

**Special Seminar in Psychology: Positive Psychology Interventions**  
PSYC 978 (Section 001) – 3 credit hours

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Fall 2002, Monday 1:00-4:00  
2234 East Hall

Positive psychology calls for as much focus on strength as on weakness, as much interest in building the best things in life as in repairing the worst, and as much attention to fulfilling the lives of healthy people as to healing the wounds of the distressed. The concern of psychology with human problems is understandable. It will not and should not be abandoned. Positive psychologists are “merely” saying that the psychology of the past sixty years is incomplete. But as simple as this proposal sounds, it demands a sea change in perspective. Psychologists interested in promoting human potential need to start with different assumptions and to pose different questions from their peers who assume a disease model. This seminar will first concern itself with the basics of positive psychology and then move to an unexplored topic: interventions informed by this perspective in domains like family and childrearing, friendship and romance, recreation and leisure, school, work, and service,

Requirements: attendance and participation in weekly seminar; one-page, single-spaced, 12 point font reaction paper per topic; and one-hour seminar presentation (plus annotated bibliography).

**Relevant Webpages**

Positive Psychology Webpage:  
<http://www.positivepsychology.org>

Positive Organizational Studies Webpage:  
<http://www.bus.umich.edu/positiveorganizational scholarship/>

**Readings**

*American Psychologist* (special issue) January, 2000 (AP)

Comte-Sponville, A. (2001). *A small treatise on the great virtues* (C. Temerson, Trans.). New York: Metropolitan. (STGV).

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. New York: HarperCollins. (FL).

\*Dutton

\*Fredrickson, B. L. (2001). The role of positive emotions in positive psychology. *American Psychologist*, 56, 218-226.

Myers, D. G. (1993). *The pursuit of happiness*. New York: Avon Books. (PH)

\*Peterson, C., & Park, N. (2003). Positive psychology as the even-handed positive psychologist views it. *Psychological Inquiry*.

\*Peterson, C., & Park, N. (2003). Virtues and organizations.

Seligman, M. E. P. (2002). *Authentic happiness*. New York: Free Press. (AH)

\* available from instructor

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading</u>
9/9/02	serious introductions	
9/16/02	positive emotions	AP (Csikszentmihalyi & Seligman; Salovey et al.) Peterson & Park (2003a) AH (Chapters 1-7) Fredrickson (2001)
9/23/02	happiness	PH AP (Buss; Diener; Myers))
9/30/02	flow	FL AP (Massimini & Della Fave; Ryan & Deci)
10/21/02	virtues & character	STGV AH (Chapters 8-9) AP (Vaillant; Peterson; Taylor et al.)
10/28	talents & abilities	AP (Baltes & Staudinger; Simonton; Winner)
11/4/02	positive institutions	AH (Chapters 10-12) AP (Lubinski & Benbow; Larson) Dutton Peterson & Park (2003b)
11/11/02	interventions 1	
11/18/02	interventions 2	
11/25/02	interventions 3	
12/02/02	interventions 4	
12/09/02	conclusions	AH (Chapters 13-14)