

## Syllabus

### PSY 315G RESILIENCY AND POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Rollins College Psychology  
Fall Semester 2006  
Wednesday 6:45 – 9:25 pm

Hamilton Holt School  
(August 24 – December 7)  
Bush 129

**Professor:** Dr. Marie C. Shafe  
**Office:** Cornell Social Science 238  
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**Phone:** 407-646-2390

**Office Hours:**  
M, T, W, Th  
1:30 – 3:30 pm  
By Appointment

#### Course Description:

This course will examine the paradigm shift from pathology to strengths-based psychology. Within psychology today, there is a growing body of work that includes a strengths-based and resiliency approach. This course is designed to explore the concepts, research behind the concepts, techniques, resiliency factors and exercises to enhance optimism, decrease stressors, and significantly increase well-being. The format of the course will be didactic, experiential, and interactive along with assigned readings to create an environment conducive to learning new concepts, skills and applications.

#### Course Objectives:

1. Students will learn the distinction between the emerging Positive Psychology principles and other theoretical principles of psychology.
2. Students will develop an understanding of resiliency factors and how to use them.
3. Students will develop an understanding of the dimensions of happiness/subjective well-being and their application to their lives.
4. Students will be expected to demonstrate applications of core concepts of Positive Psychology and resiliency factors.
5. Students will acquire skills to implement strengths-based concepts in their lives.
6. Students will become familiar with research that supports the principles, strategies, and skills of Positive Psychology.

#### Course Format:

This course will include didactic instruction, experiential learning exercises, research writing, and written examinations. **There will be an experiential learning exercise each week.**

#### Required Texts and Readings:

Compton, William C. (2005) *An introduction to positive psychology*. Belmont, CA: Thomson-Wadsworth.

Reivich, K. and Shatte, A. (2002) *The resilience factor*. New York: Broadway Books.

**All e-mail communication regarding this course is to be completed using the official Rollins e-mail address for BOTH students and professor. All official communication coming to you via e-mail will be through your Rollins e-mail address. CHECK YOUR ROLLINS E-MAIL ADDRESS DAILY.**

### **Additional Recommended Readings:**

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990) *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. NY: HarperPerennial.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1997) *Finding flow: The psychology of engagement in everyday life*. NY: Basic Books.

Prochaska, J., Norcross, J. and DiClemente, C. (2002) *Changing for good: A revolutionary six-stage program for overcoming bad habits and moving your life positively forward*. New York: Quill.

Seligman, Martin (2002) *Authentic happiness*. New York: Free Press.

### **Required Assignments and Learning Experiences:**

1. **Complete assigned readings weekly prior to class session.**
2. **There will be two examinations: mid-term and final exams**
3. **Assigned Learning Experiences.** Complete all exercises and *assignments*. Instructions will be given in class by Dr. Shafe. You will have some specific assignments which will be due the following week. There will be an assignment of completing an exercise of ***Intentional Acts of Kindness for 4 weeks and another assignment of Gratitude for four weeks. Each assignment is to be completed, written, and handed in.***
4. **Assessment Paper.** Complete a written assessment of your experience with the assignments, what you have learned, and how what you have learned relates to the principles of Positive Psychology and Resiliency. This paper should be between 2 - 4 pages.
5. **Research Paper.** Select an area or concept of Positive Psychology and research the topic. This paper needs to be between 10 - 12 pages and is to utilize at least five (5) references other than the textbooks used in class. The references may be books, professional journal articles, or book chapters. **APA style is to be used.** References may be obtained from the internet as long as they are professional sources and are cited appropriately according to APA Style. Any questions about APA Style of writing may be directed to Dr. Shafe or Thomas Johnson Writing Center.

### **Evaluation Criteria:**

Assignments	10%
Mid-term Exam	20%
Final Exam	25%
Assessment Paper	15%
Research Paper	25%
Attendance and Participation	5%**

## Classroom Policies and Procedures:

- Attendance, Punctuality, and Group Participation** - Since most of the learning experiences in this course are interactive and participatory, **attendance is mandatory**. Attendance will be taken each class session. In order to have an environment most conducive to positive, productive learning, each student needs to be present and an active participant. Each student is responsible for all information presented in class and assigned for class. It is **essential for students to be punctual so as not to disrupt class experiences** for other students. Student willingness to actively participate and contribute to learning experiences enhances those experiences for the entire class. As a student, you bring enormous resources and experiences which can enrich the classroom experience. **\*\*More than three (3) absences will result in a loss of a letter grade unless there are extenuating circumstances which had been discussed with Dr. Shafe.**
- Professor Availability** – If, at anytime you wish to discuss **any issue related to the class** with me, particularly those related to your class performance, do not hesitate to contact me. ***I am available and willing to set up an appointment convenient to both of us. It is important to have this course be a productive and rewarding experience for you. Therefore, contact me with any questions, concerns, ideas and suggestions you have.***
- Paper Formatting** – All papers required in this course are to be in the formatting style of the American Psychological Association, *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association*. To avoid any penalty for a paper, please use an abstract, reference page, title page, and correctly formatted citations. Make sure that all source material, including the Internet is cited.
- Method of Grading** –

A = 94 – 100	B = 84 – 86	C = 74 – 76	D = 64 - 66
A- = 90 – 93	B - = 80 - 83	C- = 70 – 73	D- = 60 - 63
B+ = 87 – 89	C+ = 77 – 79	D+ = 67 – 69	F = Below 60
- Academic Honesty** – Students are expected to comply with the Student Conduct policies of Rollins College which includes ethical conduct and that the student will not cheat or plagiarize. Plagiarism may result in a grade of F for the course.
- Respect for Individual Differences** – The Department of Graduate Studies in Counseling endorses a learning climate which represents diversity and individual differences and encourages the open-minded exploration of differences among individuals. While I do not expect all students to think the same way, I do expect that you, as students, will be accepting of differences in ideas, people, cultures, and world views and strive to understand how other people’s perspectives, behaviors, and world views are different from your own.
- Assignment Policy** – **All assignments are due when stated. Assignments will not be accepted beyond the announced deadline.** For emergencies only, the student needs to contact Dr. Shafe and discuss the circumstances of the emergency. ***All assignments may be emailed directly to Dr. Shafe at both [mshafe@rollins.edu](mailto:mshafe@rollins.edu). Emailed assignments are to arrived no later than two(2) hours prior to the time of the regularly scheduled class for which the assignment is due.***

The professor reserves the right to modify the course syllabus as needed as the course progresses and external events dictate. Any and all changes made will be announced either on the official Rollins College email and/or in class.

**\*\*\*\*It is imperative that all students check your Rollins College email regularly. All students are responsible for information sent via your official Rollins email address.**

## Assignments and Due Dates

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
Positive Introduction	August 23
Three (3) Blessings	September 27
Intentional Acts of Kindness	October 25
Gift of Time	September 13
One Door Closes, One Door Opens	October 4
Savoring	November 8
Putting It Into Perspective	November 15
Gratitude Letter and Visit	November 29
Satisficing vs Maximizing	November 22
Life Summary	December 6

## Assessment Paper

1. The paper is to encompass:
  - a. What you have learned from the assignments
  - b. How what you have learned relates to the principles of Positive Psychology and Resiliency
2. The paper is NOT an opinion piece to be quickly put together in an hour or two. It is a scholarly reflection with supporting evidence from class content and exercises.
3. The Assessment Paper is to include all assignments and exercises and is **Due the last class session, one week prior to the Final Exam.**

## Research Paper

1. American Psychological Association (APA) style of writing is to be used. This is the official writing format for papers in Psychology. ***However, you may use first person in this paper which is a deviation from APA style of writing.*** This means that the paper is to include:
  - a. Cover page
  - b. Running Head
  - c. Abstract
  - d. Introduction
  - e. Primary context of paper
  - f. Conclusion or Summary
  - g. Any references used in the body of your paper must be properly cited and referenced at the end of your paper in a References page

- i. Bandura (1996) has proposed....
- ii. Maximizing and satisficing are two concepts that address the paradox of choices individuals face. (Schwartz, 2004)
- iii. When making a statement that is not original with you, provide support of that statement and cite the author of that statement or concept or idea
- iv. At the end of your paper, all references cited in the body of your paper are to be listed in the References section, in alphabetical order
- v. Do not list any references in the reference section that are not cited in the body of your paper

4. **Paper Due Final November 15.**

**Class Schedule and Assignments**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings/Assignments</b>
August 23	Overview of Course Overview Positive Psychology	Positive Introduction
August 30	Positive Emotions	Compton Chs. 1 - 2 Blessings Exercise
September 6	Happiness Amplifying Positive Emotions	Compton Chs. 3 - 6
13	Classification of Strengths Signature Strengths	Compton Chs. 7 - 8
20	Meaningful Relationships Positive Parenting Resiliency Factors Forgiveness	Reivich/Shatte Chs. 10 & 11
27	Flow, Creativity, and Well-Being Positive Mental Health and Physical Health Positive Emotions	Compton Chs. 9 - 10
October 4	<b>Mid-Term Exam</b>	<b>Compton Chapters 1 – 10 RS Chs. 10, 11 PowerPoint Handouts</b>
11	Resiliency Factors Forgiveness	Reivich/Shatte Chs. 1 - 3
18	Resiliency Skills	Reivich/Shatte Chs. 4 – 6
25	Challenging Beliefs ABCDE	Reivich/Shatte Ch. 7
November 1	Resiliency Applications Putting it into Perspective	Reivich/Shatte Ch. 8 & 9

8	Resiliency Applications Paradox of Choice Satisficing vs. Maximizing	
15	Work, Creativity, Love and Personal Satisfaction Meaning at Work	Compton Chs. 11 - 12 Reivich/Shatte Ch 12 & 13
<b>22</b>	<b>Out of class assignments will be given</b>	<b>No classroom session</b>
29	Meaning and Purpose The Meaningful Life Life Summary/Legacy	
December 6	<b>Final Examination</b>	<b>C Chapters 11- 12</b> <b>RF Chapters 7 – 13</b> <b>PowerPoint Handouts</b>

**This course will have you completing exercises each week. However, I believe that you will find each of the exercises personally rewarding as you learn what Positive Psychology and resiliency factors are and how they impact individuals in a positive, productive way.**

### **Positive Introduction**

Compose a Positive Introduction of **yourself at Your Very Best.**

The Positive Introduction should have a beginning, middle and an end. It is to be about one concrete moment in time when you felt at you very best. It will tell a specific story that shows you at your best and illustrates what your believe to be your highest strength.

This introduction may be about a task you accomplished, a time at work, a time in nature, a time on vacation, a time with family and/or friends, a time by yourself....and so on. Be specific in your descriptions and make your story come alive. It should end with a bang, not a whimper.

**Make write your Positive Introduction during the week to provide a copy for Dr. Shafe. Remember to keep a copy for yourself.**

**Gratitude is a powerful tool for increasing satisfaction because it amplifies good memories about the past. Additionally, no one person ever becomes whomever he/she becomes in life without the assistance, encouragement or influence of many individuals. As one proceeds throughout the lifespan, one encounters many individuals along the way—parents, friends, teachers, coaches, teammates, professors, employers, siblings, children and other family members, co-workers, mentors, and so on—who were especially kind, helpful and/or influential in your successes.**

**Persons and events contribute daily in a cumulative effect upon our lives. Often, these individuals go unrecognized in formal or informal ways. There are many rituals, dependent upon ethnic heritage, religions, or such, for a diversity of “rites of passage” that exists throughout the world. However, our society seems to lack gratitude rituals, formal ways of expressing thanks to those who have done well by us. Think about the people in your life that have significantly contributed to you in some way.**

**Write a Gratitude Letter to one of these individuals describing in concrete terms why you are grateful. The letter is to be concrete: name specifics the person did for you, and exactly how it affected your life. Tell what you are doing now and how you often remember their efforts. Make it come alive.**

**Please be prepared to read your letter aloud to the person as an expression of appreciation, recognition and gratitude for the person and his/her efforts of support, encouragement, and challenge/inspiration for your during your life. If the person lives within 100 miles of you at present, call and set a time to visit. Once there, read the letter to this person. If the person is further than 100 miles, call him/her on the phone and read the letter to him/her.**

**Be prepared to discuss the following questions:**

- 1. How did you feel as you wrote the letter?**
- 2. How did the other person react to your expression of gratitude? How were you affected by other’s reaction?**
- 3. How long do you think these feelings will last after you present your letter?**
- 4. To what extent do you think you will recall the experience in the days that follow the reading of the letter? How do you think this recollection will affect your mood?**
- 5. Have you thought of others with whom you wish to share your gratitude?**
- 6. How do you think this experience will influence, at all, your current and future development?**

## **Example Gratitude Letter:**

**Dear Dr. Gibson,**

**As I think back to the three years I was in the doctoral program and you were my major professor and dissertation chair, so many great memories come flooding back. I remember the time that you invited me to be part of a research team for a grant you had on consultation in schools. You took the time to teach me to write grants, patiently showing me the various steps and jargon federal specifications required. You took the team out to dinner and made a point of expressing to each of us your confidence in us to successfully complete both the research and the writing of the technical report.**

**I remember being in New Orleans my second year for a professional conference. You had made sure that your grants had included funds for some doctoral students to attend at least two profession conferences—one state and one national during the year. You invited me to attend and then made sure that I met other professionals in the field including those who were the major researchers and authors of the counseling profession. You also took several of us to Pat O'Brien's to enjoy an evening away from “the intensity of studying and work required back in Bloomington”.**

**I remember how you told me, “There is more to learn than what’s in the journals and textbooks. You can’t know everything. However, you can make connections with people throughout this entire profession and beyond. Your relationships will serve to encourage continual renewal both personally and professionally.”**

**A highlight of my doctoral years was when my dissertation was accepted and I had passed the oral defense. You came out, shook my hand, and said, “Congratulations, Dr. Shafe.” It was a wonderful feeling, but seeing how proud you were of me was an even greater thrill. You beamed your famous smile that we graduate students had become so accustomed. Then, you invited me to dinner to celebrate along with friends “so the moment is anchored in your memory”---as though I would ever forget! Your encouragement, support and expertise are the reasons my doctoral program was such a meaningful experience for me.**

**I hope that the students you have had over the years appreciate the gift they have in having you for a professor. I knew you were a good teacher when I was in my doctoral program. However, as I have taught over the years, I realize over and over what a great teacher, mentor and friend you were to me. I hope that in your retirement you recognize how much you are appreciated.**

**One thing you taught me was to always care deeply for each student and to make yourself available continually, long after graduation. I have worked to emulate you in this manner with the students I have taught since completion of my doctoral studies.**