



Shanghai Jiao Tong University

PS907 Positive Psychology

Term: July 3 – August 3, 2017

Instructor: Jennifer Crocker, PhD

Home Institution: The Ohio State University

Email: crocker.37@osu.edu

Class Hours: Monday through Thursday, 120 minutes each day

Discussion session: 2 hours each week

Total Contact Hours: 66 contact hours (45 minutes each, 3000 minutes in total)

Credit: 4 units

Course Description

Prior to World War II, psychology had three stated principles: make the lives of people fulfilling, identify and enhance human excellence, and treat pathology. Proponents of positive psychology make the argument that over the past 60 years, psychology, particularly clinical psychology, has focused almost solely on the treatment of pathology and less-than-optimal functioning, while ignoring the first two goals of psychology. Researchers and practitioners interested in studying and promoting human potential have made the argument that psychology should study human strengths and the conditions that lead to human flourishing.

In this course we will consider research and theory related to the following questions: Why bother studying positive experiences? What conditions result in optimizing human potential and flourishing? What benefits are associated with various human strengths? Can we do things differently to meet our full potential or are we stuck wherever we are? Are there drawbacks in focusing on strengths and positive experiences? Can positive psychology help people flourish even in the face of adversity?

Many of the lessons in this course have experiential components. Therefore, you will not only be learning about the concepts and techniques related to positive psychology in the academic sense. You will also be learning through doing and, as such, will have knowledge based both on scientific review and personal experience.

Course Goals

In this course, students will:

- ✧ Develop an understanding of the underlying assumptions and basic questions associated with positive psychology.
- ✧ Acquire insight into their personal strengths and virtues. Additionally, students will be exposed to exercises that have been posited to increase these strengths and help people respond to adversity in constructive ways that allow them to flourish.



- ✧ Cultivate an understanding of the various dimensions of subjective well-being and the application of these dimensions to daily functioning.
- ✧ Become familiar with research that supports or refutes the principles, strategies, and skills associated with positive psychology.

Required Text

Lyubomirsky, S. (2007). *The How of Happiness*. NY: Penguin Publishing Group. (THOH)

Grading Policy

1. Course grades will be based on total points earned from the following activities:

Exams: 3 (2 midterms and a final) * 25 points each = 75 points

Response papers: 2 * 12.5 points each 25 points

The majority of your grade will be based on three in-class examinations. Exam questions will be primarily in the form of multiple choice items and short answers. The exams will cover all reading material (including reading material not covered in class) and all lecture/class material (including material not covered in the readings). It is *very important* to attend class. There will be several video clips, class discussions, and demonstrations in class that will not appear in your reading materials but *will* appear on your exams.

| Number grade | Letter grade | GPA |
|--------------|--------------|-----|
| 90-100 | A | 4.0 |
| 85-89 | A- | 3.7 |
| 80-84 | B+ | 3.3 |
| 75-79 | B | 3.0 |
| 70-74 | B- | 2.7 |
| 67-69 | C+ | 2.3 |
| 65-66 | C | 2.0 |
| 62-64 | C- | 1.7 |
| 60-61 | D | 1.0 |
| ≤59 | F (Failure) | 0 |

2. Papers

Students will write two short (2-pages, double-spaced, 12-point font) papers applying principles learned in the course to real life events. Topics will be assigned one week before the papers are due.

3. Academic Misconduct

No plagiarism or cheating will be tolerated. This means among other things that you will not submit someone else's work as your own, copy someone else's work, or cheat in any other way. When you draw on others' work, you must cite that work properly.



Course Schedule

| Course Schedule | | |
|-----------------|--|---|
| Date | Topic | Reading |
| July 3 | Introduction | |
| July 4 | What is Positive Psychology and Why do we Need It? | THOH Chapter 1 |
| July 5 | Positive Emotions: Pleasure and Happiness | THOH Chapter 2, pp 38-47 |
| July 6 | Positive Emotions: Broaden and Build | Fredrickson (2001) |
| July 10 | Acquisition and Adaptation | THOH Chapter 3 |
| July 11 | Savoring | THOH Chapter 7, pp 190-204 |
| July 12 | FIRST MIDTERM EXAM | |
| July 13 | Positive Personality: Character Strengths | http://www.viacharacter.org/www/The-Survey |
| July 17 | Hope and Optimism | THOH, Chapter 4, pp 101-111; First reaction paper due |
| July 18 | Humility and Other Virtues | Exline (2008) |
| July 19 | Positive Self | Neff (2008); Kernis & Heppner (2008) |
| July 20 | Positive Motivation | THOH , pp 205-226 |
| July 24 | Flow | THOH , pp 180-189 |
| July 25 | SECOND MIDTERM EXAM | |
| July 26 | Mindfulness and Meditation | THOH , pp. 240-244; Kabat-Zinn (2005) |
| July 27 | Gratitude and Forgiveness | THOH ,Chapter 4, pp. 88-100; Chapter 6, pp 169-179 2nd reaction paper due |
| July 31 | Positive Relationships | THOH , pp. 138-149 |
| Aug 1 | Creating Good Relationships | Crocker & Canevello (2016) |
| Aug 2 | Overcoming Adversity with Positivity | THOH , Chapter 6, pp 150-168 |
| Aug 3 | FINAL EXAM | |