Forgiving and Respecting Self: A New Lens on Life is a 3-credit course. You will learn how to help others become more self-accepting and self-forgiving, and you will learn what it means to respect and value yourself.

Tangney, Boone, & Dearing (2005) suggest a “New Lens on Life” shift in focus from the self’s narrow (and sometimes obsessive) concentration on personal transgressions to one’s contributions to others, to the community, and to growth in the future. This shift in perspective described by Templeton (1997) is the state when a “person who has gained a sense of humility is no longer phenomenologically at the center of his or her world. The focus is on the larger community of which he or she is a part.” According to Maruna (2001) and others, a restorative justice perspective places the emphasis “not on moral angst but on moral change and moral action.” Finally, Holmgren (2002) summarized the shift in focus: “To dwell on one’s past record of moral performance, either with a sense of self-hatred and self-contempt or with a sense of superiority, is an activity that is overly self-involved and devoid of any real moral value. The client will exercise his moral agency much more responsibly if he removes his focus on the fact that he did wrong and concentrate instead on the contribution he can make to others and on the growth he can experience in the moral and nonmoral realms” (p. 133). (Research findings available in Chapter 10 “Forgiving the Self: Conceptual Issues and Empirical Findings” published in Worthington’s Handbook of Forgiveness, 2005, pages 154-155.)

Students will study several models of self-forgiveness and identify one model appropriate for teaching family members or colleagues how to forgive the self for a minor self-destructive behavior such as overeating, persistent sleep deprivation, or a sedentary lifestyle. Students will also learn about Selhub’s “love response” (an adaptation of the relaxation response) as a cognitive and behavioral method to counter the long-term stress/fear response arising from thoughts such as “I am not enough” or “I do not have enough.” Specific exercises, behavioral
changes in food choices (Braverman, 2009), and changes in activity levels may be chosen to experiment with a healthy lifestyle. At the end of the semester, undergraduate students will teach principles of self-forgiveness and self-respect for 1 hour to two adult family members. Graduate students will give a presentation to two or three colleagues or fellow graduate students.

Course Description:

Students will explore the research about self-forgiveness and self-respect and will learn about philosophical issues as well as psychological issues. Students will learn important distinctions such as the difference between self-acceptance and self-forgiveness and the difference between self-esteem and self-respect.

Students will learn about the benefits of self-forgiveness and self-respect. Although self-forgiveness research is still in its infancy, researchers believe that the benefits of learning a “propensity toward feeling forgiven” may include a reduction in anger, anxiety, depression, “paranoid ideation, and interpersonal sensitivity” (Snyder & Lopez, 2002, p. 451). Students will search for research studies about whether self-forgiveness helps to protect an individual from experiencing a range of common self-destructive behaviors such as indulging a sugar addiction or maintaining a sedentary lifestyle.

Students will practice exercises to help change negative physiology to positive physiology. According to Dr. Selhub, clinical instructor, Harvard Medical School, and senior staff physician at Massachusetts General Hospital, when the brain thinks the answer to the question “Am I enough?” is “no,” it triggers a fear response. Blood pressure rises; cortisol and adrenaline flood the system. If the perception that “I’m not enough” continues over time, the immune system shuts down. A person may develop “inflammatory disorders from arthritis, autoimmune disorders, and allergies to diabetes, obesity, depression, and cardiovascular disease” (Selhub, 2009). As levels of adrenaline, cortisol, and related chemicals/substances rise, serotonin and dopamine levels fall. [Selhub noted that low serotonin may ‘produce cravings for junk or ‘comfort’ food…’] With unremitting stress, self-care behaviors may be replaced by self-destructive patterns, and an individual may feel anger and anxiety. Selhub’s prescription to address the fear response is to apply a “SHIELD,” a pneumonic to “Slow down; Honor what you feel; Inhale; Exhale; Listen to the self to find the answer to this question In what way did the situation tell me ‘I’m not enough’ or ‘I don’t have enough?’ and Decide to give yourself what you need” (Selhub, 2009). Many of the chemicals released in a Love Response, “endorphins, oxytocin, dopamine, vasopressin, and nitric oxide also perform another function: they help turn off the Fear Response, evoke the relaxation response, and create positive physiology” (Selhub, 2009, bold italics added).

Dr. Eric Braverman, clinical assistant professor of integrative medicine in neurological surgery at Weill Cornell Medical College in New York City, believes that brain chemistry “not only controls your physical state, but your emotional life as well” (2009). Four primary chemicals in the brain, dopamine, gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA), dopamine, and serotonin are a crucial part of the chemistry that “determines the brain’s effectiveness” and therefore “any modality that can facilitate neurogenesis or brain cell growth” can contribute to a better mood and higher-quality sleep (2009).
Course Objectives:

Core competencies include the ability to teach the process of forgiving the self for a minor issue:

1. Decide how to facilitate self-acceptance and/or self-forgiveness (Ulrich, 2009),
2. Consider the destructive effects of perfectionism, “self-destructive unselfishness,” “self-destructive self-blame” (Ulrich, 2009), “false limitations” and “false wrongdoings” (Flanigan, 1997),
3. Talk to someone as you try to determine your level of responsibility in a situation (Ulrich, 2009),
4. Replace self-destructive behaviors with daily self-care routines (Selhub, 2009),
5. Make lifestyle changes that show self-care (Braverman, 2009),
6. Focus on learning from the situation rather than ruminating about it (Lyubomirsky, 2008),
7. Make amends to the harmed person(s) with changed behavior and action (Maruna, 2001),
8. Reconcile with self and reconnect with others using the “love response” (Selhub, 2009) or another approach that increases loving-kindness while decreasing anxiety and fear,
9. Decrease feelings of self-resentment by focusing on character growth (Holmgren, 2002),
10. Shift the focus outside of or beyond the self by contributing to others and to the community (Templeton, 1997).

Course Requirements:

**NO TEXTBOOKS ARE REQUIRED:** STUDENTS WILL READ COURSE E-RESERVE JOURNAL ARTICLES AND BOOK CHAPTERS. ALL STUDENTS WILL BE REQUIRED TO READ THE MATERIALS AS OUTLINED IN THE LESSONS. GRADUATE STUDENTS WILL HAVE EXTRA READING ASSIGNMENTS.

**ASSIGNMENTS**

You will

1. write answers to questions posted in 12 weekly class discussions by providing specific examples from case studies, movies, interviews, documentaries, or guest speakers,
2. practice 12 out of 20 possible exercises (e.g. Selhub’s “Daily Reprogramming Tools for Self-Acceptance”) and write your thoughts in half-page weekly response papers,
3. watch 10 short course videos, utilize five suggestions for one of your own minor self-forgiveness situations, and write a 1-page reaction paper at the end of the semester,
4. interview a high school or college counselor, social worker, or psychologist about teen self-destructive behavior and self-forgiveness--identify common positive techniques and write a 2-page summary of the interview complete with Questions and Answers,
5. find 10 recent journal articles about self-destructive behavior and 10 recent journal articles on self-forgiveness or self-respect,
6. create a 10-slide (undergrads) or 15-slide (grads) Research PowerPoint show to use in teaching 2 family members or colleagues about applying principles of self-forgiveness
or self-respect to self-destructive behavior, record & archive your PP show (with your narration) on Wimba, an electronic classroom, with the help of a teaching assistant,

7. design a 1-hour presentation on forgiving the self for minor self-destructive behaviors such as 1) bingeing/overeating, 2) persistent sleep deprivation, or 3) a sedentary lifestyle and present it to 2 adult family members (undergrads) or colleagues (grads),

8. write a 1-page reaction paper about a live guest speaker (Wimba) and 1-page reaction paper on an archived guest lecture,

9. write a 5-page (undergrads) or 10-page (grads) research paper on using positive self-forgiveness methods with self-destructive behavior limited to problems such as excessive working, exercising, cosmetic procedures, shopping sprees, spending, caffeine, pornography viewing, reckless driving, etc. (email instructor for approval),

10. based on your readings about self-respect, choose the five most effective exercises and lifestyle changes to increase feelings of self-worth and self-respect, and

11. take an open-book, open-note final essay exam by writing 4 short one-page essays from a choice of 10 possible questions.

CLASS DISCUSSIONS
Our class holds a weekly discussion. After reading the lecture material and finishing the assignments listed in the weekly schedule, you’ll post an opinion at your convenience during the week and support your opinion with a case study, interview, movie, article, or course video). You’ll also write a response to another student’s comment about the discussion questions. If you don’t support your opinion or respond to a classmate, you’ll earn half credit.

GRADUATE STUDENTS

- You will have extra reading to use in your weekly discussion postings. Please add a paragraph at the bottom of your opinion posting in the normal class discussions.

Disclaimer

Students are NOT encouraged to share personal details of their own self-forgiveness stories with other students as part of the course. You may use case studies, videos based on true stories, textbook examples, and articles as examples to illustrate opinions or responses in postings. You’ll write about the process of applying five principles from the course videos to a minor self-forgiveness issue at the end of the semester. You will also have the chance to evaluate the exercises and lifestyle changes that contribute to greater self-respect.

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 may result in an unsatisfactory course grade.
ASSIGNMENTS

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<td>Class Discussions</td>
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<td>Weekly Response Papers about 12 Exercises</td>
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<td>Presentation for 2 Adult Family Members/Colleagues</td>
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<td>Summary of Research PPT Show placed on Wimba</td>
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<td>Reaction Papers</td>
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<td>Evaluation of Methods to increase Self-Respect</td>
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<td>Final Essay Exam</td>
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<td>5-Page Research Paper (undergrads) OR a 10-page Research Paper (grad. students)</td>
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TOTAL 100

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Planning Time

You’ll see 12 lessons in this course. Successful students (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 at least three hours of homework. A three-credit course will require at least 8-9 hours of homework (reading, research, 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 or teaching assistants often so that they can receive much needed feedback on their work.

Online Course Responsibilities

This course requires significant self-motivation. Some lessons take a considerable amount of time to complete. Please note that not all lessons are created equal. Some may take a bit more time than others. Some people believe this to be a much easier way to study this subject than in the on-campus frame work. 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 course communication with the instructor should be completed using the Blackboard email tool.
• Assignments are to be submitted into the submission area (copying a Word document and pasting it) or in a Word format (.doc) or a PPT. The preferred method is to copy and paste a Word document into the area.

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. Any time a student uses someone else’s work and does not give that person credit, it is 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.

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

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