with-resilience/](http://teresachinn.co.uk/the-problem-with-resilience/)

[https://idronline.org/the-problem-with-resilience-as-we-know-it-mental-health-wellbeing/](https://idronline.org/the-problem-with-resilience-as-we-know-it-mental-health-wellbeing/)
Monday January 16th: NO CLASS – MLK Day

Tuesday January 17th: Gratitude, Spirituality, Transcendence, Flow

Reflection Paper #3 Due 11:59 PM

Text:
Lopez Chapter 10 Spirituality Section
Lopez Chapter 10 Flow Section
Lopez Chapter 11 Gratitude Section

Articles:


Wednesday January 18th: Connections – Relationships, Empathy, Altruism, Forgiveness

Text:
Lopez Chapter 11 (empathy and altruism sections)
Lopez Chapter 12 (forgiveness section)

Articles:


Thursday January 19th: Second Wave Positive Psychology: Beyond the Binary

Reflection Paper #4 Due 11:59 PM


Friday January 20th: First Wave and Second Wave Positive Psychology Interventions

Articles:


Monday January 23rd: Third Wave Positive Psychology: Beyond the Individual

Reflection Paper #5 Due 11:59 PM

Articles:


Yakushko & Blodgett (2021). Negative reflections about positive psychology: on constraining the field to focus on happiness and personal fulfillment. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 6*(1), 104-131.

Friday January 27th:

- Final Project Due 11:59 PM
- Flourishing Journal Due 11:59 PM