

PSYCHOLOGY 4460-PSYCHOLOGY OF HAPPINESS & WELL-BEING--FALL 2006

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Office Hours: M, W & F 10:15 - 11:15 and by appt.

Texts: INTRODUCTION TO POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY by William C. Compton &
PURSUIING HUMAN STRENGTHS by Martin Bolt

This course will be an introduction to theories and research in psychology that examine topics relevant to the nature of happiness and psychological well-being. Topics covered will include happiness, life satisfaction, creativity, wellness, love, self-actualization, wisdom, as well as a number of others. Recently, in psychology these topics have been discussed under the heading of "Positive Psychology". In addition to research covered by positive psychology, we will also examine other relevant ideas on the nature of psychological well-being. The course will be a combination of traditional lectures, class exercises, class discussions, and self-exploration exercises.

Grading will be based on: (1.) four multiple choice exams each covering about 25% of the course material (i.e. no comprehensive final), (2.) completion of ten short, written journal exercises that ask how the perspectives discussed in class apply to your life, (3.) a short written research review, and (4.) a personal project.

EXAMS: The four exams will each have 35 multiple choice questions worth one point each and one short essay question worth 20 points for a total of 55 points. Note that the 20 point short essay will be a take-home style essay question distributed on the day of the multiple choice exams. If you miss a scheduled exam, you may make it up during the time scheduled for the final exam. You may also elect to re-take any one of the first three exams during the second hour of the final exam time (on a re-take you get the higher of the two grades). Exams are worth up to 220 points.

JOURNALS: Ten times during the semester I will distribute a short thought question or experiential exercise. Answers to the questions require only that you apply the material of the course to your life. Please note, that the journals ask you to explore how ideas impact you personally. However, no one needs to self-disclose anything that she or he feels uncomfortable with. For instance, they may ask you to write a short personal essay, keep a daily diary, or practice a technique to enhance well-being. Your answers should be printed/typed, double-spaced, and at least 200 words (this is approximately 3/4 page of double-spaced, 12-point font text). Each journal is potentially worth 10 points. Grading will be on a 4-level point system: 10 points=answered fully with a thorough discussion of how it relates to your life, 5 points=journal answered fully, but is late without prior approval,

2 points=journal is answered briefly with little effort and is late, 0 points=journal is not turned in. Please note that the journals will be distributed via your MTSU email account. I will announce the distributions in class, but it will be your responsibility to access the journals and hand them in on time. Journals are worth up to 100 points.

RESEARCH REVIEW: The review will consist of four research articles published in professional journals. All three articles should cover the same topic in positive psychology (e.g. what predicts happiness, what factors are related to healthy marriage, what leads to satisfaction at work). The review will be 2-3 pages of typed, double-spaced text. Details will be given out later in class. The review will be worth 30 points.

PROJECT: The project will be a 4-5 page paper describing something you did to further explore positive psychology. There are four options for the project: (1.) you may do a formal research paper that looks at a theory or research area, (2.) you may try to implement ideas from positive psychology in your own life and describe what happened, (3.) you can do an in-depth interview with someone who you admire and lives a "positive" life, or (4.) you may create your own project. You must have your project approved before you begin. Details will be given out later in class. The review will be worth 50 points.

EXTRA CREDIT: Opportunities will be available to earn 15 extra credit points through a number of means such as class participation, book or web site reviews, or the psychology research pool (details later in the course).

THE FINAL GRADE WILL BE BASED ON THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

A = 400-360 (90%), B = 359-320 (80%), C = 319-280 (70%),
D = 279-240 (60%), F = 239 or less.

Note from MTSU about Lottery Scholarships:

"To retain Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship eligibility, you must earn a cumulative TELS GPA of 2.75 after 24 attempted hours and a cumulative TELS GPA of 3.0 thereafter. A grade of C, D, F, or I in this class may negatively impact TELS eligibility. Dropping a class after 14 days may also impact eligibility; if you withdraw from this class and it results in an enrollment status of less than full-time, you may lose eligibility for your lottery scholarship."

Lecture & Exam Schedule

Topics Begin on: Topics with Readings:

Aug. 30 Introduction to Positive Psychology

Chapter #1 (Compton); "Introduction" (Bolt)

Sept. 4 no class

6 Positive Emotion & Healthy Motivation
Ch. #2 (Compton); p.81-89 & 99-109, 112-116 (Bolt)

13 Wellness & Health Psychology. Ch. #6 (Compton)
(Note: out of order in terms of the Table of Contents)

20 **Exam #1**

22 Exam review

25 Subjective Well-Being
Ch. #3 (Compton); p. 117-125, 128-131 & 134-149 (Bolt)

Oct. 2 Leisure, Flow, Peak Performance
Ch. #4 (Compton); p. 125-127 & 131-132 (Bolt)

6 no class

9 Love & Healthy Relationships
Ch. #5 (Compton); Ch. #2 & Ch. #9 (Bolt)

16 Fall Break--no class

18 **Exam #2**

20 Exam review

23 Excellence & Creativity. Ch. #7 (Compton)

27 Resilience, Wisdom, & Self-actualization
Ch. #8 (Compton); p. 45-53 & 89-98 (Bolt)

Nov. 3 Interventions for Happiness & Well-being
Ch. #9 (Compton); Ch. #8 & p. 54-62 (Bolt)

10 **Exam #3**

13 Exam review

15 Religion and Well-Being
Ch. #10 (Compton); Ch. #3 & p. 133-134 & 150-158 (Bolt)

22 Positive Work & Positive Communities
Ch. #11 (Compton); p. 109-112 (Bolt)

24 no class

29 A look to the future & conclusions. Ch. #12 (Compton)

Dec. 11 **Exam #4** (10:00-12:00)