

**POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY: THE SCIENCE OF HAPPINESS**  
**Summer A 2025**

**INSTRUCTOR:** Dr. Ryan Duffy  
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**OFFICE HOURS:** Wednesdays 11:00am-1:00pm

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** The purpose of this course is to examine the fundamentals positive psychology. The course begins with an exploration of the history of positive psychology and its basic tenants. We then explore a wide range of topics that relate to happiness and well-being, including positive relationships, positive thinking, life meaning, religion/spirituality, gratitude, altruism, career development, and character strengths.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

- Understand the basic principles of positive psychology.
- Understand the major areas within positive psychology that have received a considerable amount of attention in the literature.
- Understand how advantages effect the ability to achieve well-being
- Understand the role of relationships in achieving a happy life.
- Understand how to use positive psychology techniques in your own life.
- Understand the strengths and positive life experiences of other class members.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Lopez, Pedrotti, & Snyder (2024). *Positive Psychology: The Scientific and Practical Explorations of Human Strengths* (5<sup>th</sup> Ed.)

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHOD:** Class time will be devoted to synchronous lectures.

**EVALUATION CRITERIA:** The course is graded A to E. A late paper will be **lowered 10%** for every day they are late, including weekends. **Computer problems** under any circumstances will NOT excuse a late paper or assignment. Papers are only accepted as uploaded to Canvas. Course grades will be based on the following:

(a) **Exams:** Three exams will be given over the course of the semester, and they will include ONLY multiple-choice questions. Tests will be based on classroom, book, article, and discussion material. The final is NOT cumulative. *1/2 of the questions come from lecture. 1/2 from the readings.*

(b) **Strength Assignment:**

1. Prior to class on 5/16/2025, students will complete the **VIA SURVEY OF CHARACTER STRENGTHS**
2. <http://www.authentic happiness.sas.upenn.edu/>
3. Save your results.
4. On 5/16/2025, students will be assigned to interview another class member for 30 minutes and then be interviewed themselves by a class member for 30 minutes via Zoom.
5. During these interviews, the goal will be to understand what is “best” about the other student, which in positive psychology language is labeled signature strengths.
6. The specific questions to ask during this interview will be shared in class on 5/16/2025.
7. Students will email a copy of their signature strength questionnaire results to the student that interviews them.
8. Students will find a time to independently interview each other outside of class over the next week
9. Based on their interview of another class member, as well as that student’s signature strength questionnaire, students will complete a paper of **NO MORE THAN 1 PAGE, 12 point font, double spaced, Times New Roman lettering, 1 inch margins, in black ink**. This paper will describe what is best about this student. This paper is due on 5/23/2025.
10. You will be graded out of 15 points on proper completion of the paper, proper formatting and grammar.

**(c) Gratitude Assignment:**

1. Think of someone who has done something important and wonderful for you, yet who has not been properly thanked.
2. Reflect on the benefits you received from this person and write them a letter expressing your gratitude for all he or she did for you.
3. This letter can be over 1 page if needed.
4. Arrange to deliver the letter to them personally over Zoom. You will arrange this visit in advance and make sure it is just a one-on-one visit.
5. You will read your letter aloud to them and spend some time with him or her talking about what you wrote.
6. You will write a one page paper about this experience. **This is to be NO MORE THAN 1 PAGE, 12 point font, double spaced, Times New Roman lettering, 1 inch margins, in black ink**. Anything differing from this will lose points. This is due on 6/21/2025.
7. You will turn into me your gratitude letter and your one-page description of the experience, together on one word document.
8. On 6/21/2025, the entire class will be spent hearing about people’s experiences with the assignment.
9. You will be graded out of 15 points on class attendance, proper completion of the assignment and on proper formatting and grammar, NOT on the content of the letter or experience.

## GRADING SCALE

(a) Exam I	20%	A	92-100
(b) Exam II	20%	A-	90-91.99
(c) Exam III	30%	B+	88-89.99
(d) Strength assignment	15%	B	82-87.99
(e) Gratitude assignment	15%	B-	80-81.99
		C+	78-79.99
		C	72-77.99
		C-	70-71.99
		D+	68-69.99
		D	62-67.99
		D-	60-61.99
		E	Below 60

A grade of “I” (incomplete) is assigned only for work which has been of a passing quality through the academic term but which, for good reason and with approval of the instructor, cannot be completed within the time frame of the semester. Students for whom special circumstances may warrant an “I” must discuss this matter with the instructor before the last day of class.

**MAKE UP POLICY:** There are **no set times for makeup exams OR for presentations**. However, if missed tests/presentations are accompanied with written verification for why the exam was missed (e.g., doctors note, religious holiday, death in the family) I will work with you to take the exam or give the presentation at a different time. Please consult the university guidelines for more information on the makeup policies: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

**CLASS ATTENDANCE:** Students will not be deducted any points for missing classes, other than those they are required to attend.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** You are expected to be familiar with the University policy on academic dishonesty, as this policy applies to our class as well as to others. Failure to comply with academic integrity policies may result in failing the course and progression through standard university procedures.

**ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS FOR PERSONS WITH UNIQUE NEEDS:** In compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), I will work with accommodations that are needed. If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact me. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.”

## Schedule

Class	Date	Topic	Readings
<b>Part I: Positive Psychology Basics</b>			
1.	5.12	Introduction/syllabus	
2.	5.13	What is positive psychology?	1; Diener et al. (2018)
3.	5.14	What is happiness?	3
4.	5.15	Sociological perspectives and money	Tabuchi (2021)
5.	5.16	Character strengths	4
6.	5.19	Being positive – 1	Lyubomirsky & Layous (2013)
7.	5.20	Being positive - 2	Sheldon (2021)
8.	5.21	Open mindedness	6
9.	5.22	<b>EXAM 1 – 40 questions</b>	
10.	5.23	<b>NO CLASS/ Strength assignment due</b>	
<b>Part II: Positive Relationships</b>			
11.	5.27	Friendship	Waldinger (2023)
12.	5.28	Romantic relationships - 1	Zaki (2020)
13.	5.29	Romantic relationships - 2	12
14.	5.30	Romantic relationships – 3	O’Connell (2017)
15.	6.2	Romantic relationships – 4	Finkel (2017); Masters of Love
16.	6.3	<b>EXAM 2 – 30 questions</b>	
<b>Part III: Meaning</b>			
17.	6.4	Life meaning	King & Hicks (2021)
18.	6.5	Goals	Ward et al. (2022)
19.	6.6	Religion	10
20.	6.9	Altruism	11
21.	6.10	Gratitude – 1	Epley (2023)
22.	6.11	Gratitude – 2	Regan (2023)
23.	6.12	Career development and working - 1	Blustein et al. (2023)
24.	6.13	Career development and working – 2	14
25.	6.16	<b>NO CLASS/spillover</b>	
26.	6.17	Forgiveness	Schumann (2022)
27.	6.18	<b>Gratitude assignment due/Presentations</b>	
28.	6.19	<b>NO CLASS/Juneteenth</b>	
29.	6.20	<b>EXAM 3 – 50 questions</b>	