

Hofstra University
Hofstra College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Department of Psychology

Course: *PSY XXX: Positive Psychology*

Instructor: Jeffrey J. Froh, Psy.D.

Semester: Spring, 2007

Semester Hours: 3.0

Day/Time: XXX

Room: XXXX

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Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.; Wednesday, 3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

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Please use your Hofstra email account to send me an email. If an occasion arises and you must email me from your personal account, please write ***PSY XXX - Hofstra*** in the Re-Subject box. This will indicate to me that the email is from a Hofstra student in the course ***PSY XXX***. Your email will then be given priority over the many others I receive daily. All official communication sent to you via email will be through your Hofstra email address. All students are responsible for information sent via your official Hofstra email address. CHECK YOUR HOFSTRA EMAIL ADDRESS DAILY.

Course Description:

Prior to World War II, psychology had three main missions: make the lives of all people fulfilling; identify and enhance human excellence; and treat pathology. Nonetheless, in the last half-century psychology has largely focused on decreasing maladaptive emotions and behaviors, while ignoring optimal functioning (e.g., happiness and life satisfaction). Positive psychology is the study of how human beings prosper in the face of adversity. Its goal is to identify and enhance the human strengths and virtues that make life worth living (“The good life”) and allow individuals and communities to thrive (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

This course will provide an introduction to positive psychology. It is designed to explore the concepts, research behind the concepts, techniques, and exercises that enhance well-being. The format of the course will be didactic, experiential, and interactive. Assigned readings will be given weekly.

Course Objectives:

The student will be able to:

1. Understand the aim and scope of positive psychology.

2. Understand the distinction between positive psychology principles and other theoretical principles of psychology.
3. Appreciate Martin Seligman's contribution to the field of positive psychology.
4. Acquire insight into their own strengths and virtues and learn strategies to increase their happiness and overall quality of life.
5. Develop an understanding of the dimensions of subjective well-being and the application to their lives.
6. Experience a stable increase in happiness, as a result of practicing the happiness inducing techniques discussed in class and in the readings.
7. Comprehend research that supports the principles, strategies, and skills of positive psychology.
8. Develop an excitement and passion for positive psychology.
9. Develop a zest for living a virtuous, satisfying, and meaningful life!

Required Readings:

See course outline below for readings. All articles/chapters are on E- Reserve. **The reading assignments for each week that have an “*” next to them are what you need to have read before coming to class for that week.** All readings either with or without an “*” will form the foundation for lecture and discussion. ***With love of learning being one of my top five signature strengths, I of course encourage you to read everything.*** However, you are only required to read the assignments with an “*” next to them.

Course Requirements:

I. Experiential Exercises* (40%)

Students are required to complete experiential exercises throughout the semester with the goal being to apply the material of the course to their lives. A 1-2 page, typed, double-spaced, 12-point font, *reflection* paper will be written about their experience with the exercise. The ultimate goal is for you to experience the positive psychology construct first hand, self-reflect in a meaningful way and, as a result, gain insight into the mechanisms and processes of the “good life.”

The Reflection Paper is due WITHIN 1 WEEK at the BEGINNING of the designated class. Some Reflection Papers are due at the BEGINNING of the next class after which it was assigned. That's because some interventions require 1 week of implementation, whereas others can be completed the night it is assigned. You will be made aware of the due date each week.

NB: The experiential exercise for Week 13 should be between 2-3 pages.

II. Project/Paper* (30%)

The project/paper should have two parts. Part one will focus on your self-improvement project. Part two should describe your future, and how you'll make it better using the skills and techniques learned in this course.

The Self-Improvement Project

It would be best to write this up as an empirical paper (see sections needed below). You may also use a different format if you think it's a better fit. However, please address all of the issues below.

- A. *Introduction*: Why did you decide to change what you (hopefully) changed? What variables facilitated and impeded this change? What mechanisms may explain why? What is your hypothesis? Use research to support your answers.
- B. *Methods*: Describe the procedure(s) you used to change yourself. What techniques did you use? What is the psychology behind these techniques? How did you measure change?
- C. *Results*: What happened? Even though self-report data may suggest the intervention was effective, you must also provide corroborating evidence from other sources. Reports from friends/family/coworkers (e.g., unsolicited comments such as, "Hey, you're smiling so much more these past few weeks. What's your secret?"), objective health indicators (e.g., fewer sick days used), and behavioral measures (e.g., since you've started regularly counting blessings – doing this regularly, by the way, may not be the way to go...we'll talk – you've written 3 times more "thank you's" this month compared to last month) are all appropriate.
- D. *Discussion*: Was your hypothesis confirmed or disconfirmed? Are your results consistent with prior research? What have you learned about self-change, and positive psychology? You might talk about strengths, weaknesses, and difficulties in implementing your intervention, or you might explain why some techniques seemed to be more effective than others. What would you do differently if you had the chance to do it again? Why?

Your Ideal Future, Future Self

Throughout the semester, we'll discuss the "full" versus the "empty" life while highlighting *arête* and the "good life." You should now know more about your strengths and weaknesses, the causes of your happiness, and what kind of future self is worth pursuing. Drawing from the numerous readings throughout the semester, sketch out a vision of your ideal future life, or future self. Explain why this would be a pleasant life, a good (engaging) life, and/or a meaningful life. Describe what growth means for you, and the ways you hope to grow into your future self. Describe the facilitating and inhibiting factors.

Guidelines for Writing the Paper

The paper must be typed and 11-15 pages long (excluding title page, abstract, references, table(s), and figure(s)). It should be double-spaced and in 12-point font, black ink, 1" margins

on all sides, and written following the procedures and guidelines set forth by the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.). Failure to do so will result in a loss of points.

Unless there is a seminal article for your topic that you think must be included (e.g., Diener, E. (1984). Subjective well-being. *Psychological Bulletin*, 95, 542-575.), please do your best to keep references as current as possible (e.g., 2000 – present). Try and limit your references to scholarly books and articles with an emphasis on the latter. I say “try” because sometimes authors will cite popular works as evidence for growth and interest in a topic (e.g., *Time* magazine published a special issue entitled *The Science of Happiness* on January 17, 2005). Moreover, the Internet can be used if the citation is from a scholarly source (e.g., PsycARTICLES). Citing information from a website called *Happiness and apple pie: Grandma was right* is NOT.

If you are unsure of whether a text or an Internet site meets the “scholarly source” requirement, just bring the text and/or website address to me and I will let you know if it is acceptable. Also, if you are unsure how to cite/write anything using APA format, simply make an appointment with me during my office hours and we can go over how this is done.

One part does not carry more weight than the other. Both should be of exceptional quality, demonstrating a strong work ethic in design, content, and presentation. If one part is more personal and “literary,” the other part should be more academic. You must draw on the many readings in class. **Also, it is imperative that you read/cite research beyond class reading.** Please place an “*” next to any works in your references that were read especially for this project. Failure to do so will result in point reduction.

A final note on work ethic: If your intervention is walking 3 times a week and/or journaling, I’ll deduct points for laziness. Becoming happier and living the “good life” is hard work; no one ever said it would be easy! Please commit yourself to personal growth and development. I promise you the work you put in will pay dividends a thousand times over!

All projects must be approved by Day, Date, Year

NB: Failure to meet the above deadline will result in a loss of points on your project/paper grade.

The project/paper is due Day, Date, Year

***NB: All assignments are due when stated. Assignments will not be accepted beyond the announced deadline.** For emergencies only, you need to contact me and discuss the circumstances of the emergency. **I must receive a hard copy of the assignment in my hand the class it is due. Showing up to class without it and emailing it to me after class is unacceptable. If an emergency arises and you are unable to make class, you may email me the assignment, but it needs to be in my inbox no later than 2 hours prior to the time of the regularly scheduled class for which the assignment is due.**

III. Mid-Term Examination (15%)

A ***Mid-Term Examination*** will be given.

The Mid-Term Examination will consist of multiple-choice, true/false, fill in the blanks, short answers, and essays.

The material on the Mid-Term Examination will come directly from the class lectures and assigned readings.

If, for some reason, you are not in attendance for the midterm on the date scheduled, you must contact me on that date so that a make-up exam can be scheduled.

The Mid-Term Examination will be given on Day, Date, Year

IV. Final Examination (15%)

A Final Examination will be given on the last day of the course (Day, Date, Year).

The material on the Final Examination will come directly from the class lectures and assigned readings.

The Final Examination will consist of multiple-choice, true/false, fill in the blanks, short answers, and essays. The Final Examination is **Non-Cumulative**. It will only cover material covered from the midterm to the last day of class.

The Final Examination will be given Day, Date, Year, from Time - Time

V. Grading Summary

Required Assignment	Due Dates	Percent of Final Grade
<i>Experiential Exercises</i>	<i>TBA Weekly in Class</i>	<i>40%</i>
<i>Project Topic</i>	<i>XXXXXX</i>	<i>---</i>
<i>Mid-Term Examination</i>	<i>XXXXXX</i>	<i>15%</i>
<i>Project/Paper</i>	<i>XXXXXX</i>	<i>30%</i>
<i>Final Examination</i>	<i>XXXXXX</i>	<i>15%</i>

VI. Grading Policy

For a grade of **A**, a student needs to accumulate an average of 93%-100%.

For a grade of **A-**, a student needs to accumulate an average of 90%-92%.

For a grade of **B+**, a student needs to accumulate an average of 87%-89%.

For a grade of **B**, a student needs to accumulate an average of 80%-86%.

For a grade of **C+**, a student needs to accumulate an average of 77%-79%.

For a grade of **C**, a student needs to accumulate an average of 70%-76%.

For a grade of **D+**, a student needs to accumulate an average of 67%-69%.

For a grade of **D**, a student needs to accumulate an average of 60%-66%.

For a grade of F, a student needs to accumulate an average of 0%-59%.

VII. Attendance Policy

Since a lot of the learning experiences in this course are interactive and participatory, **attendance is mandatory**. I take attendance at the beginning of every class. Be prompt! You are responsible for the information discussed in class and assigned for class. With varied life experiences, your presence and participation is necessary for optimal learning. You bring a lot to class and I look forward to learning *from* you, as do your fellow students. **More than three absences will result in a loss of a letter grade (e.g., from an A to a B) unless there are extenuating circumstances that you discussed with me.**

VIII. Academic Honesty

All students are expected to abide by the University's Policy on Academic Honesty. This policy may be viewed by accessing the Hofstra University General Bulletin 2002-2003 (p. 54) selecting the section containing pp. 8-139, and scrolling to p. 54. Procedures for Handling Violations of Academic Honesty by Students at Hofstra University are detailed in Faculty Policy Series #11 (rev. 1997).

IX. Students with Disabilities

If you have any documented disability-related concerns that may have an impact upon your performance in this course, please meet with me within the first two weeks of the current semester, so that we can work out the appropriate accommodations. Accommodations are provided on an individualized, as-needed basis after the needs, circumstances, and documentation have been evaluated by the appropriate office on campus. For more information on services provided by Hofstra, and for submission of documentation of your disability, please contact: Dr. Karin Spencer in 101 Memorial Hall at 516-463-6770 (for physical and/or psychological disabilities) or Linda DeMotta in 202 Roosevelt Hall at 516-463-5761 (for learning disabilities and/or ADHD). All disability-related information will be kept confidential.

PSY XXX: Spring, 2008

Week 1
Date **Positive Introductions:** Review the short descriptions of the 24 signature strengths. Focus on what you believe to be your top five strengths by giving careful consideration to the *entire description*, not just the word used to label the trait. Think of a time when you obviously used one of these strengths. Please introduce yourself to the class by telling a brief story (about 1 minute) about a time when you used one of these strengths. The time may be about a task you accomplished or a time at work, in nature, on vacation, with family and/or friends, by yourself, etc. Be specific in your descriptions.

History/Overview of Positive Psychology: What is positive psychology? Where was positive psychology born? With Martin Seligman, Abraham Maslow, or William James?

READING(S):

Franklin, B. (1956). *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*. New York: Harper. **SKIM 1ST HALF, BUT READ 3RD QUARTER CAREFULLY, ON VIRTUES AND MORAL PERFECTION. ANY VERSION IS FINE.**

Froh, J. J. (2004, May/June). The history of positive psychology: Truth be told. *The Psychologist*, 16 (3), 18-20.

Jorgensen, I. S., & Nafstad, H. E. (2004). Positive psychology: Historical, philosophical, and epistemological perspectives. In P. A. Linley & S. Joseph (Eds.), *Positive psychology in practice*(pp.15-34). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

*Seligman, M. E. P., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000). Positive psychology: An introduction. *American Psychologist*, 55, 5-14.

Sheldon, K. M., & King, L. (2001). Why positive psychology is necessary. *American Psychologist*, 56, 216-217.

Evolutionary Perspective of Positive Traits and States: Why has psychology ignored positive functioning? Why even study happiness; isn't suffering more important?

*Buss, D. M. (2000). The evolution of happiness. *American Psychologist*, 55, 15-23.

EXERCISES:

Click on the link below and take the "strengths survey." Print out the completed survey, review the results, and focus on your top five signature strengths (please keep the survey results because you need to use it and turn it in with the exercise for Week 15). Creatively use your top five signature strengths daily in the areas of work, love, and play. Describe your subsequent experience in these domains.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=26794443440>

Week 2 Subjective Well-Being: Correlates, Predictors, and Heritability:

Date What is happiness? How do we define happiness? Is happiness what matters most? What causes happiness? Who is happy? Can I increase my happiness or is there a biologically determined hedonic set point that will make my efforts futile?

READING(S):

Diener, E., Suh, E. M., Lucas, R. E., & Smith, H. L. (1999). Subjective well-being: Three decades of progress. *Psychological Bulletin*, 125, 276-302.

*Lykken, D., & Tellegen, A. (1996). Happiness is a stochastic phenomenon. *Psychological*

Science, 7, 186-189.

Myers, D. G. (2000). The funds, friends, and faith of happy people. *American Psychologist*, 55, 56-67.

The Progress Paradox: Does money cause happiness? If so, shouldn't we be much happier? Also, why has real income doubled since the 1950's and life satisfaction not budged?

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1999). If we are so rich, why aren't we happy? *American Psychologist*, 54, 821-827.

*Easterbrook, G. (2003). *The progress paradox: How life gets better while people feel worse*. New York: Random House. **CHAPTERS 5, 6, & 7 (PP. 163-227)**.

Flourishing: How does flourishing differ from hedonic and eudaimonic well-being? Isn't this just a fancy name for happiness?

Keyes, C. (2002). The mental health continuum: From languishing to flourishing in life. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 43, 207-222.

Keyes, C., & Haidt, J. (2003). Introduction: Human flourishing-the study of that which makes life worthwhile. In C. Keyes & J. Haidt (Eds.), *Flourishing: Positive psychology and the life well-lived* (pp. 3-12). Washington: American Psychological Association.

Ryff, C. D. (1989). Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meanings of psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57, 1069-1081.

EXERCISES:

Interview people regarding their views of money and happiness. Has conventional wisdom prevailed? How did they respond when you shared the data with them?

OR

Have a good day. Determine what makes a day good for *you*. Then, assuming that you can identify this, how can you change your future days to maximize the enabling factors and minimize those that detract?

OR

Determine your happiness profile (Peterson, 2006, p. 100). Are you highest in pleasure, engagement, meaning, or victory? Were you shocked? What are the implications?

Week 3 **Hedonics:** My Lexus will make me happy forever, right? Happiness is simply
Date about experiencing continuous positive affect, right? Shouldn't I just aim to be the

yellow smiley face icon exuding bliss – “Don’t worry, be happy?” Life would be perfect if I just won the lottery...think again!

READING(S):

*Brickman, P., Coates, D., Janoff-Bulman, R. (1978). Lottery winners and accident victims: Is happiness relative? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 36, 917-927.

*Diener, E., Lucas, R. E., & Scollon, C. N. (2006). Beyond the hedonic treadmill: Revising the adaptation theory of well-being. *American Psychologist*, 61, 305-314.

Kahneman, D. (1999). Objective happiness. In D. Kahneman, E. Diener, & N. Schwarz (Eds.), *Well-being: The foundations of hedonic psychology* (pp. 3-25). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Kubovy, M. (1999). On the pleasures of the mind. In D. Kahneman, E. Diener, & N. Schwarz (Eds.), *Well-being: The foundations of hedonic psychology* (pp. 134-154). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Lyubomirsky, S., Sheldon, K. M., & Schkade, D. (2005). Pursuing happiness: The architecture of sustainable change. *Review of General Psychology*, 9, 111-131.

Wrzesniewski, P., Rozin, P., & Bennett, G. (2003). Working, playing, and eating: Making the most out of most moments. In C. Keyes & J. Haidt (Eds.), *Flourishing: Positive psychology and the life well-lived* (pp. 185-204). Washington: American Psychological Association.

EXERCISES:

Think of a time when you adapted to an experience, object, etc. that you dreamt about for eons and swore it would give you eternal pleasure/satisfaction. Now that you have an understanding of the hedonic treadmill, what would you have done differently?

Week 4 **Altruism and Positive Emotions:** What happens when we’re kind to others? Does doing random acts of kindness lead to happiness, or do happy people engage in more random acts of kindness? How do positive emotions broaden our thought-action repertoires and build our psychological and social resources?
Date

READING(S):

Bartlett, M. Y., & DeSteno, D. (2006). Gratitude and prosocial behavior: Helping when it costs you. *Psychological Science*, 17(4), 319-325.

Bible, Matthew 5-7 (Sermon on the mount).

*Fredrickson, B. L. (2001). The role of positive emotions in positive psychology: The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. *American Psychologist*, 56, 218-226.

Trivers, R. L. (1971). The evolution of reciprocal altruism. *Quarterly Review of Biology*, 46,

35-57. *PP. 45-54.*

PROJECT TOPIC DUE XXXXXX

EXERCISES:

Make a concerted effort to engage in random acts of kindness every day (a simple, small favor). Make it anonymous if possible. What happened to you as a result? What about the beneficiary and/or those around you? Pay attention to how often you do this during the day/week and the specific acts you do. Can we adapt to the intervention if we do it every day for a week? Should it only be every so often? Is it better to do numerous acts once a week? How “big” do the acts need to be? Is holding a door enough to boost happiness?

OR

Plan a “perfect” surprise for someone who needs it, tutor a child in reading or math, play your guitar at a local nursing home, volunteer for a local organization (e.g., Canine Companions for Independence [CCI]), etc.

OR

Leave a huge tip for a small check.

OR

Simply spend *time* with someone. Make a deposit in their “emotional bank account.”

OR

Be a listening ear to a friend. Ask them how their day was and actually listen to the answer before telling them about your own day.

OR

Send an e-card to a different friend each day.

OR

Pay the whole tab when you are out with friends.

OR

Induce a positive emotion (e.g., talk to a friend, eat ice-cream, etc.) and then attempt a task (e.g., write a paper) and see if you perform “optimally” (or at least better than you have in the past) as a function of the positive emotion.

Week 5 Love and Healthy Relationships: Does marriage make you happier or

Date are happy people more likely to get married? What is it exactly about marriage that leads to happiness? Does marriage have the same happiness inducing effect it has on women as it does on men? Are women really more labile, while men are more stony?

READING(S):

Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 117, 497-529. **PP. 497-503.**

Gable, S. L., Reis, H. T., Impett, E. A., & Asher, E. R. (2004). What do you do when things go right? The intrapersonal and interpersonal benefits of sharing good events. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 87, 228-245.

*Myers, D. G. (1999). Close relationships and quality of life. In D. Kahneman, E. Diener, & N. Schwarz (Eds.), *Well-being: The foundations of hedonic psychology* (pp. 374-391). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

EXERCISES:

Have your partner/friend take the VIA survey (they may take the brief version if they wish). Plan a “strengths date” allowing each other to plan half of the time spent together using your top 5 signature strengths.

OR

Following Gottman’s advice and spend an extra 5 hours this week with your partner and reflect on the difference between this week and your “typical” week (prior to having this knowledge). Get feedback from your partner. How has your relationship changed? Do you feel closer? Happier with “what you have?” More satisfied? Did you see the effects of improving your relationship (your “base/foundation”) in other areas of your life (e.g., more focused/productive at work, more energetic)?

OR

Choose a person with whom you are close and keep track of how you respond whenever s/he relays some good news. Resolve to respond to every piece of good news in an active and constructive way. Keep track of what you do, and make sure the number of active-constructive responses outweighs other responses by at least 3:1.

Week 6 **Flow and Savoring:** What does it mean to be fully in the moment? How does one get in “the zone?” When is one more likely to experience flow and why would one want to? How can you cultivate the capacity to attend to, appreciate, and enhance the positive experiences in one’s life? What does this have to do with reminiscing about the good ‘ole days?

Date

READING(S):

*Bryant, F. B., & Veroff, J. (2007). *Savoring: A new model of positive experience*. Mahway, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum. **CHAPTERS 1 (PP. 1-24), 5 (PP. 112-143), 8 (PP. 198-215), & EPILOGUE (P. 216).**

Nakamura, J., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2002). The concept of flow. In C.R. Synder & S.J. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology* (pp. 89-105). New York: Oxford University Press.

EXERCISES:

Stop and notice the next time something good/pleasurable happens. To savor this event, you should: share with others, build memories, self-congratulate, sharpen perceptions, and become absorbed.

Week 7

MID-TERM EXAMINATION DAY, DATE, YEAR

Date

Week 8

Date

Religion, Spirituality, and Transcendence: Are religious people happier and, if so, by how much and why? Is it a function of the religion itself? What about the social support? Or, is it the mere belief that one is connected to something greater than oneself? Is it because it provides us meaning? Have we lost our sense of faith?

READING(S):

Easterbrook, G. (2003). *The progress paradox: How life gets better while people feel worse*. New York: Random House. **CHAPTER 9 (PP. 244-254).**

*Myers, D. G. (2000). *The American paradox: Spiritual hunger in an age of plenty*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. **CHAPTER 10 (PP. 257-291) & EPILOGUE (PP. 292-295).**

Zinnbauer, B. J., & Pargament, K. I. (2005). Religiousness and spirituality. In R. Paloutzian & C. Park (Eds.), *Handbook of the psychology of religion and spirituality* (pp. 21-42). New York: The Guilford Press.

EXERCISES:

For 5 minutes a day, think about the things you can do to improve the world or your community.

OR

Read a religious or spiritual book, or go to a religious service every day.

OR

Explore different religions. You can do this by going to a library, looking on the Internet, or asking your friends about their religions.

OR

Spend a few minutes a day in meditation or prayer.

OR

Invest in a book of affirmations or optimistic quotes. Read a few every day.

Week 9 **Gratitude:** How does saying, “thank you,” lead to happiness? Is gratitude the moral emotion that fosters functional societies? How does gratitude protect against greed, envy, and our culture of conspicuous consumption? Why does having a broad perspective (i.e., getting the “big picture”) on life help one become grateful?
Date

READING(S):

*Emmons, R. A. (2004). The psychology of gratitude: An introduction. In R. A. Emmons & M. E. McCullough (Eds.), *The psychology of gratitude* (pp. 3 – 18). New York: Oxford University Press.

McCullough, M. E., Emmons, R. A., & Tsang, J. (2002). The grateful disposition: A conceptual and empirical topography. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 82, 112-127.

McCullough, M. E., Kilpatrick, S. D., Emmons, R. A., & Larson, D. B. (2001). Is gratitude a moral affect? *Psychological Bulletin*, 127, 249-266.

EXERCISES:

Gratitude Visit: Write a gratitude letter to someone who has been especially kind to you and has not been properly thanked and then deliver it to him or her in person. Read it to them if you'd like. Submit a copy of this letter to me with your reflection paper.

OR

Count up to five blessings per day for the next week. Include your blessings with your reflection paper.

OR

Every day, thank someone for something that you might otherwise take for granted (e.g., thanking the janitor who cleans your hallways).

OR

Keep a record of the number of times you use the words “thank you” in a day. Over the course of the first week, try to double the number of times that you say the words.

OR

Call a parent/sibling/friend each day and thank him/her (e.g., for helping you to become who you are, or for always being there for you.).

OR

Send someone a “thank you” e-greeting.

OR

Leave a note for your roommate/apartment mate, suitemate/hall mate that thanks them for something about them that you appreciate.

Week 10 **Hope and Forgiveness:** What effect does hope have on health, relationships, and goal attainment? Why do “high-hopers” live longer? When is the right time to forgive? Is forgiveness always a viable option? Learn how to forgive and discover the benefits of forgiving.

Date

READING(S):

Easterbrook, G. (2003). *The progress paradox: How life gets better while people feel worse*. New York: Random House. **CHAPTER 8 (PP. 228-243)**.

McCullough, M. E., & vanOyen Witvliet, C. (2002). The psychology of forgiveness. In C.R. Synder & S.J. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology* (pp. 446-458). New York: Oxford University Press.

*Snyder, C. R., Rand, K. L., & Sigmon, D. R. (2002). Hope theory: A member of the positive psychology family. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology* (pp. 257-276). New York: Oxford University Press.

EXERCISES:

Think about a grievance against you and apply the REACH. Did it work? Why? Why not?

OR

Create an exercise to increase hope.

Week 11 **Growth by Adversity:** Why do some people shrivel up and wilt when struck by adversity, while others not only survive but also *thrive*? What are the processes and outcomes associated with posttraumatic growth? What role do intrapersonal, interpersonal, and extrapersonal factors play in resiliency?

Date

READING(S):

Ryff, C. D., & Singer, B. (2003). Flourishing under fire: Resilience as a prototype of challenged

thriving. In C. Keyes & J. Haidt (Eds.), *Flourishing: Positive psychology and the life well-lived* (pp. 15-36). Washington: American Psychological Association.

*Tedeschi, R. G., & Calhoun, L. G. (2004). A clinical approach to posttraumatic growth. In P. A. Linley & S. Joseph (Eds.), *Positive psychology in practice* (pp.405-419). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

EXERCISES:

Write a “growth narrative” for yourself. This should be about a time you faced some setback, trauma, problem, or failure and consequently not only bounced back, but also went beyond zero and experienced growth.

Week 12 **Growth by Awe and Beauty:** Have you ever viewed a sunset, seen a piece of art, or heard a sermon that left you awestruck? Did the vastness lead to accommodation? That is, did the experience not fit with any experience you’ve had before consequently leading you to alter mental structures? If you relate to this, then you’ve had the pleasure of experiencing awe.

Date

READING(S):

Haidt, J. (2003). Elevation and the positive psychology of morality. In C. Keyes & J. Haidt (Eds.), *Flourishing: Positive psychology and the life well-lived* (pp. 275-290). Washington: American Psychological Association.

*Keltner, D., & Haidt, J. (2003). Approaching awe, a moral, spiritual, and aesthetic emotion. *Cognition and Emotion, 17*, 297-314.

Maslow, A. (1964). *Religions, values, and peak-experiences*. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press. **PP. 3-58 AND APPENDIX A.**

EXERCISES:

Go to a museum (e.g., the Guggenheim) and pick out a piece of artwork or a display that has aesthetic value and touches you because of its beauty.

OR

Write down your thoughts about a piece of art, or something beautiful you see around campus grounds. Remember, we are blessed because Hofstra is a registered arboretum.

OR

Take a walk with a friend and comment on something pretty that you see

OR

Attend a concert and enjoy the sound for its musical value. Or pick out the most moving music you know of, and listen to it appreciatively on headphones every night. Or ask a friend to recommend the most beautiful music he or she knows.

OR

Keep a journal, and every night, record something you saw during the day that struck you as extremely beautiful, or skillful.

OR

Find something that makes you happy, in aesthetics or value, a physical activity or an object, and let it inspire you throughout the day.

OR

Visit a Fine Arts Library and browse through the art books.

Week 13 **Growth by Virtue:** What is morality? How does it develop? Can we
Date become better people by doing good deeds? Does objective morality exist?

READING(S):

Damon, W. (1999). The moral development of children. *Scientific American*, 281, 71-78.

*Piliavin, J. A. (2003). Doing well by doing good: Benefits for the benefactor. In C. Keyes & J. Haidt (Eds.), *Flourishing: Positive psychology and the life well-lived* (pp. 227-248). Washington: American Psychological Association.

Walker, L. J., & Pitts, R. C. (1998). Naturalistic conceptions of moral maturity. *Developmental Psychology*, 34, 403-419.

EXERCISES:

The pleasant life involves the pleasures of positive affect and personal well-being. Map out your ideal day, then live and savor it. ALSO, act like a philanthropist and help someone out. Which activity made you happier in both magnitude *and* duration? Why? Does it depend on how you define happiness? Explain. Which act would Jeremy Bentham (19th century philosopher and early advocate of utilitarianism) more likely endorse? Why? Do you agree? This week's exercise is more involved than the others. Therefore, the write-up should be between 2-3 pages. I think this is an especially valuable exercise and think you'll derive great benefit.

Week 14 **Meaning & Purpose:** What impact does having a meaning/sense of
Date purpose in life have on happiness? Is there a relationship between
 meaning, hope, gratitude, and/or attachment? How can we acquire
 a meaning in life? Do you agree with Viktor Frankl: "He who has a why can get
 through any how?"

READING(S):

Baumeister, R. F., & Vohs, K. D. (2002). The pursuit of meaningfulness in life. In C.R. Synder & S.J. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology* (pp. 608-631). New York: Oxford University Press.

*Frankl, V. E. (1984). *Man's search for meaning: An introduction to logotherapy* (3rd ed.). (I. Lasch, Trans.). New York: Simon & Schuster. (Original work published in 1959). **PP. 119-157.**

Seligman, M. E. P. (2002). *Authentic happiness: Using the new positive psychology to realize your potential for lasting fulfillment*. New York: Free Press. **CHAPTER 14 (PP. 251-260).**

EXERCISES:

Write your own legacy. Think ahead to your life as you would like it to be and how you would like to be remembered by those closest to you. What accomplishments would you mention? What personal strengths would they enumerate? In short, what is your legacy?

Week 15 **Strengths, Choice, and Contentment:** What is the paradox of choice? Do we really need 68 kinds of toothpaste to choose from? Now *I* have to decide my medical procedure? Are you a maximizer or satisfier? How does chasing the latest trends erode your quality of life and morals? What are the personal, social, and ecological costs of materialism?

READING(S):

Kasser, T. (2006). Materialism and its alternatives. In M. Csikszentmihalyi & I. Csikszentmihalyi (Eds.), *A life worth living: Contributions to positive psychology* (pp. 200-214). New York: Oxford University Press.

Peterson, C. (2006). *A primer in positive psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press. **CHAPTER 6 (PP. 137-164).**

*Schwartz, B. (2004). *The paradox of choice: Why more is less*. New York: Harper Perennial. **CHAPTER 1(PP. 9-22), 2 (PP. 23-46), AND 11 (PP. 221-236).**

Schwartz, B., Ward, A., & Monterosso, J. (2002). Maximizing versus satisficing: Happiness is a matter of choice. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 83, 1178-1197.

*****PROJECT/PAPER DUE DAY, DATE, YEAR*****

EXERCISES:

Complete the VIA Classification Survey (the long version) at www.authentic happiness.org. Before completing it, predict your top 5 strengths. Was your prediction correct? Why or why not? Explain your gut reaction when you saw your results? **What new insights did you gain from this? Attach a copy of your results from this assessment and the shorter survey you completed at the beginning of the semester to the paper. Is there a difference? Which list rings

truer for you? Why? Knowing this, what should you do differently? How will this information affect you???

Week 16

FINAL EXAMINATION DAY, DATE, YEAR

Date

***I reserve the right to modify the course syllabus during the semester as the course progresses and external events dictate. Any and all changes made will be communicated either via your official Hofstra email address and/or in class.**

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