

- Lyubomirsky, S. (2013). *The Myths of Happiness: What Should Make You Happy But Doesn't, What Shouldn't Make You Happy But Does*. The Penguin Press. New York. ISBN# 978-1-59420-437-1

COURSEWORK AND FORMAT

The learning objectives for this course are based on the University's [L-Series objectives](#) and the [Department of Psychology's learning outcomes](#): 1) Knowledge in psychology, 2) Scientific inquiry & critical thinking, 3) Ethics, 4) Multiculturalism & diversity, 5) Communication, and 6) Professional development.

1) **Course material & Participation.** It is imperative that you attend class regularly in order to learn the material. Periodically, we will have in-class free writing exercises or clicker questions. You are responsible to have a working clicker for all lecture/discussion classes.

2) **Weekly Happiness Reflections & Activities.** Part of the course will involve your self-directed goals to be a happier person. In addition to yourself, you will choose 1 other person outside of class (this can be anyone, including a friend, partner, etc.). You will reflect upon the happiness research that we have discussed and come up with exercises for you and your activity partner to do. This can include activities such as meditation, gratitude journals, volunteering, etc. You will keep a journal of your activities and submit a (1/2 page – 1 page) reflection each week describing your activities. This will be worth 15% of your overall course grade. Time during class on Thursdays will be devoted to reflecting on your activities and goals, getting feedback from other students in the class, assessing whether your goals were met, and planning for the following week.

For a bit of extra credit, you can extend your activities to include a small group of people. This may be advantageous if you are part of a student club/organization (or just a closely knit group of friends) and you want to have a positive impact on all of them. This will include more work for you, because it will involve monitoring several people's activities and happiness levels over time, but potentially more rewarding as well. Students can earn 2 bonus points for each weekly reflection assignment if they are working with a group.

Semester Length	Out-of-Class Hours/Week
16 weeks	6-9
6 weeks	15-22
3 weeks	30-45

3) **Exams.** There will be 2 midterm exams, each worth 15% of your final grade. They will include multiple choice and (possibly) other format questions (e.g., matching, fill in the blank) and will cover material discussed in class and in the readings. Midterms are not cumulative, however, some concepts may fit into more than one unit, and thus may appear on an exam more than once. If that is the case, I will usually mention it again during lecture. Alternatively, such concepts may appear a second time in the readings. There will not be long essay questions on exams. There will also be a final exam (worth 20% of your final grade), which will be cumulative and contain a higher number of questions, although it will focus more on the material covered since the 2nd midterm. There will be some extra-credit questions built into the exams.

4) **Fact-Checking Happiness Claims Paper.** This is the biggest and most rigorously evaluated assignment of the course. Your task is to find a book excerpt, blog post, TV show, film, etc. about happiness and evaluate its scientific accuracy. For this assignment, you will critique an existing (non-scientific) commentary on happiness. A good place to start looking for such commentaries is the internet. For example, you could search for "how do I find happiness?" and see what comes up. The task is to critically evaluate the claim(s) made, in terms of their scientific accuracy and how much they are supported by scientific research. In this paper, you will need to summarize existing research studies in the psychology of happiness, including identifying key variables and findings. Your paper should be approximately 4 pages in length (excluding references) and will

be due by **Wednesday November 28th at 5pm**. This will be evaluated for content (accuracy) and writing quality, and will be worth 25% of your course grade. You also have the opportunity to submit an **optional** mid-semester term paper, which is exactly the same as the final term paper. The purpose of this is to gain practice and feedback in preparation for the final term paper.

RESEARCH PARTICIPATION

Students may earn extra credit by participating in up to 5 credits of experimental research as participants in the psychology department's subject pool. Furthermore, we strongly recommend that you complete the Mass Screening Survey, which is worth 1 credit. Each credit of experimental participation is equal to 1 point of extra credit on your final course average (ex: 2 SONA credits brings you from 89 to 91). This will be taken into account after all other grades and credits are factored in. If you have never done SONA experiments before, you can learn about research participation here: <https://psyc.umd.edu/undergraduate/participating-research>. It is your responsibility to keep up with information about SONA policies (e.g., deadlines, alternative assignments). For all SONA-related questions, please contact **Steve Young**, who is the SONA administrator in the psychology department main office. The contact email is SONAhelp@umd.edu.

UNIVERSITY & DEPARTMENT POLICIES

My course policies can be found here: <https://umd.box.com/v/SeltermanCoursePoliciesFAQs>. As a member of the UMD community I expect that you are aware of, and will adhere to, all relevant policies. University policies can be found at www.president.umd.edu/policies. For policies on academic integrity, accommodations for disabilities, excused absences, copyright laws and grade appeals please visit <http://ter.ps/psycsyllabi>. You will also find this page useful to understand policies that affect you: <http://ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html>. You are personally responsible for reviewing these policies, and I expect you to know the details within them. All documentation and official correspondence must be submitted digitally, whenever possible. This means that any forms or paperwork (including but not limited to ADS accommodations, travel letters, incomplete contracts) should be delivered to me through email.

GRADE BREAKDOWN

Participation = 10%
Weekly Reflections = 20%
2 Midterm Exams (15% each) = 30%
1 Final Exam = 20%
Fact-Checking Happiness Claims Paper = 20%

Total = 100%

COURSE SCHEDULE

Dates	Topic (Textbook Chapter); Assignments	Misc. Notes
Week 1 8/27 – 8/30 Week 2 9/4 – 9/7	<u>Introduction</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diener & Diener Ch 1 & 2; Haidt Ch 1 • “Fast Friends” Activity <u>Methods & Perspectives to Study Happiness</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diener & Diener Ch 14 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NO CLASS Monday 9/3 Labor Day Observed
Week 3 9/10 – 9/14 Week 4 9/17 – 9/21	<u>Emotional Perspectives</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diener & Diener Ch 9, 10; Haidt Ch 5 	
Week 5 9/24 – 9/28 Week 6 10/1 – 10/5 Week 7 10/8 – 10/12	<u>Cognitive Perspectives</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diener & Diener Ch 11; Haidt Ch 2 	
	Midterm Exam #1 & Follow-Up – 10/1 & 10/2	
Week 8 10/15 – 10/19 Week 9 10/22 – 10/26	<u>Motivational Perspectives</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diener & Diener Ch 5, 6; Haidt Ch 7, 8 	
Week 10 10/29 – 11/2 Week 11 11/5 – 11/9 Week 12 11/12 – 11/16	<u>Sociocultural Perspectives</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diener & Diener Ch 7, 8; Haidt Ch 9 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optional Mid-semester paper due Friday 11/2 by 5pm
	Midterm Exam #2 & Follow-Up – 11/5 & 11/6	
Week 13 11/19 – 11/23 Week 14 11/26 – 11/30 Week 15 12/3 – 12/7 12/10	<u>Interpersonal Perspectives</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diener & Diener Ch 4; Haidt Ch 6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NO CLASS 11/28 & 11/29 Thanksgiving Break
	<u>Wrap Up & Conclusions</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diener & Diener Ch 12 & 13; Haidt Ch 10 & 11 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Term Paper Due November 28th @ 5pm
FINAL EXAM TBA		

NOTE: This syllabus is *not* a binding document. I reserve the right to modify the syllabus at any time and for any reason. If anything is modified, then I will notify the class, but it is your responsibility to keep up with class announcements and updates. If you are confused about anything on the syllabus, then you are responsible to ask either me or the TAs for clarification.