Educational Psychology 5063/6063-090
Enhancing Happiness and Life Satisfaction

Course Syllabus

Instructor Information

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Nature of the Course

Martin Seligman, a past APA president, launched the positive psychology movement in 1998. According to Seligman, the “topic of positive psychology was happiness… the gold standard for measuring happiness was life satisfaction, and… the goal of positive psychology was to increase life satisfaction” (2011). Seligman recently introduced a theory of well-being and now asserts that “the topic of positive psychology is well-being… the gold standard for measuring well-being is flourishing, and… the goal of positive psychology is to increase flourishing” (2011). The new “well-being theory” has five elements: “positive emotion, engagement [also known as flow], meaning, positive relationships, and accomplishments” (Seligman, 2011, pg. 16).

One goal of this course is to practice journal activities and teach an adult how to use the activities to enhance well-being. Another goal is to apply Frisch’s Quality of Life Therapy & Coaching exercises to high-priority areas of your life and teach two adults how to practice QOLT activities from the Toolbox CD to increase life satisfaction. According to Ed Diener, only 15% of our sense of well-being is influenced by genetics (or “heritability”) and the other 85% is a combination of learning new things, feeling emotionally supported by a social network, using your strengths and favorite skills, sensing that you are respected, and having your basic needs fulfilled (2011).

Positive psychology has focused “increasing attention to the ‘sweetest emotions’ [namely] happiness, joy, love, curiosity, hope, and gratitude” (Emmons & McCullough, 2004). Researchers have found that the “strengths ‘of the heart’—zest, gratitude, hope, and love—are more robustly associated with life satisfaction than are the more cerebral strengths…” (Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004). A pattern exists that these “heart’ strengths foreshadow subsequent life satisfaction” (Park et al., 2005). According to Seligman (2011), life satisfaction “essentially measures cheerful mood” and is closely related to traditional definitions of happiness.
A Test of Flourishing (adapted from an assessment in FLOURISHING (Seligman, 2011, pg. 27)

1. “Taking all things together, how happy would you say you are?”
2. Do you “love learning new things” & do you feel absorbed or interested in activities?
3. Do you mostly feel that what you do in your life is “valuable and worthwhile”/meaningful?
4. Overall, do you feel “very positive” about yourself?
5. Are you “always optimistic” about your future?
6. If anything goes wrong, do you “take a long time” to feel like your normal self again? (reverse)
7. Do individuals in your life genuinely care about you?

Based on answers from 2,000 adults/country, Felicia Huppert and Timothy So (2009) found that only 33% of Danish/18% of British/6% of Russian citizens seem to be flourishing (Seligman, 2011).

Course Objectives

By the end of the semester, you will be able to

1. explain how practicing gratitude may increase your sense of well-being,
2. evaluate empirically-validated and evidence-based journal activities and QOLT exercises designed to enhance life satisfaction and flourishing,
3. apply QOLT exercises to high-priority goals in valued areas of your life, and
4. teach other adults how to practice journal activities and QOLT exercises from the Toolbox CD & analyze how their reactions/ratings compare to your ratings.

Course Requirements


ASSIGNMENTS

Reflection Journal

You will select and practice one activity per day (7 activities each week) in a reflection journal for 3 or 4 weeks. After practicing an exercise, you’ll describe your reaction and rate it on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent).

1. “5-in-1-day acts of kindness” (Seligman et al.) Examples in one day: cheered a friend, gave up bus seat, gave directions, allowed someone to cut ahead in line or in traffic, and loaned an item (Practice only on one day in a week.)
2. “Visualizing the best possible future for oneself” (Lyubomirksy) Visualize a different scene each week. See yourself being “your best self” and being/doing what you’ve hoped.

3. “What I Take for Granted” list (Emmons) List NEW items if repeated each week

4. Identify a mentor (an individual who has helped you in an important way). You may choose people in different areas of your life (professional, personal, academic, or spiritual). Write a letter of gratitude (1/4 page) to ONE mentor and complete a 5-minute gratitude visit with that mentor in person (Seligman et al.). If you cannot visit in person—after sending an email or writing a letter—call or Skype for a personal contact.

5. “Extracting Blessings from Adversities” (finding “benefits in difficulties”) (Emmons) Ask a close relative to function as an “Accountability Partner.” You will identify one blessing from an adversity. Ask your accountability partner to think of one blessing from an adversity as well. Help each other “find hidden blessings… identify barriers … or give thanks for aspects of your life that may be particularly challenging” (Emmons). Talk to your accountability partner for a few minutes and write your insights about applying gratitude to difficult life circumstances.

6. Ask Yourself 3 Questions “The Naikan practice involves reflecting on 3 questions:
What have I received from ____________?
What have I given to ________________?
What troubles and difficulties have I caused ________________?”

After reflecting on your week, write an answer to each question (Emmons, 2007).

7. “Scan the Day Differently” (Kauffman) or “Reverse the focus from negative to positive.” Use a “mental spotlight each night” and review daily events “thinking only about what went right.” (Kauffman).

8. “Reflecting, writing, and talking about one's happiest and unhappiest life events for 15 minutes” (Lyubomirksy). Identify a happy life event and an unhappy life event (or two happy events) that happened long ago. You may choose to write about only happy life events. Write a paragraph about two events. Do not use traumatic events or someone else’s life experiences. Talk to your accountability partner for 5 minutes about the events and then write another paragraph with a few insights or reactions after your discussion.

9. Write answers to 4 questions about a person in “Stand in Their Shoes” (McKay):
1. 'What needs influence him or her to act this way?'
2. 'What beliefs or values influence him or her to act this way?'
3. 'What aspects of his or her history (hurts, losses, successes, failures, and rewards) influence this behavior?'
4. 'What limitations (fears, health problems, lack of skills) influence this behavior?'
10. Write about “Three Good Things” that went well during the week. (Seligman et al.) Explain why each good thing happened. Think about these possibilities in answer to the question, “Why did it happen?” Write one cause of each event. Did it happen because of (1) good luck? (2) your preparation? (3) someone else’s help?

11. Write a goal in one area weekly. See Frisch’s “16 Areas of Life Which May Constitute a Person’s Overall QOL” (Self-Esteem, Friends, Work, Learning, Love, Play, Money, Health, etc.) Work on one goal each week. Comment if you make any progress.

**CLASS DISCUSSIONS**

You will participate in six class discussions. After reading assignments and watching course videos, you’ll share a short opinion in answer to a question in our class discussions (supported by evidence from your readings), and you’ll comment on a classmate’s opinion.

**PERSONAL COACHING STRATEGY (PCS)**

You’ll construct a strategy to find new ways to achieve goals in valued areas of your life by selecting and practicing 5 QOLT exercises (undergrads) or 6 QOLT exercises (grads) per week for 3 or 4 weeks. Your goal is to find 12 (undergrads) or 16 (grads) of the most helpful QOLT exercises from the Toolbox CD to make progress on the goals you set at the beginning of the semester. After practicing them, evaluate the QOLT exercises in your PCS! You will include only exercises and interventions rated 4+ for your goals in this assignment.

**PROJECT**

**Design and present an informative PowerPoint Show on Enhancing Well-Being for two adults.** If you’d like to design a list of Journal activities and QOLT exercises for a parent, sibling, or close friend, you may share the interventions you feel would be most helpful based on the needs of your audience in a 45-minute PowerPoint presentation. You will include 10 QOLT exercises from the Toolbox CD and 5 journal activities that may be useful to your participants in a PowerPoint presentation and share instructions in a handout. Participants will sign a disclaimer form, evaluate the presentation and interventions, and send an email to the instructor. (Examples of PowerPoint shows and all forms are provided in the course.) You may work with a classmate or complete the project on your own.

**ANALYSIS PAPER**

**Undergraduate students:** You’ll teach an adult (age 18+) how to practice 7 activities of his/her choice from the Journal for one week and ask your friend to rate each activity. At the end of the week, you’ll discuss the activities and listen to his/her reactions. You’ll write a 2-page analysis paper that compares your reactions/ratings to 7 activities (see your journal for your ratings) with your friend’s reactions/ratings. A suggested outline with a sample analysis paper is included in the course to give you an idea of the format. **Graduate students:** You will write a 3-page analysis paper after teaching 2 people how to practice 7 journal activities. You’ll see examples of graduate analysis papers on the course as well.
GRATITUDE QUIZ

At your convenience during two weeks of the semester, you’ll take an open-book, open-note online gratitude quiz. You’ll have 2 hours to complete the short quiz of True/False and Multiple-Choice questions. (See the practice quiz, study guide, and review in the Quiz preparation file.) Gratitude is a “crucial component of happiness.” Research suggests that a regular practice of gratitude may “increase the ‘set-point’ for happiness by as much as 25 percent” (Emmons, 2007).

FINAL ESSAY EXAM

Undergraduate students will write 3 one-page essays chosen from 10 possible essay questions for your open-book final essay exam. Graduate students will write 5 one-page essays from a list of 10 possible essay questions. To provide evidence for your answers, you’ll use research findings from selected chapters in THANKS! How Practicing Gratitude Can Make You Happier and The Psychology of Gratitude.

Grade Scale

Grading in this course is based upon the following activities and assignments. Since all graded assignments are related directly to course objectives, failure to complete a major assignment will result in an unsatisfactory course grade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSIGNMENTS</th>
<th>100 POINTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflection Journal 3-4 weeks</td>
<td>21 points</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Coaching Strategy:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Part 1</td>
<td>6 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Part 2: Practice QOLT Exercises 3-4 wks.</td>
<td>20 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Discussions</td>
<td>12 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quiz</td>
<td>6 points</td>
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<td>Project</td>
<td>10 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analysis Paper</td>
<td>10 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Essay Exam</td>
<td>15 points</td>
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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<th>Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>86-89</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-85</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>64-66</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>D-</td>
<td>50-63</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>76-79</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>49 and below</td>
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Planning Time

You will see 12 lessons in this course. Successful students (those earning an A, B, or C grade) use their time wisely. Just like a face-to-face course, the standard formula for college coursework is that every hour of class time results in three hours of homework. A three-unit course will require an average of 9 hours of homework (reading, research, and studying) per lesson. As a result, successful students plan their time wisely so that they keep up with assignments by maintaining a pace that fits the course schedule. They also communicate with the instructor so that they can receive much needed feedback on their work.

Online Course Responsibilities

This course requires significant self-motivation. Some lessons may be completed over 2 weeks. Many people believe that online learning is easier than the on-campus framework. Others may feel very intimidated at first. Be patient as you work your way through the first few lessons. If you are serious about the material, you will learn as much, if not more, than most on-campus students about this subject and develop reading and communication skills that are vital to the workforce of the 21st century.

The following is a list of general notes as they relate to the course:

- All communication with the instructor should be completed using the course mail tool.
- Assignments are to be submitted in the Discussion course tool by copying and pasting into the submission area. If you must attach a file, please use the Word format (.docx) or pdf for a document or .ppt for your PowerPoint show.
- If you email an assignment, I may not be able to find it in time to add the score to your grade.

Online Courtesy & Communication Policy

Extreme consideration for the feelings of others is expected. People cannot see you smile and may not know when you are joking. Do not tell people they are stupid or wrong. Do explain why you believe differently. If someone has the facts wrong, direct them to the source of accurate information or politely offer your alternative “facts.” Use of profanity or direct/indirect insults which defame a person’s character, race, ethnicity, religion, etc. are inappropriate and will not be tolerated.

Academic Dishonesty & Plagiarism

Cheating will not be tolerated in this course. Anyone caught cheating will fail the course and will be reported to the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, in accordance with the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities.

Successful students always make sure that their work is original. This is important because the instructor must be able to gauge what the student has learned. Therefore, copying the work of another person, whether an essay, answers on your assignments or during a test, is considered
plagiarism. Plagiarism is a form of cheating. If a student uses someone else’s work and does not give that person credit, it is considered plagiarism. Anyone who plagiarizes will receive a failing grade on the assignment. If this is repeated, the student will fail the course and can be expelled from the university. If you are “suspected” of plagiarism, you will bear the burden of proof. You must be able to present rough drafts or related materials and discuss the topic intelligently. Refer to the University of Utah Plagiarism Policy for more details and/or the University of Utah - Policy and Procedures Manual.

University Policy for Incomplete Grades

University policy states that the “I” grade may be given--at the instructor’s discretion--whenever a student has satisfactorily completed at least 80% of the coursework but is unable to complete the remainder due to extenuating circumstances beyond the student’s control. The instructor will stipulate the particular work to be completed before a new replacement grade can be submitted. If the work is not completed within one calendar year, the “I” grade will change to an “E” (failing) grade.

General Information

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the instructor and to the Center for Disability Services, http://disability.utah.edu/ 162 Olpin Union Building, 581–5020 (V/TDD) to make arrangements for accommodations. This information is available in alternative format with prior notification. Please provide the instructor with a letter from the Center for Disability Services as soon as possible. All written information in this course can be made available in an alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disabilities.

THE INSTRUCTOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO CHANGE/MODIFY THE CONTENTS OF THIS SYLLABUS

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TEACH Act Copyright Notice
The materials on this course Web site are only for the use of students enrolled in this course for purposes associated with this course and may not be retained or further disseminated.
DUE DATES FOR FALL 2012

CLASS DISCUSSIONS:
#1 Please post comments by September 8 and a reply to a classmate by September 15
#2 Post by September 22 and reply by September 29
#3 Post and reply by October 20
#4 Post and reply by November 10
#5 Post and reply by November 21
#6 Post and reply by December 3

JOURNALS & ANALYSIS PAPER
Journals submitted on Sept. 29, Oct. 6, 20, optional 27 & Analysis Paper is due on November 3

PERSONAL COACHING STRATEGY
PCS Part 1: September 22 at midnight
For PCS Part 2, practice 5-6 QOLT Exercises on Nov. 10, Nov. 17, and Dec. 1
FINAL PCS Part 2: Submit 12 or 16 QOLT exercises rated 4+ in completed outline by Dec. 4

PROJECT: November 30 at midnight

GRATITUDE QUIZ will open on November 21 and close on December 5

FINAL ESSAY EXAM opens on December 5 and closes on December 15 at midnight