

Queen's University

Positive Psychology 335

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Course: PSY 335:	Positive Psychology
Semester:	W 2020
Semester Hours:	3.0
Day/Time:	Wed 8:30-9:50am ELLIS 324; Fri 10:00-11:20am BIO1102
Teaching Assistant:	Megan Wylie
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Textbook (Required): Positive Psychology Lopez. Sage Publications, ISBN: 9781506357355

Please use your Queen's email account to send me an email. If an occasion arises and you must email me from your personal account, please write **PSY 335** in the Re-Subject box.

Course Description:

Prior to World War II, psychology had three main missions: make the lives of all people fulfilling; identify and enhance human excellence; and treat pathology. Nonetheless, in the last half-century psychology has largely focused on decreasing maladaptive emotions and behaviors, while ignoring optimal functioning (e.g., happiness and life satisfaction). Positive psychology is the study of how human beings prosper in the face of adversity. Its goal is to identify and enhance the human strengths and virtues that make life worth living ("The good life") and allow individuals and communities to thrive (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). This course will introduce positive psychology. It is designed to explore the concepts, research behind the concepts, techniques, and exercises that enhance well-being. The format of the course will be didactic, experiential, and interactive. Assigned readings will be given weekly.

Learning Objectives:

The primary objective of this course is to expand the learner's knowledge about what a positive "mind space" is and how this construct is constructed of interactive intrapersonal, interpersonal, and environmental domains. This course will allow learners to contrast various theoretical and empirically supported approaches to "the good life" to interpret their own life reflections. The student will be encouraged to discuss the lecture topics and groups projects in small groups and respond to the opinions of others as well. Specifically, this course is designed to provide learners with an overview of the theory and clinical applications of Positive Psychology: 1) Learners will analyze positive psychology principles and contrast these positions against other theoretical principles of psychology (i.e., abnormal psychology). 2) Learners will also manipulate various self-assessment tools to gain insight into their own strengths and virtues and learn strategies to

increase their happiness and overall quality of life. 3) Learners will analyze and apply positive psychology domains to their life (i.e., character strength awareness, mindfulness meditation, & gratitude exercises) to enhance self-understanding through week-long graded assignments. 4) Learners will also contrast research that supports and critiques the principles, strategies, and skills of positive psychology in order to produce and defend a semester ending research poster and presentation.

Students with Disabilities

If you have any documented disability-related concerns that may have an impact upon your performance in this course, please meet with me within the first two weeks of the current semester, so that we can work out the appropriate accommodations. Accommodations are provided on an individualized, as-needed basis after the needs, circumstances, and documentation have been evaluated by the appropriate office on campus. For more information on services provided by Queen's, and for submission of documentation of your disability, see <http://www.queensu.ca/studentwellness/accessibility-services/>.

Or please contact: Queen's Student Accessibility Services, Student Wellness Services, 146 Stuart St, Kingston, Ontario, K7L 3N6

Phone: 613-533-6467; Fax: 613-533-6284; accessibility.services@queensu.ca

All disability-related information will be kept confidential.

Course Format. The course is presented as a series of activities, assignments and lectures. You are responsible for the material in all required reading passages in their entirety, **even if this material is not presented in lectures.** Additional readings outside the class text are recommended, and may be required for some lectures. These readings will be made available or at least directly to you or the reference will be provided. It is suggested that students study the relevant required readings before coming to class.

See course outline below for readings.

There is a textbook assigned on Reserve at the library. **Understand that you are expected to read or do the assignment before coming to class on each day.** You can find many more readings in your text as "suggested readings", I would encourage you to read everything you can in an area that gets you excited. However, you are only required to read the assigned chapters and papers listed in the syllabus or assigned to you during class.

Course Grading:

Exams* (50% of final grade) The Exams may consist of multiple-choice, true/false and fill in the blanks. The material on the Exams will come directly from the class lectures and assigned readings and they are NOT cumulative. If, for some reason, you are not in attendance for the midterm on the date scheduled, you must contact the TA on that date so that a make-up exam can be scheduled. Please see below.

Missed Examination Policy - Students will be excused from a midterm or a final examination for documented compassionate reasons. These would include situations such as major illnesses, accident, or a death in the family. You must contact both the professor and the teaching assistant as soon as you become aware you will miss an exam and you must provide your documentation in a timely manner. Only students who provide written documentation (e.g., physician's note) will be exempted from an exam. Students who are exempted from an exam for an approved reason will have their remaining exams re-weighted. Students who are not able to meet the criteria of written documentation, timely provision of documentation, or alerting the professor and teaching assistant will receive a grade of zero for a missed examination.

Students who cannot write an exam during the exam period(s) due to a serious, extenuating circumstance (with the supporting documentation required as outlined above) must be available to write a deferred exam during the Psychology Department's *Make up Exam period*.

Students should be informed of these dates to write a make-up exam, if their original exam has been successfully deferred. Please see the following webpage under "Exam Absence" for additional information: <http://www.queensu.ca/psychology/Undergraduate/psycdepartmentalpolices.html>

For other assignments in the course (as it applies): Finishing Date/Time: If you do not complete and provide the report before the specified due time, the report will be deducted 25% per day.

In this course, some components will be graded using numerical percentage marks. Other components will receive letter grades, which for purposes of calculating your course average will be translated into numerical equivalents using the Faculty of Arts and Science approved scale:

Arts & Science Letter Grade Input Scheme

Assignment mark	Numerical value for calculation of final mark
A+	93
A	87
A-	82
B+	78
B	75
B-	72
C+	68
C	65
C-	62
D+	58
D	55
D-	52
F48 (F+)	48
F24 (F)	24
F0 (0)	0

Your course average will then be converted to a final letter grade according to Queen's Official Grade Conversion Scale:

Queen's Official Grade Conversion Scale

Grade	Numerical Course Average (Range)
A+	90-100
A	85-89
A-	80-84

B+	77-79
B	73-76
B-	70-72
C+	67-69
C	63-66
C-	60-62
D+	57-59
D	53-56
D-	50-52
F	49 and below

Moderated Research Presentation Day (30% of your grade): You will be randomly assigned to a research group of approximately 5 students. Each group will be responsible for creating a power point presentation for evaluation at a moderated conference for “Positive Psychology” near the end of the semester. Your group should select one or more positive psychology constructs (e.g., altruism, gratitude, forgiveness, mindfulness) or theories (e.g., broaden and build theory of positive emotions) and develop a plan to bring these constructs to life through research.

The presentation must be constructed in Powerpoint or Keynote and include a:

- 1) Title and Authors of the project. **(2%)**
- 2) A construct definition and a basic introduction to that construct (i.e., What is it? How can people identify it? Historical review and/or coverage from your text). Your “construct” can be drawn from any of the topics in the text or may be drawn from outside the materials covered. Please discuss with the TA or myself. **(4%)**
- 3) An empirical literature review of the construct in the research literature that applies. **(4%)**
- 4) Your proposed research “Application” of the construct (i.e., a research design that tests or shows that relation or merit of your construct). This can employ an experimental design, a survey, or a series of studies and methods). **(5%)**
- 5) Your discussion and presentation to the judges that will come around and review the posters **(10%)**.

**** **Note:** Students will be required to provide the presentation in the form of a power point poster slide to the TA prior to your presentation day (3 feet tall x 4 feet wide). The presentations will consist of a 5-minute presentation to the class, then answering questions for a couple of minutes (i.e., a moderated poster presentation similar to what is done at research conferences). You will only get 5 minutes to present. A strict time limit will apply. All citations in abbreviated format (e.g., Tripp et al., 2019) and 3 key references should be included on the poster.

Personal Mini-Experiments (20% of your grade): You will be asked to conduct 3 assigned mini-experiments in total throughout the semester. In your book, almost every chapter inserts a labeled “Personal Mini-Experiment”. You are asked to bring positive psychology into your lives by conducting the kind of experiments that positive psychology researchers might conduct in a lab or the field and that positive psychology practitioners might assign to their clients for homework. Some of these experiments take less than 30 minutes to complete, whereas some will stretch out over a week. Most of these exercises are to be completed outside of class, but a few are appropriate to conduct in the classroom and we may do so if time permits. You will be discussing these during class times with the professor and with students in small clusters.

Students are required to complete a write-up for each experiment throughout the semester with the goal being to apply the material of the course to their lives. A 1-2 page, typed, double-spaced, 12-point font, paper will be written about their experience with the exercise. The ultimate goal here is for you to experience the positive psychology construct first hand, self-reflect in a

meaningful way and, as a result gain insight into the mechanisms and processes of the “good life.”

You must include your 1) student number, 2) date completed, 3) the name of the experiment, 4) brief description of the task, 5) how you recorded the experience, 6) and the results of your efforts in your opinion or by what you have recorded. These sections must be succinct; you do not have many pages to work with here. **All mini-experiments should be submitted to OnQ by 6pm for each due date.**

Exams: (50% of your grade): There are 2 exams in this course, a midterm and a final.

Date	Material Covered (plus any assigned extra readings)	Percent of Final Grade
Midterm #1 (in class)	Chapters 1-6	25%
Final (exam period)	Chapters 7-12	25%

Class schedule:

Rooms: ELLIS 324; BIOSCIENCE 1102

Class	Date	Room	Topic
1	Jan 8	Ellis	Introduction to course
2	Jan 10	Bio	Chapter 1
3	Jan 15	Ellis	Project introduction, groups etc.
4	Jan 17	Bio	Chapter 2
5	Jan 22	Ellis	Mini-Experiment 1 assigned; VIA strengths
6	Jan 24	Bio	Chapter 3
7	Jan 29	Ellis	Mini-Experiment 1 review; VIA strengths
8	Jan 31	Bio	Chapter 4
9	Feb 5	Ellis	Chapter 5
10	Feb 7	Bio	Chapter 6
11	Feb 12	Ellis	MID-TERM EXAM in class
12	Feb 14	Bio	Mini-Experiment 2 assigned; Gratitude
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13	Feb 26	Ellis	Mini-Experiment 2 review; Gratitude
14	Feb 28	Bio	Chapter 7
15	Mar 4	Ellis	Poster Workshop; Mini-Experiment 3 assigned; Mindfulness
16	Mar 6	Bio	Chapter 8
17	Mar 11	Ellis	Mini-Experiment 3 review; Mindfulness
18	Mar 13	Bio	Chapter 9
19	Mar 18	Ellis	Poster workshop
20	Mar 20	Bio	Chapter 10
21	Mar 25	Ellis	RESEARCH DAY Presentations (random groups are assigned to each research day)
22	Mar 27	Bio	Chapter 11
23	Apr 1	Ellis	RESEARCH DAY Presentations
24	Apr 3	Bio	Chapter 12

FINAL EXAM (In Final Exam Period)

Please note that I reserve the right to modify the course syllabus during the semester as the course progresses and external events may dictate. Any changes made will be communicated to you either via your Queen's email.