

HONR-300TK

The Psychology of Happiness

Course Information

Course: HONR-300TK The Psychology of Happiness (4 Credits)
Term: Spring 2021
Delivery: Face-to-face, discussion-based
In-person Meetings: Tuesdays and Thursdays
2:45pm to 4:20pm in Synod Hall 109

Instructor Information

Instructor: Dr. William Davis (Billy)
Office: Blair Hall 111
Office Hours: MWF 10:30am to 12:00pm, after class, or by appointment (online or in-person)
Email: davisw4@wittenberg.edu

Important Note: Include “HONR-300” in the subject line of your emails to help me get back to you as soon as possible. Please also be sure to check your Witt email and our Moodle site at least once per day since this is the primary way that I communicate with you outside of class.

Course Description

Introduction to psychological research on the causes, correlates, and outcomes of happiness. We will critically examine theory and research on happiness as well as a wide range of related topics including meaning in life, strengths and virtues, coping, authenticity, gratitude, flow, spirituality, and optimism.

Course Outcomes

By the end of this course, successful students will be able to:

1. Explain the difference between hedonic and eudaimonic perspectives on well-being
2. Explain theory and research behind psychological well-being interventions
3. Apply psychological research and principles to improve their own lives
4. Critically evaluate theory and research on the psychology of happiness
5. Conduct a literature review and summarize existing psychological research on a topic
6. Deliver a concise and professional presentation

This course contributes to the following General Education Learning Goals:

1. **SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS, PROCESSES & BEHAVIOR** - A student should achieve, through empirical and analytical methods, an understanding of human behavior, relationships, or institutions.
2. **WRITING INTENSIVE** - A writing-intensive course includes writing as an integral part of teaching and learning, with class time devoted to the discussion of the writing process and assignments designed to reinforce and develop writing skills.

Required Texts and Materials

You **do not** need to purchase any textbooks for this course. Readings relevant to each week's topic (academic journal articles, chapters from edited books, or other materials) will be posted on Moodle and/or Perusall for you to read and comment on before each class meeting.

Course Assessments

The following table lists the assessments in this course and how they are connected to the course outcomes and program and general education outcomes listed above.

Assessments	Course Outcomes	General Education Outcomes	% of Final Grade
Weekly Activities and Reflection Papers	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2	20%
Participation in Online Discussion of Readings	1, 2, 4	1, 2	20%
Leading Discussion	2, 4, 6	1	5%
In-Class Participation	1, 2, 4	1	10%
Mini-Midterm and Integrative Reflections	1, 2, 4	1	10%
Major Paper(s) / Project(s)	4, 5, 6	1, 2	35%

Assignments and Grading

Participation (55% of total)

This is a discussion-based course and you **MUST** actively participate to do well. Your participation grade will be determined by the following components:

Weekly Activities and Reflection Papers (20% of total)

At the end of most class meetings, you will be assigned an activity or topic for you to consider for the next week. This assignment will usually include a brief reflection paper (at least 300 words) on the activity or topic that will be due by the beginning of the next class meeting.

Participation in Online Discussion of Readings (20% of total)

You will participate in discussion for each of our weekly readings using the Persuall platform. You will receive credit for posting thoughtful questions and comments that engage with the material. Your questions and comments should be posted by the end of the day before we discuss a reading in class.

Leading Discussion (5% of total)

You will lead discussion for one or more of our weekly readings. Using the questions and comments posted online for the reading, you will guide and facilitate the discussion of that reading for the class. You should be very familiar with your reading in order to identify the key points and answer potential questions from the class. When we begin discussing your paper, you may be asked to briefly summarize the key points for the class.

In-Class Participation (10% of total)

Because this is a discussion-based course, you **MUST** actively participate in class discussion.

Mini-Midterm and Integrative Reflections (10% of total)

You will have one week to complete a take-home mini-midterm exam that covers content from the first several weeks of class. The information covered in the first few weeks of class serves as a foundation that we build upon for the rest of the semester, so it is especially important that you fully understand it. Occasionally, we will also have integrative reflection assignments in which you will discuss and apply the information we have learned over the course of several weeks. These assignments will give you an opportunity to draw out connections between our different topics and consider how they can be applied to the real world and your own life.

Major Paper(s) / Project(s) (35% of total)

You will propose an integrative and culminating paper or project (or multiple smaller papers/projects) in this course. Students in consultation with the professor will determine specific expectations for this assignment. In general, this assignment will include submitting a proposal, presenting your work to the class in some fashion, providing and receiving peer-feedback, intensive revision, and a final product submitted by the end of the semester. One possible paper/project could be a research proposal in which you propose actual research that tests a novel research question related to our course topics. Another possibility could be a review paper summarizing the psychological research on a particular topic related to our course. You are also encouraged to propose alternative projects that creatively integrate and demonstrate your mastery of the course content or related topics.

Assignment	% of Final Grade
Participation	
Weekly Activities and Reflection Papers	20%
Participation in Online Discussion (Perusall)	20%
Leading Discussion	5%
In-Class Participation	10%
Mini-Midterm and Integrative Reflections	10%
Major Paper(s) / Project(s)	
Paper / Project Proposal(s)	5%
Paper / Project Presentation(s)	5%
Peer-feedback and Revision Activities	5%
Final Revised Paper(s) / Project(s)	20%

Grading Scale

Your final percentage grade in the course will be rounded to the nearest whole number to determine your letter grade according to the scale below.

Percent	Letter Grade	Percent	Letter Grade
97-100	A+	77-79	C+
93-96	A	73-76	C
90-92	A-	70-72	C-
87-89	B+	67-69	D+
83-86	B	63-66	D
80-82	B-	60-62	D-
		< 60	F

Guidelines for Success

Moodle

All class announcements and assignments will be posted on Moodle. You should get in the habit of checking our Moodle site at least once daily.

Technical Assistance

If you experience any technical issues related to this course, please let the instructor know as soon as possible. The Solution Center can also help you if you are having trouble with Moodle or printing an assignment.

Communication (Email & Course Messages)

The best way to get in touch with me is by email (davisw4@wittenberg.edu). Include "HONR-300" in the subject line of your emails to help me get back to you as soon as possible. I will do my best to respond to all emails within 24 hours from Monday through Saturday. If it has been more than 24 hours during those times and you have not received a response, please feel free to send a follow-up email. Sometimes messages just get lost or buried in my inbox and I may miss them.

I will post announcements on our course Moodle page in the Announcements forum. You should also receive a copy of any announcements via email. Please get in the habit of checking both your Witt email and our course Moodle page at least once a day so that you are aware of any changes, assignments, and upcoming deadlines.

Finally, this semester we will also use Microsoft Teams to collaborate with one another and to meet remotely if necessary. You can access Microsoft Teams at <https://teams.microsoft.com/> using either the online version or the downloadable app (preferred) for your computer or phone.

Accessibility and ADA Accommodations

Wittenberg University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, learning, chronic health, physical, hearing, vision and neurological, or temporary medical conditions, etc.), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, you must register with the Accessibility Services office by emailing accessibilityservices@wittenberg.edu. You can also find information on the Accessibility Services webpage found at www.wittenberg.edu/success. Please note that services are confidential, may take time to put into place, and are not retroactive. The Accessibility Services Office is located in the COMPASS: Sweet Success Center, Thomas Library, on the first floor.

Honor Code

All academic work submitted at Wittenberg will carry the honor statement: "I affirm that my work upholds the highest standards of honesty and academic integrity at Wittenberg, and that I have neither given nor received any unauthorized assistance." Any student found to be in violation of the Wittenberg University [Code of Academic Integrity](#) could receive a failing grade and be referred to the Honor Council.

Time Commitment

For each credit hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction, students are expected to engage in two hours of out of class course related work each week for approximately fifteen weeks. A four credit hour course requires eight hours per week of out of class work.

Student Counseling Services

If you are struggling with stress, anxiety, depression, or any other personal crisis, the student counseling services offered by Wittenberg are a valuable resource. The Counseling Services [website](#) has more information about the services they offer. You can also call them at (937) 327-7946 or stop by the Counseling Center in 210 Shouplin Center.

Course Policies

Attendance Policy

Because a large part of this course is discussion-based, **you are expected to attend each of our class meetings** except in the event of an excused absence such as an illness or personal emergency. You will find yourself quickly falling behind and losing many points if you miss class, do not complete the readings, or do not submit completed assignments. If you know ahead of time that you will be unable to attend a class meeting, or if you miss class due to an unanticipated event, please inform me as soon as possible so we can consider our options. You are still responsible for any material covered on a day you are absent. If you have more than two **unexcused** absences, your final grade in the course may be reduced by **one-third of a full letter grade** for each additional unexcused absence (e.g., a B would become a B-).

To help with contact tracing in the event of possible coronavirus cases on campus, this semester you will be required to sit in the same seat for every in-person class and attendance will be taken each day.

Make-up and Extension Policy

Make-up assignments or extensions may be granted in the event of an excused absence such as an illness or personal emergency. You need to contact me by email as soon as possible if you need to request an extension on an assignment so that we can discuss our options. For some assignments, extensions may not be possible (e.g., discussion participation). If an extension is possible, the assignment grade may be reduced by a specified amount (e.g., one-third of a full letter grade) for each day it is late (e.g., a B would become a B-).

If you are having difficulty keeping up with the class assignments and submitting your work before deadlines, please contact me immediately and I will do my best to work with you to overcome these difficulties.

Syllabus Change Statement

Course instructors reserve the right to adjust this syllabus and content to meet the needs of students and to address course outcomes. In the event of substantive changes, students will be notified via an announcement in class or via Moodle.

Calendar of Course Topics, Assignments, and Activities

A preliminary list of course topics and associated readings is provided below. Topics and readings may change throughout the semester based on the interests of the class members and our class discussions. Any changes to the assigned readings or calendar will be posted on Moodle and announced in class.

Course Topics, Calendar of Activities, Major Assignment Dates

Week 1	Introduction to the Course and Foundations	
1/19	First Day – No Readings	
1/21	“How to Read a Journal Article” Selected Readings Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000 Gable & Haidt, 2005	Perusall Discussion of Readings (Practice) Add a profile picture to Office and Moodle Submit a brief autobiography Post a video introducing yourself to the class
Week 2	Hedonic and Eudaimonic Well-Being	
1/26	Lucas & Diener, 2008 Ryan & Deci, 2001	Perusall Discussion of Readings
1/28	Ryff & Singer, 2008	Perusall Discussion of Readings
Week 3	Second Wave Positive Psychology	
2/2	Linley, Joseph, Harrington, & Wood, 2006 Wong, 2011	Perusall Discussion of Readings
2/4	Lomas & Ivtzan, 2016	Perusall Discussion of Readings Reflection: Positive Psychology Measures
Week 4	The New Science of SWB, WEIRD People	
2/9	Diener et al., 2017	Perusall Discussion of Readings
2/11	Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010	Perusall Discussion of Readings Mini-Midterm Due
Week 5	National Accounts of SWB, The Happiest People	
2/16	Diener, 2000 Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2015	Perusall Discussion of Readings
2/18	Diener & Seligman, 2002 Diener, Seligman, Choi, & Oishi, 2018	Perusall Discussion of Readings Reflection: Savoring Expedition (Due 9/21)
Week 6	Individualism, Culture, and Well-Being	
2/23	Becker & Marecek, 2008 Kitayama, Berg, & Chopik, 2020	Perusall Discussion of Readings Reflection: The Good Life in Different Cultures Submit Paper/Project Proposal Draft
2/25	NO CLASS – Break Day	

Week 7	Positive Emotions, Coping with Changes	
3/2	Fredrickson, 2013	Perusall Discussion of Readings
	Diener, Lucas, & Scollon, 2006	Perusall Discussion of Readings
3/4	Bonanno, 2006	Reflection: Observing Emotional Expressions
	Kashdan, 2017	Paper/Project Proposal Draft Feedback Returned
Week 8	The Need to Belong and The Need to Be Different	
3/9	Baumeister & Leary, 1995	Perusall Discussion of Readings
	Hornsey & Jetten, 2004	Perusall Discussion of Readings
		Reflection: Meditation Practice
Week 9	Relationships, Mini-Presentations	
3/16	Finkel, Simpson, & Eastwick, 2017	Perusall Discussion of Readings
	McNulty, 2010	
3/18	Project/Paper Mini-Presentations	Project/Paper Mini-Presentations
Week 10	Spending Money for Happiness, Gratitude	
3/23	Gilovich & Gallo, 2020	Perusall Discussion of Readings
	Dunn, Aknin, & Norton, 2014	
3/25	Wood, Froh, & Geraghty, 2010	Perusall Discussion of Readings
		Reflection: Gratitude Intervention
Week 11	Narrative Identity and Nostalgia, Expressive Writing	
3/30	McAdams & McLean, 2013	Perusall Discussion of Readings
	Sedikides & Wildschut, 2018	Reflection: Narrative Identity
4/1	Pennebaker & Chung, 2007	Perusall Discussion of Readings
Week 12	Authenticity and Creativity	
4/6	Rivera et al., 2019	Perusall Discussion of Readings
	Seto & Hicks, 2016	Reflection: Expressive Writing
4/8	Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009	Perusall Discussion of Readings
		Submit Paper/Project Draft or Progress Update
Week 13	Meaning in Life, Socioemotional Selectivity Theory	
4/13	Steger, 2017	Perusall Discussion of Readings
	Carstensen, 2003	Perusall Discussion of Readings
4/15		Reflection: Academic Motivation
		Paper/Project Feedback Returned

Week 14 Personality, Social Media and FOMO

4/20 Friedman & Kern, 2014

Perusall Discussion of Readings

4/22 Verduyn, 2017
Przybylski et al., 2013

Perusall Discussion of Readings
Reflection: Commercial Media Fast

Week 15 Religion/Spirituality & Virtues

4/27 **NO CLASS – Break Day**

4/29 Fave et al., 2013
Niemic, 2013

Perusall Discussion of Readings
Reflection: Applying Character Strengths

Week 16 Positive Universities

5/4 Oades, Robinson, Green, & Spence, 2011

Perusall Discussion of Readings
Final Paper/Project Due During Finals