Harvard University Extension School  
Psyc E-1504: The Science and Application of Positive Psychology  
Fall 2015  
Monday 11:10-1:10, 1 Story Street, Room 304

Instructor: Stephanie Peabody, Psy.D, Neuropsychologist  
Office Hours: Available by appointment

Teaching Team:

Dr. Peabody: peabody2@fas.harvard.edu
Leslie Williamson (TA): lesliewilliamson11@gmail.com

A complete syllabus will be reviewed with registered students during the first class.

Course Description: Positive psychologists commonly describe well-being as a construct comprising five core measurable elements: Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and Achievement (PERMA). Dr. Peabody includes a sixth element, Health and Wellness (from a comprehensive biological, psychological and social perspective) which will be equally represented throughout the course. According to positive psychology research, no element defines well-being, but each contributes to it.

Studies demonstrate that a person’s happiness and overall well-being is roughly 50% influenced by genetics, 10% by life circumstances, and a significant percentage by an individual’s control over his/her own chosen activities, thoughts and lifestyle behaviors. People who can choose what they do, and who choose wisely, influence about 40% of their own well-being. Martin Seligman, one of the founders of positive psychology, recently acknowledged this fact in his book, Flourish. He used to think that the topic of positive psychology was happiness, that the gold standard for measuring happiness was life satisfaction, and that the goal of positive psychology was to increase life satisfaction. I now think that the topic of positive psychology is well-being, that the gold standard for measuring well-being is flourishing, and that the goal of positive psychology is to increase flourishing.

Scientific research has now revealed the variables that can actually contribute to a life of well-being. Going through the change process essential to flourish in life is within your control, if you are ready, informed with evidence, willing to take the appropriate action(s) and to make the necessary commitment.

The broad goal of this course examining well-being theory is to help students measure and build the elements that contribute to human flourishing. The course is designed to introduce the concepts (e.g., biological, psychological, social, emotional), research behind the concepts,
techniques, and activities that enhance well-being. In addition, students will have the opportunity to engage in a detailed analysis and positivity change process utilizing validated questionnaires and evidence-based positive psychology and well-being enhancing interventions.

The Science and Application of Positive Psychology is among a suite of companion courses strategically connected to provide a comprehensive set of useable knowledge, skills and tools. The first cluster of courses addresses a holistic approach to health and wellness promotion, as well as injury and disease prevention and intervention. The second cluster of courses addresses optimization of performance and well-being utilizing a "Coach" approach. The courses, when completed together, deliver a robust, innovative, and science-based education and skills training platform to support professionals in many fields, including health, well-being, education, performance and coaching psychology.

Health and Wellness Cluster
- Neuroscience of Learning and Behavior Change
- Mind Body Medicine and Implications to Health and Wellness
- The Science of Physical Activity Applied to Health and Wellbeing
- Introduction to Lifestyle Medicine
- Food and Nutrition in Health and Wellbeing
- Brain Health and Performance
- Psychological Resilience (optional)

Applied Coaching Psychology Cluster
- Neuroscience of Learning and Behavior Change
- Science of Coaching Psychology I
- Application of Coaching Psychology II
- Science and Application of Positive Psychology
- Applied Performance Psychology
- Human Development (optional)

Course Objectives

This course provides an introduction to the science related to happiness, well-being, flourishing and the positive aspects of human experience. Students will gain an understanding of what contributes to well-being and how to build the enabling conditions of a life worth living. Each week will offer students an opportunity to explore the concepts (e.g., biological, psychological, social, emotional), the research behind the concepts, and evidence-based experiential activities that enhance well-being. Students will engage in a detailed analysis and evidence-based positivity change process utilizing validated questionnaires and positive psychology and well-being enhancing interventions.
Expected Student Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the aim and scope of positive psychology and implications to well-being and flourishing;
- Describe the implications of the science and application of positive psychology to biological, psychological, social and emotional outcomes;
- Identify research that supports the principles, strategies, tools and skills of positive psychology;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the dimensions of happiness/subjective well-being and the application to their lives;
- Demonstrate an understanding of resiliency in relation to well-being and flourishing;
- Utilize their own strengths and virtues and employ strategies to increase their happiness, overall quality of life and well-being;
- Integrate and apply core concepts of positive psychology and resiliency factors into their own lives and professional practice;
- Develop a toolkit of measures and activities for putting positive psychology scientific findings, theories and tools into real-world practice.

Weekly Course Format

Each week will include a variety of empirically-based readings, lectures, discussions, measures and activities to explore key elements of the week’s topic. Students will get the most out of the course if they come to class each week having completed the readings and measures, and then continue throughout the week to engage in related activities and discussions.

Each week expect to participate in a variety of activities which will include:

- Completing several readings and/or watching short videos (usually less than 20 minutes in length) on the week’s topic;
- Attending weekly lecture (the weekly scheduled class time);
- Attending weekly section which will describe measures and activities related to the week’s topic(s). You should expect to complete these before the next scheduled class;
- Participating in the online discussion board about topics related to the weekly content;
- Taking a weekly quiz, writing reflections (4 X during the course), as well as completing a multi-step final project that unfolds throughout the semester.
Live Lecture

Lecture meets on the Harvard University campus Mondays from 11:10am to 1:10pm EST. To view a live video feed of lecture while it is happening, select PSYC E-1504 from the listing at: http://classroom.dce.harvard.edu (Links to an external site.)

*If the video you see is a black window, class has either not started yet, has ended, or is in a lecture break. Class will not be listed on days that class does not meet. Lectures will be posted in the week’s module 24hrs of being recorded.*

Mobile Video

You can use the following URL on your mobile device to view on-demand lectures: go.dce.harvard.edu

*NOTE: Viewing live video on mobile devices is currently unavailable. Mobile course lectures have been tested on the following devices:*

- iOS 7 on the iPhone 5, 5S
- iPad (4th generation), iPad Air
- iPad mini, iPad mini with Retina display

Technical Support Information

For Information on how to access videos click here (Links to an external site.).
M-F 9am to 5pm EST: (617) 495-4024
M-F 5pm to Midnight, SAT 9am to 10pm, SUN Noon to 10pm EST: (617) 998-8571
E-mail: academictechnology@dce.harvard.edu

Course Policies and Expectations

The classes (lecture, sections and discussion boards) are available on a distance platform and recorded/available for students to watch/participate on when they can’t attend live or want a review.

Undergraduate and graduate students are required to attend or watch videos of the lecture each week. All students taking the course for credit are also required to attend or watch weekly sections, as well as complete all of the assignments summarized in the table below in order to pass the course.

*This course is purposefully designed to build on each week’s content and activities. The first three weeks have a great deal of introductory content and activities. For students who choose to enroll after the course has started, be advised. It will be very difficult to catch up and get the most out of the course.*
Assignments and Grading Procedures

The typical assignments are outlined below. If due to a handicap or disability you require an alternate assessment path that differs from the following, contact http://www.extension.harvard.edu/resources/disability-services. Any accommodations have to be approved by the University’s disability services office PRIOR to the start of the course.

Grading is outlined in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Undergraduate Students</th>
<th>Graduate Students</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation (complete all assigned readings; attend all classes and sections and complete weekly content-related self-assessments/measures; participate on weekly discussion boards)</td>
<td>Class Participation (complete all assigned readings; attend all classes and sections and complete weekly content-related self-assessments/measures; participate on weekly discussion boards - summarize at least 1 group discussion topic)</td>
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<tr>
<td>30%</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>Complete one intervention template to be shared with the class at the end of the term (model provided).</td>
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<td>Reflection Assignments (4)</td>
<td>Reflection Assignments (4)</td>
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<td>40%</td>
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<td>Weekly Graded Quizzes</td>
<td>Weekly Graded Quizzes</td>
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<td>15%</td>
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<td>Positive Psychology Project</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
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Grading

1. Weekly Quizzes (15%)
There will be weekly graded quizzes throughout the semester on key concepts presented in the readings and lectures. Students will have the opportunity to retake the quizzes to increase their score and understanding of the material.

2. Experiential Exercise Reflections (40%)
Students are required to complete experiential positive psychology questionnaires, activities and/or experiments throughout the semester with the goal being to apply the material of the course to their lives. A 1-2 page, typed reflection summary paper will be written about your experience with the exercises and submitted 4 times during the semester (end of Week 4, 6, 11, 15). The ultimate goal is for students to experience the positive psychology construct first hand through the exercises, self-reflect in a meaningful way and, as a result, gain insight into the mechanisms and processes of well-being and flourishing.

3. Class Participation (30%)
Students are expected to complete all required reading/viewing and attend weekly lectures and sections (live or watch recorded).

In week 4, students will be placed in groups and required to post on their group's designated discussion board for the remainder of the course. Topics will continue for two-three weeks each and focus on related readings, lecture and/or experiential activities. The purpose of this activity is for students to contribute their thinking and experiences towards the class's collective understanding and appreciation of the various concepts covered. Students will not be able to contribute after a discussion board's ending period.

Students will also be expected to actively participate in screening measures and related activities presented in the weekly sections and report out on their experiences in class, on the discussion boards and reflection assignments. Each week typically there will be at least two validated questionnaires offered in conjunction with the week's topic (e.g., PERMA, Authentic Happiness Scale, Meaning in Life Questionnaire). Students will be asked to complete these measures as an introduction to the many different tools available for screening factors of well-being, as well as an opportunity to assess their usefulness in the student's personal/professional practice. Screening results will be anonymous, but students will be required to provide proof of completion.

The first assignments related to participation are labeled Assignment Zero. They should be completed PRIOR to the first class on August 31.

- Complete a personal profile on the course website.
- Throughout the course, students will be expected to cite all references in APA format. Please complete a mandatory self-check ungraded quiz that covers the most common citations students will likely have to use in the course.
- Complete a short survey to provide valuable demographic and background information about you that will help the instructors best meet the needs of the class this term.
• Complete a baseline questionnaire on health and well-being. You will take this questionnaire again in the middle of the term and again at the end.

4. Positive Psychology Final Project (15%) This is a well-being project that will require students to first assess the current state of their well-being using a specific screening measure. Then, to choose a well-being goal(s) to pursue over a period of time (up to two weeks). Students will use an evidence-based intervention(s) that has been introduced during the course to help them achieve their goal(s). Finally, a post-intervention validated well-being questionnaire will be taken and a synthesis of the whole process, including results, will be submitted at the end of the course.

Additional Grading Information

• Late Policy: 5 points will be deducted for work submitted more than one day late; 10 points for work submitted more than one week late (you must contact the TA or instructor IN ADVANCE, if you anticipate your work will be more than one day late).

• Graduate Students
  There will be additional expectations related to course elements described above (i.e., synthesizing group discussions; completing an intervention template to be shared with the class.

• Non Credit Students
  While Non-Credit students are encouraged to participate in all of the course content, they are not allowed to submit a final project.

Required Course Texts


Most readings will include articles provided on the course website.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity, including avoiding plagiarism, is critically important. Each student is responsible for being familiar with the standards and policies outlined in the Harvard Extension School’s Student Responsibilities (http://www.extension.harvard.edu/exams-grades-policies/student-responsibilities). It is the responsibility of the student to be aware of, and comply with, these policies and standards. In accordance with Harvard Extension School’s policy on academic misconduct, violations of standards of academic conduct will be sanctioned by penalties ranging from grade reduction or failure on an assignment; grade reduction or failure of a course; up to dismissal from the school, depending on the nature and context of any infraction.
Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students needing academic adjustments or accommodations should visit the following link to learn more about the Harvard Extension School policies:
http://www.extension.harvard.edu/resources/disability-services.
## Course Schedule

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Week of August 31-</td>
<td>PRIOR TO THIS CLASS complete: Pre-course survey; Personal Profile; APA Format Quiz; complete the baseline health and well-being measure</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>September 6</td>
<td>Lecture: Positive Psychology: History and Background</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Section: TA overview of course logistics; Tuesday September 1, 7pm (online conference tool);</td>
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<td>Quiz Due</td>
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<td>Discussion Board 1 Due 9/6</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Week of September 7-13</td>
<td>NO CLASS, but reading and positive psychology assessment measures will be assigned</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Week of September 14-20</td>
<td>Lecture: Happiness and Classifications</td>
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<td>Section: Happiness and strengths identification measures and activities</td>
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<td>Quiz Due</td>
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<td>Discussion Board 2 Due 9/20</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Week of September 21-27</td>
<td>Lecture: Personal Goals, Self-Efficacy and Grit</td>
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<td>Section: Personal goals, self-efficacy and grit measures and activities</td>
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<td>Quiz Due</td>
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<td>Reflection 1 Due 9/27 (weeks 1-3)</td>
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<td>Week</td>
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| 5    | Week of September 28-October 4 | **Lecture:** The Benefits of Positive Emotions Part I  
**Section:** Positive emotions measures and activities  
**Quiz Due**  
**Designated Group Discussion Board 3 Begins 9/28** |
| 6    | Week of October 5-11 | **Lecture:** The Benefits of Positive Emotions-Part II; Interventions: Preventing, Promoting and Enhancing  
**Section:** Positive emotions measures and activities (continued)  
**Quiz Due**  
**Discussion Board 3 Ends 10/11 (graduate summary due)**  
**Reflection 2 Due 10/11 (weeks 4-6)** |
| 7    | Week of October 12-18 | **NO CLASS**  
**Complete Mid-term PERMA + H Questionnaire and Submit Goal for Final Project, both Due 10/18** |
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<th>Week</th>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Week of October 19-25</td>
<td><strong>Lecture:</strong> Empathy and Altruism</td>
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<td><strong>Section:</strong> Empathy and altruism measures and activities</td>
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<td><strong>Quiz Due</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Discussion Board 4 Begins 10/19</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Begin Final Project</strong></td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Week of October 26-1 November 1</td>
<td><strong>Lecture:</strong> Gratitude and Forgiveness</td>
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<td><strong>Section:</strong> Gratitude and forgiveness measures and activities</td>
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<td><strong>Quiz Due</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Discussion Board 4 Ends 11/1 (graduate summary due)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Continue Final Project</strong></td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Week of November 2-8</td>
<td><strong>Lecture:</strong> Optimism and Hope</td>
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<td><strong>Section:</strong> Optimism and hope measures and activities</td>
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<td><strong>Quiz Due</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Discussion Board 5 Begins 11/2</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Post-Project PERMA + H Questionnaire Due 11/8</strong></td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Week of November 9-15</td>
<td><strong>Lecture:</strong> Wisdom and Courage</td>
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<td><strong>Section:</strong> Wisdom and courage measures and activities</td>
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<td><strong>Quiz Due</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Discussion Board 5 Ends 11/15 (graduate summary due)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Reflection 3 Due 11/15 (weeks 8-11)</strong></td>
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<td>Week</td>
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| 12   | Week of November 16-22 | **Lecture:** Spirituality, Mindfulness and Flow  
**Section:** Spirituality, mindfulness and flow measures and activities  
**Quiz Due**  
**Discussion Board 6 Begins 11/16**  
**Final Project Summary Due 11/22** |
| 13   | Week of November 23-29 | **Lecture:** Resiliency and Post Traumatic Growth  
**Section:** Resiliency and post traumatic growth measures and activities  
**Quiz Due**  
**Discussion Board 6 Ends (11/29) (graduate summary due)** |
| 14   | Week of November 30-December 6 | **Lecture:** Physical Health and Well-being  
**Section:** Physical health and well-being measures and activities  
**Discussion Board 7 Ends 12/6 (graduate summary due)**  
**Quiz Due** |
| 15   | Week of December 7-13 | **Lecture:** Positive Social Engagement  
**Section:** Positive social engagement measures and activities  
**Quiz Due**  
**Discussion Board 8 Ends 12/13**  
**Reflection 4 Due 12/13 (weeks 12-15)**  
**Course Evaluation Due 12/13** |
Additional Information

Grading expectations are outlined as follows:

A and A*: Earned by work that indicates a student’s strong comprehension of the course material and full engagement with the course requirements and activities. This grade is also earned through a demonstration of the skills/tools needed to apply the course content in daily personal/professional practice.

B+, B, and B*: Earned by work that indicates a strong comprehension of the course material, a good command of the skills needed to work with the course materials, and the student’s full engagement with the course requirements and activities.

C+, C, and C*: Earned by work that indicates an adequate and satisfactory comprehension of the course material and the skills needed to work with the course materials, and that indicates that the student has met the basic requirements for completing assigned work and participating in class activities.

D+, D, and D*: Earned by work that is unsatisfactory but that indicates some minimal command of the course materials and some minimal participation in class activities that is worthy of course credit.

E: Earned by work that is unsatisfactory and unworthy of course credit. This grade may also be assigned to students who do not submit required work in courses from which they have not officially withdrawn by the withdrawal deadline. Zero or E grades are assigned to students for missing work. These grades are included in the calculation of the overall grade.

Updated 8-14-15